

# Statement of Purpose

The definition of the Latin word, Tutis is:  
Protected, Safe, Secure.

This Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with The Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011; Regulation (3)(1) and amendments 2013, The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011, Standard 16; The Children Act 1989; The Children and Young Persons Act 2008; The Care Standards Act 2000.

This Statement sets out how Tutis Foster Care provides for children placed within the Agency.

The Statement of Purpose is available to Ofsted and is available to all members of Staff; Foster Carers and prospective Foster Carers; Children placed with our Foster Carers; their Parents and Local Authorities. The Statement of Purpose is available online. It is placed on Tutis Foster Care's website - adhering to Fostering Regulation 3(2) and NMS, 16.1 and Children Act Guidance and Regulations, Volume 4 (4.1)

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated as necessary, at least annually.

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<b>Opening Statement, Mission and Status</b>	<b>3</b>
Opening Statement	3
Mission	3
Status	3
<b>Aims, Objectives and Principles</b>	<b>4</b>
Aims and Objectives	4
Principles	5
<b>Staff and Constitution of Tutis Foster Care</b>	<b>5</b>
Constitution	5
Staff Structure	5
<b>Standards of Care</b>	<b>6</b>
Expectations of the Agency	6
Monitoring and Controlling	7
Enquiries, Assessment and Foster Panel	8
Matching Process	9
Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest	9
Safeguarding Procedures	9
<b>Services Provided by Tutis Foster Care</b>	<b>10</b>
Emergency	10
Single/Solo	10
Respite	10
Sibling	10
Bridging	10
Long-term/Permanency	10
Short-term	11
Children with disabilities	11
Parent and Child	11
Unaccompanied Children	11
<b>Services for Foster Carers</b>	<b>11</b>
Supervision and Support	11
Training and Professional Development	12
Foster Carer Support Groups	12

Emergency Support 13

**Services for Children and Young People** 13

**Comments and Complaints** 14

## **Opening Statement, Mission and Status**

### **Opening Statement**

Tutis Foster Care is based in the county of Cumbria, surrounded by the fells and beauty of the Lake District. Our office is located in the centre of a small harbour town. We are a small fostering Agency run by committed individuals, who want to provide the very best care for children and young people.

Tutis Foster Care provides a range of foster homes to meet the needs of most of the children referred to the agency. Albeit, there are children who have needs that will be better met elsewhere i.e. specialist provision. We have an extensive knowledge of what our Foster Carers can offer, and we only put forward Foster Carers who are equipped to offer what is needed in relation to the specific needs of a child.

We have extensive experience of working as Social Workers, Managers and Senior Managers within Local Authorities and have an excellent understanding of the needs and requirements of Placing Social Workers.

Tutis Foster Care was founded due to the knowledge that many Foster Carers want to be part of a small, stable, well-supported Agency whose fundamental aim is to offer all that is possible to enhance the lives of the children they care for.

### **Mission**

The mission of Tutis Foster Care is to deliver comprehensive high-quality foster homes, to enable children to enjoy a positive family experience and where necessary remain in their foster home, by ensuring good matches are made, alleviating placement breakdowns.

### **Status**

Tutis Foster Care is an independent fostering provider, registered by Ofsted in July 2015, registration Number SC489594.

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## Aims, Objectives and Principles

### Aims and Objectives

- To develop and deliver a comprehensive, high quality and integrated service to meet the diverse needs of the children we care for.
- To ensure the fostering service provides the very best care, safety and protection for children and young people.
- To deliver services that impact successfully the lives of children and young people and result in positive outcomes.
- Deliver responsive services in partnership with local, regional and national agencies, including the statutory, voluntary and the independent sector.
- To assess, support and develop Foster Carers to enable them to meet the expectations of high-quality foster care.
- To ensure that those who work in connection with the Agency are suitable to work with children and young people and are managed, trained and supported to ensure the best possible outcomes.
- To ensure that services are provided in a manner that promotes equal opportunities and does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, culture, religion or class.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept in relation to individual Foster Carers and children and young people placed within the Agency, via a secure electronic database.
- To work in a professional manner with Foster Carers and ensure a high ratio of Staff to Carers.
- Foster homes should meet all of the individual needs of children and young people - Tutis recruit Foster Carers from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, so that we can offer appropriately matched Foster Carers.
- Our Foster Carers will offer children much needed stability.
- We provide 24-hour support x 7 days a week.

## Principles

- The needs, welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount.
- We treat our Foster Carers as core members of the team.
- Foster Carers and Staff have a right to regular supervision, training, professional development and support.
- Foster Carers and individuals who work for the Agency adhere to the Agency's Policies and Procedures.
- We treat all children and young people as individuals and take their unique needs, wishes and feelings into account in relation to the care they are receiving.
- We comply with government legislation, regulations, national minimum standards and associated 'good practice' guidelines:
  - The Care Standards Act 2000
  - The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
  - Fostering Services: The National Minimum Standards 2011, amended 2013
  - The Children's Act 1989, guidance and regulations Volume 4: fostering services (referred to as statutory guidance) 2011
  - The Children's Act 2004
  - The Care Planning Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
  - The Care Planning Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
  - National Standards for Foster Care and Family Placements Services

## Staff and Constitution of Tutis Foster Care

### Constitution

Tutis Foster Care is a Limited Company. In accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and 1989, Tutis Foster Care has a Board of Directors who meet on a regular basis and are responsible for the corporate governance of the Agency.

The board of directors are as follows:

<b>Louise Devlin</b>	-	<b>Registered Manager</b>	<b>(07923 266700)</b>
<b>Jenny Beddows</b>	-	<b>Senior Supervising Social Worker</b>	<b>(07415 198734)</b>

### Staff Structure

Tutis Foster Care Senior Management Team (as above) have a wealth of experience and expertise in the field of fostering and social care. The Directors are qualified Social Workers registered with Social Work England. They are responsible for all strategic and operational aspects of the Agency.

**Robin Lovegrove**, the Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker has past experience of working in Independent Fostering Services and many years of working as a Team Manager in the local authority, within the Children Looked After Team. He has thorough knowledge of Child Care Law and Fostering Legislation.

**Deborah Henderson**, Supervising Social Worker, has worked in various fields, such as Child Protection and Leaving Care Teams; prior to this she worked in supporting roles (with families and children) for local voluntary services. All the roles have required dedication and tenacity in order to attain the best possible outcome for looked after children. Deborah's ultimate goal is to enable children estranged from their biological family to enjoy a nurturing, fulfilling and positive life with the best possible carers.

**Julie Slater**, the Agency Administrator, has over 18-years experience in HR and company administration. She has past experience in providing and delivering HR support for army personnel stationed throughout Europe. Julie has been responsible for devising and implementing new systems and procedures to ensure effective HR management and security of information within Tutis. Julie is very passionate about children and young people having the opportunity to strive to achieve in life. In Julie's spare time she is an Army Cadet Volunteer working with young people aged 12-18 years across Cumbria.

## Standards of Care

### Expectations of the Agency

We believe that the needs, welfare and best interests of children and young people are paramount.

Our policies and procedures clearly detail the high standards expected from our Staff and Foster Carers.

- Each child/young person has an inherent right to develop their potential, regardless of previous life experiences.
- Children and young people have a right to be looked after by adults who offer high quality care, including respect, concern and affection.
- The significance of birth family and identity will be respected by all involved.
- Young people should be suitably prepared for leaving care - leaving their Tutis foster placement with savings and educational attainment to support their chosen career, along with suitable independent life skills.
- The Agency is managed in an ethical, effective and efficient manner.
- We comply with all the relevant legislation and endeavour to exceed the National Minimum Standards at all times.
- We ensure the rights of children are promoted in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of The Child.

- Child Protection procedures are followed vigorously at all times, to ensure children and young people are safeguarded.
- We oppose any form of corporal punishment. The Foster Carers are trained in order to attain skills in behaviour management, and we oppose any conduct that demeans, degrades or humiliates a young person in their care.
- We promote Equality & Diversity at all times - throughout the recruitment, assessment and matching process.
- We expect additional support to be given to Foster Carers when needed.

### **Monitoring and Controlling**

The Registered Manager oversees a comprehensive monitoring system in accordance with regulatory requirements. Safeguarding matters are a key priority, and the Registered Manager has lead responsibility.

The Management Team will be responsible for ensuring quality performance, which will be undertaken on an on-going basis. Roles are clearly defined between the 'Responsible Individual' and the 'Registered Manager'.

Communication between Staff and Foster Carers is via Support Groups, regular Supervision Visits and, when necessary, extra Support Visits. Telephone and email are other methods used.

The Agency employs the services of an independent accountant to ensure that all financial procedures are up to date.

Regulation 35 Reports, in line with The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, are completed on a quarterly basis.

The Agency will inform the relevant authorities, within 24 hours, of events and notifications arising under Regulation 36 re: Schedule 7 of The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011).

Individual files will be held for each child on eCarePLUS, which is a secure electronic database. It will include CLA documents, case records and notifications. eCarePLUS is password protected. Information will only be shared in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The agency's expenditure is a composition of fees to Foster Carers, Staff salaries and the general expenses of running and maintaining the service. The expectation is for Carers to provide a high level of care to the child, which includes good quality clothing/footwear/sports and hobby equipment/activities/holidays and extra-tuition when necessary.

Tutis has the required insurance which covers all the agency's activities and details are available upon request.

### **Enquiries, Assessment and Foster Panel**

All enquiries are recorded using the eCarePLUS system and are kept on file. The Initial Enquiry Form is completed when prospective Foster Carers first contact the Agency. If deemed appropriate, an Initial Home Visit is arranged. This gives the prospective Foster Carers the chance to ask questions about the role of a Foster Carer; the Agency; the assessment process and the process of transfer if they are existing Carers with another Agency.

If the Initial Home Visit is positive, the prospective Foster Carers will complete an Application Form and subsequently a Form F Assessment will commence. This is managed in a timely manner. Robust, analytical reports are compiled.

The Assessment processes take into account The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011), Regulation 26. During the course of the Assessment, applicants are expected to attend Preparation Training – this gives further insight into the tasks associated with fostering. During the training, young people who have been looked after are invited to discuss their experiences and inform the potential Foster Carers the positives and negatives of their personal experience in care.

The assessing Social Worker makes a recommendation to the Foster Panel regarding the approval, or not, of potential Foster Carers.

In accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Tutis Foster Care maintains a Central List of Foster Panel Members. It is the Panel's aim to ensure the provision of a high-quality fostering service, that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children in our care. The Panels take place locally, therefore, there is no need for potential Foster Carers to travel out of county. If for any reason face to face Panels cannot take place, they would be undertaken using Microsoft Teams.

Panel Members have varied backgrounds and qualifications. It reflects Tutis Foster Care's commitment to diversity. The list includes Care Leavers, ex-Foster Carers, Independent Social Workers, Education and Health specialists. Panel has access to specialist legal and medical advice as required.

The Independent Chair has many years of experience of working with children and young people in a variety of roles. He is both a qualified Social Worker and a Teacher, with more than 25 years post qualification experience in Social Work.

The Fostering Panel makes recommendations relating to new fostering applications. Recommendations to approve and advisory notes reflect the fostering suitability of the household. The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) makes the final decision whether Foster Carers are approved or not. Albeit, there is an appeal process that potential Carers can undertake (Independent Reviewing Mechanism - IRM) if they do not agree with the ADM's decision. Foster Carers will be informed in writing of the outcome and the terms of approval, as decided by the Agency Decision Maker. Terms will include the number of children the Carers are able to look after, age, gender and the nature of placements. If the decision is not to Approve, they will be given advice on what steps they are able to take.

First Annual Reviews are heard at Panel, as are post Allegation Reviews, and Termination or Changes of Approval.

### **Matching Process**

At Tutis Foster Care all children are carefully 'matched' to ensure that their needs can be best met by their Foster Carer/s.

Tutis Foster Care initially receives referrals from various Local Authority Placement Teams. We liaise closely with the placing teams and the identified Foster Carers, to ensure that the child's needs will be met through the best possible matching.

All decisions to place a child are overseen by the Registered Manager, to ensure we have made the best possible match for the child and Foster Carer.

All children matched with our Carers are made to feel welcome in their new home, and we take great pride in ensuring that they feel part of the family they have joined.

We will always consider the needs of both the child being placed and any children already placed within the foster home, prior to any agreement. This is to minimise any potential detriment to the care afforded to *any* child within the household.

We will always aim to equip our Carers with the appropriate information they need from the placing Social Worker. This enables the Carers to understand, to a degree, the individual needs of the child/ren.

### **Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest**

Foster Carers should always be provided with as much information, as is possible, about the child or young person placed with them, and each Carer is expected to adhere to high standards of confidentiality in respect of this information. As an Agency, we maintain records on Carers and children placed, which are subject to National Standards and Data Protection (GDPR) legislation. Staff and Foster Carers are expected to declare any potential conflict of interest.

### **Safeguarding Procedures**

Tutis Foster Care's Safeguarding Procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any Child Protection issues. The overriding aim of these guidelines and procedures is to ensure the protection of children.

On receipt of an allegation, Tutis Foster Care will liaise with the Local Authority's Designated Officer in the county where the child is residing, even if the child is from out of county. Cumbria Children's Services have procedures to follow, published by the LSCB.

Tutis Foster Care has incorporated the Warner Principles and recommendations from the Bichard Inquiry, for recruitment and selection of Staff. Prior to any Staff member being employed by the Agency, DBS

checks, references and employment safeguards are undertaken.

There is a rigorous vetting and assessment process that's undertaken with all potential Foster Carers.

Enhanced DBS checks are repeated every 3 years for all Carers and Staff. Most Staff and Carers are on the DBS Update Service.

Safeguarding training is essential. There is an expectation that all Foster Carers and Staff members undertake such training every 3 years.

Our processes and procedures ensure that any concerns are addressed and monitored by the Senior Management Team, and this will inform service development.

## Services Provided by Tutis Foster Care

Tutis Foster Care will work closely with Local Authorities to understand their specific needs relating to foster homes in particular geographical areas. We then look to recruit Carers from a range of backgrounds, who are able to provide high quality foster placements for children in the care of local authorities.

Types of placements we are able to provide:

### Emergency

Some of our Carers can provide unplanned emergency placements for individual children and sibling groups. Referrals can be made at any time.

### Single/Solo

Some of our Carers can offer placements to children where the expectation is that no other children are placed alongside, due to the child's extensive needs.

### Respite

Some Carers can provide Respite on a regular basis, to avoid children having to stay with various Carers during respite periods. Tutis Foster Care have a dedicated Respite Carer.

### Siblings

A number of our Foster Carers are available to care for sibling groups, which will ensure children remain with their brothers and sisters.

### Bridging

We are able to provide homes with Foster Carers who have experience in bridging children to adoption, long-term foster care, rehabilitation with family or independence.

### Long-term/Permanency

Homes are available with long-term Foster Carers who can take individual children or sibling groups. The matching is in accordance with placing authority requirements. The foster home



should be available until the child/ren is of leaving care age. It may be that the child/ren can then continue on a Staying Put basis. We often have children staying post 18.

### **Short-term**

Short-term foster homes may be required whilst long-term plans are being formulated. We have Carers available to offer such.

### **Children with disabilities**

We have Foster Carers who can offer homes to children who require specialist input with regard to disability.

### **Parent and Child**

We can provide care for expectant parents who go on to become parents alongside their children, ensuring that young parents are given the best opportunity to care for their own child, whilst being assisted and supported by a knowledgeable, supportive adult.

### **Unaccompanied Children**

We have Foster Carers who are available to care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Support packages include assisting with immigration issues; supporting religious, language and cultural needs; integration within the community.

## **Services for Foster Carers**

### **Supervision and Support**

Tutis Foster Care recognises that even though we do not have case management responsibility for the children in our care, it is our responsibility to ensure that the needs of the child are paramount.

Regular Supervision meetings take place between the Supervising Social Worker and Foster Carers. Supervision meetings focus on positive developments, as well as areas of concern.

The Supervising Social Worker has responsibility for assisting Carers in their development and identifying training. This involves enhancement of Carer skills and knowledge to further meet the needs of the children placed.

A record of Supervision is placed upon E-Care, of which Carers have access to. This ensures that any points for action that are recorded are readily available.

Unannounced Visits take place at least annually.

Each Foster Carer has an allowance of 14 nights respite per annum. Carers are encouraged to recharge their batteries if it is felt necessary.



## **Training and Professional Development**

Each Foster Carer's approval will be reviewed annually, albeit more frequently in certain circumstances.

After Approval, Tutis Foster Carers are required to complete the following training courses:

1. Safeguarding (all Carers) – asap and then to be completed every 3 years
2. First Aid (all Carers) - within 6 months of approval and then every 3 years
3. Health and Food Hygiene (main Carer) - within 6 months of approval and then every 3 years
4. Challenging Behaviour (all Carers) - will be completed within the first year of approval and then every 3 years

If Foster Carers transfer to Tutis from another agency and they already have a child placed, they will complete the 4 courses as soon as is appropriate, as they more than likely will be in date when they transfer.

Tutis Foster Care has additional Safeguarding Support and Advice, offered via an independent Safeguarding Consultant.

Main Carers should undertake at least 4 Training Workshops per year and there is an expectation that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Carer undertakes 2. Training is a combination of face to face and online.

All Foster Carers will be supported in the completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards, with the aim of completing within 12 months of approval.

All Carers have membership with the Fostering Network and NAOTP.

After approval, each foster household will be given access to an up to date set of Policies and Procedures (in the form of a Foster Carer Handbook.) The Handbook is held electronically on ecarePLUS. The Handbook will be updated on an on-going basis and Foster Carers will be advised of any updates. Any changes or additions will be discussed at Support Groups.

The Handbook contains details of, but not limited to:

- Safeguarding
- Supervision and Support, Development and Training
- Carer Reviews
- Allegations, Complaints and Representations Procedures
- Financial Support and Expectations
- Recording and Confidentiality Expectations
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Delegated Authority

## **Foster Carer Support Groups**

Regular Foster Carer Support Groups are held to enable Foster Carers to meet and socialise;

share good practice ideas; receive information from the Agency. Additionally, it gives Carers the chance to share any stresses and receive and offer peer support.

The Support Groups are facilitated by Tutis Foster Care Staff. Occasionally guest speakers attend, this includes young care leavers.

### **Emergency Support**

Tutis Foster Care provides 24 hours x 365 days a year, on-call service to Foster Carers. This is staffed by qualified Social Workers who have access to a Manager.

## **Services for Children and Young People**

The children and young people are seen regularly by an allocated Supervising Social Worker. Due consideration is given to the role and involvement of the local authority Social Worker and there is clarity regarding the responsibility of roles.

Foster Carer Supervision addresses the care provided to children and young people in support of:

- Their physical and emotional development.
- Achievement and enjoyment in education, leisure, and social activities.
- New experiences and opportunities.
- Preparation for independent life.

We assist in identifying appropriate services to promote the above.

Tutis Foster Care is aware of the importance of safeguarding and safer caring practices. The Foster Carers understand that good practice in such areas is quintessential. Each Foster Carer undertakes Allegations Training and has knowledge of the Child Protection process.

Services for children and young people include:

- The supervision (when applicable) of Contact with family/friends.
- Access to an independent Youth Worker, who can act as an Advocate.
- Support to access full health and education services.
- Bespoke written material including Childrens Guides.
- Activities and Outings.
- Participation Groups.
- Leaving Care Advice, Information and Support.
- Cultural Trips – in the past we have carried out work in a Bulgarian Orphanage and visited Poland to allow the young people to visit Auschwitz and explore Krakow

Prior to the cultural trips, the young people had to complete a City and Guilds Diploma in Employability Skills. Modules undertaken included: Managing Personal Finance; Effective Communication; Valuing Equality and Diversity and Introduction to Alcohol and Drug Awareness.



On return from these trips, the young people put together a Presentation and delivered it to family, friends and professionals. Many skills were developed prior to, during and post the trip.

Where possible, Tutis Foster Care builds relationships with local organisations who work to enrich the lives of children and young people throughout Cumbria.

Tutis Foster Care:

- Sets high, realistic aspirations for children and young people.
- Celebrates achievements.
- Advocates for appropriate provision, in all areas, and offers support.
- Understands the impact of negative past experiences and loss, and the effect this has on the mental health of young people, which requires tailored interventions and coping strategies for both the Foster Carers and the children.
- Tutis encourages Foster Carers to continue caring for young people post 18, where practicable.

## Comments and Complaints

All children and young people placed with Tutis Foster Care will be informed of the Comments and Complaints process - this is incorporated in the Children's Guides, which is found on the Tutis website, under the Resource Section.

The Children's Guide provides a list of numbers and appropriate helplines, including an area for details of the child's Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). It provides contact information for Ofsted and the Children's Commissioner for England.

Staff, Foster Carers and other professionals will also have access to the required information regarding the process by which to make a comment or complaint about the Agency.

