

# Ethelbert

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Fostering Services  
**Inspiring children to succeed!**

Statement of Purpose  
May 2026



### Statement of Purpose & Function October 2025



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## Introduction

Ethelbert Fostering Services (EFS) is a substantial and versatile provision that offers foster homes for individual children and young people, sibling groups and for those who display challenging behaviour and/or variety of complex needs. It is well resourced with education, health and therapeutic provisions.

The focus of the agency is to ensure safe and stable homes where children and young people can thrive and develop in order to achieve their full potential. Often our children and young people arrive following a series of placement breakdowns. By specifically matching the presenting needs of the individual child with the identified skills of our dedicated foster carers, we succeed in providing stability and structure to their lives and help them progress towards positive outcomes.

At our last Ofsted Inspection in 2021 the agency was awarded an overall rating of 'Good'.

## Mission Statement

For Ethelbert Fostering Services to inspire children to succeed, we firmly embrace our Foster Carers Charter statement:

*“Our shared belief is that a safe, secure and happy environment with quality foster families help achieve stability for children and young people, satisfaction and accomplishment for carers but most importantly affords these children and young people a vital second chance to experience a balanced, nurturing and fulfilling childhood”*

## Status and Constitution

EFS is an independent fostering provider trading under Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited – a private limited company (Reg. 03291503). It is a family owned business established in 1972 and offering an extensive range of residential and fostering services, supported by specialist education provisions in our own registered schools and vocational centres.

EFS is registered and inspected by Ofsted (SC036583) and complies with the standards and expectations identified in the Children's Act 1989, Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and Amendments 2013, the National Minimum Standards 2011, the Fostering Services and Care Standards Act 2000.





## What We Can Offer ...

Our foster carers have a diverse range of skills and experience to meet the needs of any children and young people matched to their families. EFS offers the following services;

- ❖ Long Term / Permanent Foster Homes
- ❖ Assessment / Short Term Foster Homes
- ❖ Stayovers
- ❖ Bridging
- ❖ Therapeutic Provisions
- ❖ Pre-Adoption Homes
- ❖ Emergency Arrangements
- ❖ Specialist UASC Foster care Accommodation
- ❖ Staying Put Arrangements

# Aims & Objectives

## Our Aims:

- ◆ To provide a safe and stable home environment where children and young people can thrive and develop in order to achieve their full potential.
- ◆ To uphold the rights of children and young people and to ensure that they are listened to and valued, protected from harm and provided within a safe family environment.
- ◆ To provide a positive experience of family life for all our children and young people.
- ◆ To make moving a positive experience for every child and young person and settle them into their new home as effortlessly as possible.
- ◆ To provide a caring family environment for all children and young people, where they can experience positive parenting with foster carers who genuinely care and consistently convey unconditional positive regard.
- ◆ To prepare children and young people for independence.
- ◆ To provide adaptable, bespoke care and education packages specifically designed to meet and achieve a wide range of needs and outcomes.
- ◆ To ensure that family time arrangements, where appropriate, are supported.
- ◆ To provide a caring child centred service conforming to the highest standards of professional practice.

## Our Objectives:

- ◆ To ensure children and young people's views are paramount and contribute to care planning.
- ◆ All children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop their full potential, be involved in the decision making about their lives and have access to their family/friends and significant others.
- ◆ To support children and young people to have positive views of themselves by recognising each individual's gender, faith, ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation and any disability they might have.
- ◆ To provide access to a wide range of therapeutic services.
- ◆ To provide supervised and supported family time if this is required, by our trained and skilled sessional workers.
- ◆ All children and young people will be cared for by adults who offer respect, concern, affection and experience appropriate to meet their individual needs.
- ◆ To prioritise all staff and foster carer training through our own training centre which is staffed by a full-time Training Centre Manager/QCF Assessor and Administrator.
- ◆ To access training provided by external providers such as Coram BAAF and The Fostering Network which is subject to continuous review.
- ◆ Provide carers with access to a qualified and experienced supervising social worker.
- ◆ 24-hour support 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- ◆ To use lessons from complaints, compliments, inspections and outcomes from children and young people, Ofsted, carers and local authorities to improve our service.
- ◆ To continuously develop the service by reflecting the latest good practice and research findings.

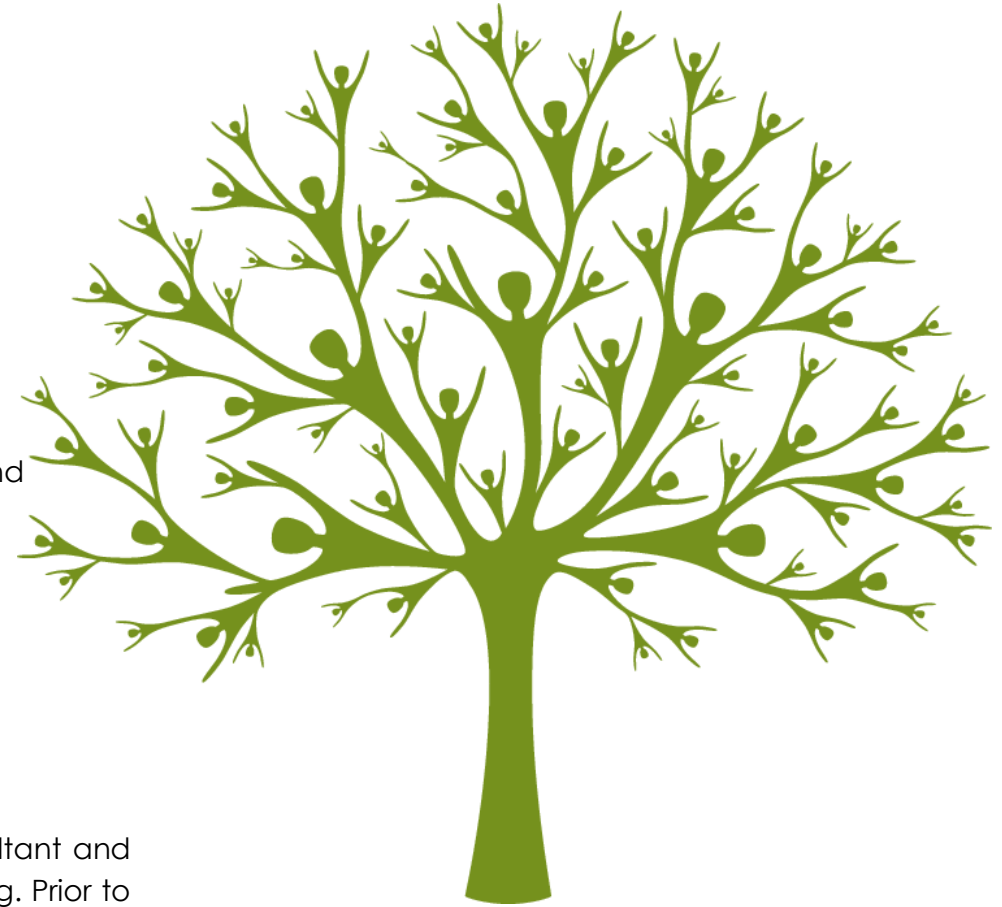
## Panel Members

The Panel also comprises of members providing the following expertise:

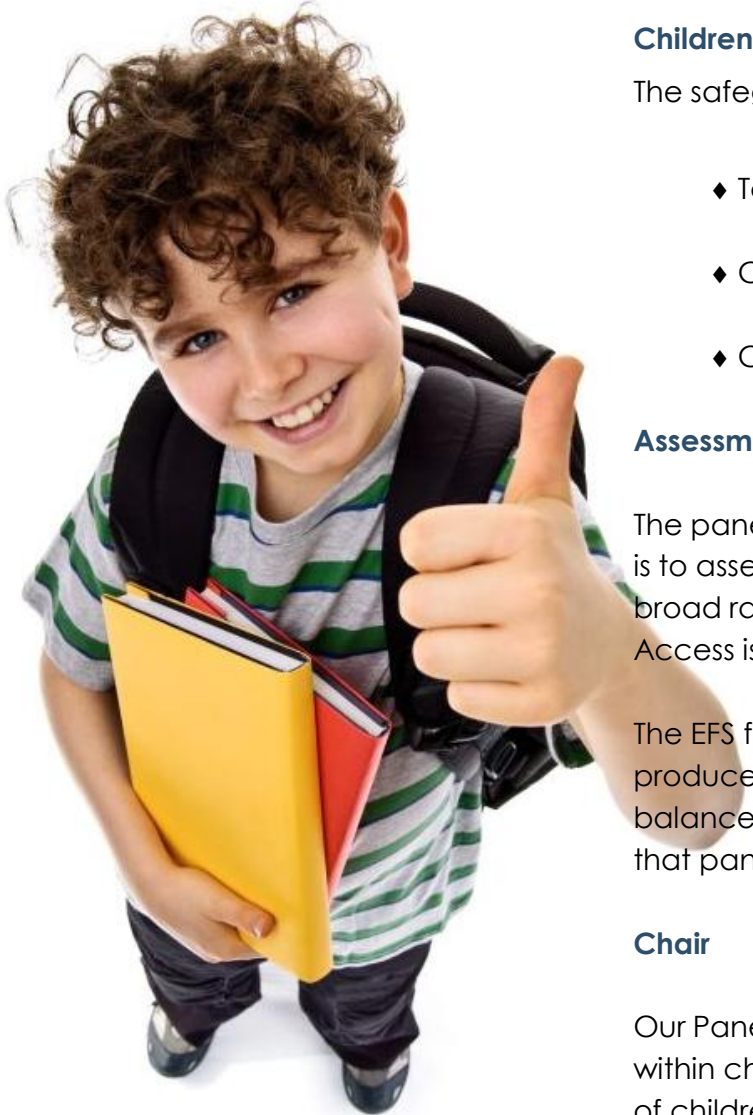
- ◆ Qualified independent social workers who have extensive experience of fostering panels and completing fostering assessments
- ◆ Conducting Ofsted inspections
- ◆ Education and pastoral care
- ◆ Nursing, working with foster families, family assessments, completing parenting assessments and providing early intervention strategies and a personal advisor to teenage parents.
- ◆ Therapeutic services
- ◆ Experience of consultancy for careers and work-based development
- ◆ Managing and supporting Independent foster agencies
- ◆ A former foster child
- ◆ Foster Carers

## Agency Decision Maker

Our Agency Decision Maker is a highly qualified and experienced independent social work consultant and trainer. She has experience of fostering and adoption alongside a particular interest in safeguarding. Prior to her independent social work practice, she worked extensively as a senior manager and Head of Service within local authority children's services.



# Standards of Care & Service Quality



## Children & Young People

The safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount

- ◆ Taking children and young people's views, wishes and feelings into account, wherever possible, is an integral part of our philosophy
- ◆ Children and young people develop emotional resilience, a positive identity, psychological wellbeing, healthy outcomes and educational achievement through personalised care
- ◆ Children and young people experience care and support from foster carers who promote their individual identity

## Assessment, Approval & Panel

The panel is a multi disciplinary body drawn from a central list. It meets as required, but usually on a monthly basis and its purpose is to assess and review foster carer approval and the terms of approval in a fair and transparent manner. Its members have a broad range of experience and qualifications with access to specialist advice such as health, therapy, education and training. Access is also available to an independent medical advisor and a legal advisor.

The EFS fostering panel complies with the Fostering Services Regulations and guidance such as Effective Fostering Panels produced by Coram Baaf. It has adopted core principles such as; having fair and transparent processes that enable panel to balance the skills and abilities of foster carers, whilst keeping children and young people's welfare paramount. EFS recognises that panel recommendations can have a lifelong impact on children, young people and families.

## Chair

Our Panel Chair is an experienced, child centred independent social worker. She has held a range of senior management roles within children's services alongside her independent social work practice. She has a keen knowledge of fostering and the needs of children who are looked after.

## Foster Carer Agreements

All foster carers enter into a foster care agreement, covering the matters set out in the regulations. The purpose of the agreement is to provide written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership and about what can be expected by both parties.

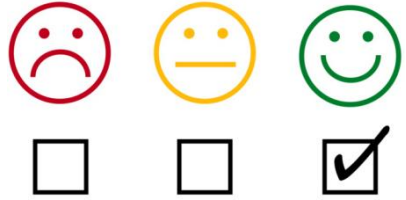
## Foster Carers Charter

The charter explains what EFS and foster carers can expect from each other. To achieve our goals, good quality foster placements help achieve stability for children and young people, namely:

- ◆ Working in Partnership
- ◆ Sharing Information
- ◆ Transparency
- ◆ Fair Treatment
- ◆ Communication & Consultation
- ◆ Respect for the Child
- ◆ Learning, Development & Support
- ◆ Communication & Consultation



# Monitoring and Quality Assurance



## Complaints

The Manager will ensure that all complaints and representations are recorded in writing, along with any action taken and the outcome of the investigation. It is our aim for any complaint to be resolved safely and quickly whilst maintaining a level of independence, dependent upon the nature and level of the complaint.

All complaints will be addressed thoroughly and be responded to within a maximum of twenty-eight days.

We ensure we comply with current legislation and best practice and lessons from research. We have robust and effective quality assurance systems and regularly review policies and procedures. Information about the quality of our fostering service comes from many sources, an example being questionnaires from carers, children and young people we look after. Feedback about the service is collated and presented to the fostering team and any improvements to further develop the service are appropriately addressed.

# Services for young people

## We Offer:

- ◆ To support family time, we have our own well-equipped homely facility, which provides a safe, private and warm environment
- ◆ In preparation for independence, each child is individually assessed for the use of a life skills folder (usually around the age of fourteen years but this can vary) to support them on their pathway planning journey
- ◆ Access to our Health Promotion Specialist
- ◆ Holiday activities
- ◆ Monthly newsletters
- ◆ Advocacy services
- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Children's groups
- ◆ A children's council
- ◆ All children and young people receive a welcome box that reflects the child's interests, a children's guide and a memories book
- ◆ Access to educational provisions
- ◆ Access to therapeutic services



## Health

**We offer a wide range of therapeutic services:**

- ◆ Psychological Assessments
- ◆ Psychotherapy
- ◆ Speech & Language Therapy
- ◆ Systemic Psychotherapy
- ◆ Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- ◆ Play Therapy
- ◆ Art Therapy
- ◆ Music Therapy
- ◆ Drama Therapy
- ◆ Counselling
- ◆ Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR)

**In addition to our panel of consultant therapists, we retain the services of:**

- ◆ A Therapy Services Manager
- ◆ A Health Promotion Specialist

## Health Promotion

Our dedicated Health Promotion Specialist is available to visit and discuss any health issues that arise. Along with the support of the supervising social worker, she also ensures that all health assessment recommendations are fully actioned. Additionally, she helps identify local support/activities within the community.





We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people within the agency have the opportunity to reach their full potential and recognize that access to a high standard of appropriate education is paramount in achieving this. We work in partnership with mainstream schools and Special Educational Needs schools in order to secure and maintain the educational requirement of each and everyone of 'our' children. However, we are aware that for some of them this is not a positive experience or the best option. For these children and young people, we can offer a vocational centre which works in conjunction with local colleges and focus' on a range of skilled trades and professions.



### **The Old Priory School (TOPS)**

The Old Priory School is registered to educate up to 33 children and young people aged 11—16 years (Key Stage 3 & 4) levels.

All pupils have access to the National Curriculum within a safe, structured learning environment.

Courses lead to GCSE, ASDAN, functional skills and a range of vocational qualification.

Pupils are placed into tutorial groups appropriate to their individual needs with experience and qualified teaching staff.

Each Group has a dedicated Learning Support Assistant who has considerable experience in working with children.



### **The Davenport School**

The Davenport School is an Independent SEMH bespoke primary learning environment.

The school is registered for up to 22 pupils of mixed gender and ability. The age range of the children within The Davenport School are between 5-12 years (Key Stage 1-2).

The school provides its own curriculum and follows the key objectives of the Literacy and Numeracy National Curriculum on a daily basis and pupils are challenged and supported to enable them to reach their full potential. All lessons are made fun and interactive with a key focus of being student led. In the afternoons a termly topic is taught in lessons incorporating educational trips out to make the curriculum and lessons interesting and engaging. Physical and practical topics such as PE and PSHE are encouraged, giving the children the opportunities to experience a wide variety of topics throughout the week.



### **Park Lane Vocational Centre (Affiliated to The Old Priory School)**

Park Lane offers a Vocational Curriculum enabling children to acquire trade skills including: Bricklaying, Carpentry, Plaster Boarding and Plastering. They also include Plastic Pipework, Concreting Skills, Painting and Decorating, Ceramic Wall Tiling, CDT, Health and Safety and Literacy and Numeracy. The course taught are aimed at specific qualifications which prepare students for 16+ college placements and to help student gain employment with the construction industry. The current qualifications that students work towards include: CITB Level 1, City and Guilds Level 1, NPTC-Entry Level 2 and 3 and ASDAN Bronze, Silver and Gold award.

## Services for Foster Carers Training and Development

We recognise foster carers have an array of valuable knowledge, skills and experience. Our trainers ensure training is delivered in an arena where foster carers are able to share their experiences, skills and ideas, whilst gaining support and furthering their development with knowledge and expertise from specialist trainers.

Each year a comprehensive training package is devised to support the Training, Support and Development Standards for foster carers (TSD).

Skills and knowledge are continuously reviewed through supervision and annual reviews. EFS is committed to continuing professional development for our carers and provides each family with a personal development plan, which are reviewed annually.

All new applicants attend the pre-approval training course, 'Skills to Foster', endorsed by the Fostering Network. Following approval, a personal development plan is devised to help ensure they have the relevant skills and knowledge to support them in their fostering role.

EFS maintain a training and development portfolio in order to record how they are meeting the competencies required. Foster carers have access to a wide range of resources including on-line training that provides an introductory level which is then supplemented by more advanced face to face training.

All carers have access to a well-resourced library that is regularly updated in line with current research and practice initiatives.

“ Belonging to a smaller foster agency like Ethelbert was the best decision we made, this is our 1st year as foster parents and it can be quite daunting learning new skills and ideas behind caring for looked after children, our supervising social worker has supported us brilliantly throughout this year.

Ethelbert have provided us with courses both online and in groups to give us the tools we need to guide us through this new process.

The 24hr support line is invaluable, knowing there is always someone there to speak to along with the regular support meetings with fellow foster carers has been a huge help too. ”

*...Ethelbert Foster Carers ES & GS  
January 2022*

“ It was a lot of hard work going through the process, but it was worth every minute. Everyone at Ethelbert's have been very supportive despite Covid, we have all battled through together. Fostering is so rewarding, and we love being able to give a child a loving family home, and as much support as they need.

Whenever we need support there is always someone from Ethelbert's on the other end of the phone. Our son and of our grandchildren think it's a great thing, and our eldest granddaughter says she now wants to do it when she gets older.... ”

*..Ethelbert Foster Carers JD &PD  
January 2022*

“ We have been fostering with Ethelbert's Fostering Services for 7 years. Our first child is still with us and we have recently welcomed a young sibling group into our family. We have had several other young people short term and have also enjoyed having some children stay with us on for a short break. The placement team have matched suitable children for our family and listened to our concerns/wishes when searching for a child or young person.

We feel we have been well supported by our Supervising Social Worker and other foster carers within the agency.

Through the agencies social events we have had the opportunity to see the growth and development of other carers foster children and how they have become members of their family.”

*...Ethelbert Foster Carers  
January 2022*

## Support

Foster carers receive support and supervision from their named supervising social worker. This is in the form of regular phone contact and email/text messaging. Home visits for supervision/support take place every month as a minimum. Additional visits are needs led.

Newly approved foster carers receive weekly visits for the first four weeks of their first child placed with them, followed by fortnightly visits for the following two months and, thereafter, a minimum of monthly visits.

Peer mentoring support is also available for new and existing foster carers. Newsletters are published monthly and foster carers are encouraged to have an input to these.

Foster carers have good access to respite care and day care is provided locally by our skilled sessional workers. We have good links with local contact centres and local CAMHS services.

Regular activities/days out are organised to help support foster carers, their families and the children and young people in their care.

Every foster carer is automatically provided free membership to The Fostering Network. We provide reflective practice support for all foster carers with a qualified therapist. This affords carers the time and space to explore the impact of caring for traumatised children and young people and provides them with strategies to manage feelings and behaviours.

Support groups are held on a quarterly basis providing peer support, updates on new developments/practice as well as the opportunity to meet other carers.

## Organisation Structure

### Meet the team

Within Ethelbert Fostering Services we pride ourselves in employing individuals who are experienced, qualified and passionate about caring for children and young people. With high quality assessment skills, proactive decision making, knowledgeable planning and placement practice are integral to our philosophy, resulting in a well-trained, reflective and insightful team.

The Managing Director & Responsible Individual, Leslie Davenport has over 35 years' experience within fostering and residential care settings. Additionally, he holds a Level 5 management qualification.

The Operations Director, Andy Marshall has an established childcare services background in financial planning and business management and has provided support and managerial oversight to the Registered Manager, Agency and organisation since 1999 to ensure a financially secure future.

The Registered Manager who leads the Fostering Team is Jenny Beraet, following a successful application to Ofsted and the status being awarded in August 2025. Jenny joined Ethelbert Children Services in January 2022 as a Senior Supervising Social Worker. She qualified as a Social Worker in 2007 and worked for Kent within the Children Social Work Service until 2020 when she took the role of Supervisor/Assessor for the Newly Qualified social workers within East Kent. Jenny enjoys supporting the development of others through her role as a Practice Educator, ASYE assessor and through delivering training for foster carers.

Our foster carers, who are central to our team, are supported by a team of skilled and experienced supervising Social Workers all of whom possess a background in working with children and families. All of our Supervising Social Workers are qualified and registered with Social Work England.

Supervision for the Registered Manager is regularly provided by an external, suitably qualified and experienced Consultant Social Worker.

The team is supported by a child centred Practice Manager, Siobhan McAree, who promotes continuous improvement in outcomes for children in our care. Siobhan holds a Degree in Social Work, obtained in 2007 and a Practice Teaching and Enabling Others award. Siobhan is an experienced Social Worker who has worked within Statutory Child Protection for the past 16 years, including in the role of a Social Worker, Deputy Team Manager, Advanced Practitioner, Child Protection Chair and Senior Practitioner.

Our Annual Reviewing Officer is Michelle Knell who qualified as a Social Worker in 2010. Since then she has worked for various Local Authorities, CAFCASS and as an Independent Social Worker before joining Ethelbert Fostering Services in 2023. The Annual Reviewing Officer role is key to promoting the quality of experience for the children placed with our carers through providing comprehensive and analytical Annual Foster Carer Review.

We have an Education Champion for the Fostering Service, Julie Egan. Julie has a degree in Secondary Education (specialising in Dyslexia) and has experience teaching in secondary provisions; both mainstream and specialist settings.

Julie's role aims to raise the educational outcomes and aspirations of our children and young people, as well as support foster carers in being 'first educators'. This includes providing workshops to upskill and boost carers confidence in supporting their child's educational needs, attending PEP's, EHCP's or other educational meetings or offering support to children and young people who are out of school. In addition, she monitors children's progress, attendance and attainment.

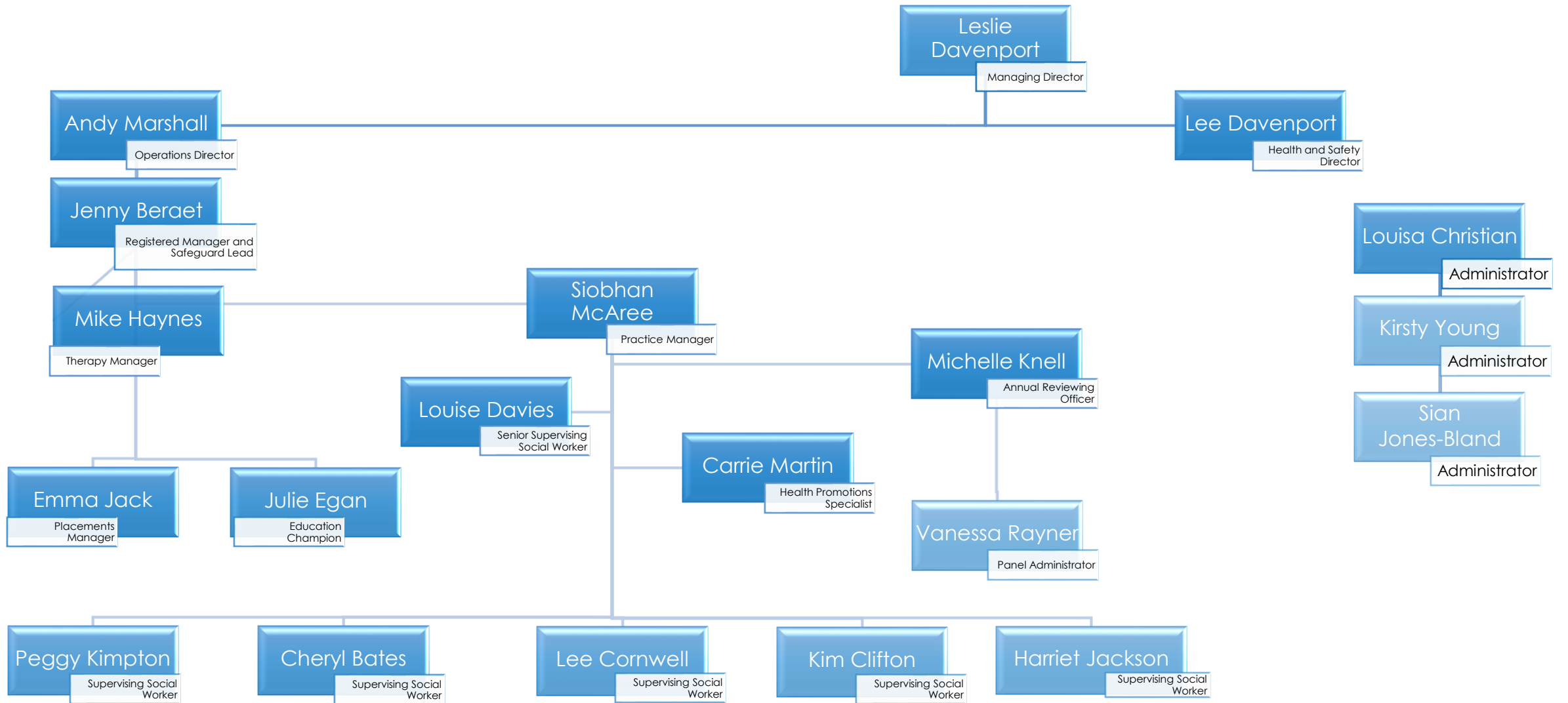
Our comprehensive administrative support is delivered by an effective, efficient, reliable and supportive team who thrive on ensuring the work they produce is of the highest professional standard.

Taking referrals and liaising with our Foster Carers and the placing authorities ensuring a good match for the children to foster families is the role of our Placements Manager, Emma Jack.

The health of the children we look after is supported by a range of health experts, including therapists and counsellors. We have a dedicated Health Promotions Specialist, Carrie Martin and a Therapy Manager, Mike Haynes who are committed to improving outcomes and meeting the health needs of our children.

Our dedicated Health Promotion Specialist holds a degree in Health Promotion and is available to visit our children and young people to discuss any health issues that may arise. Education is provided on health topics and emotional support is offered as necessary. Along with the support of the Supervising Social Worker, our Health Promotion Specialist ensures that any health recommendations are fully actioned and provides resources and/or signposting to other services as appropriate. Children and young people are afforded the opportunity to attend groups in a range of health related topics. Our Health Promotion Specialist provides training to foster carers covering topics such as; sexual health, substance misuse and medication.

# Organisational Structure



# Ethelbert

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