



Cornerstone
because foundations matter.

Statement of Purpose: Fostering 2018



Cornerstone

(North East)
Adoption and Fostering Service

The Fuse Box – 90 Coronation Street, Sunderland, SR1 2HE
Tel: 01915656423 Email: office@cornerstonenortheast.co.uk

Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and Fostering Service, trading as Cornerstone, is registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee no: 5663749 and registered as a charity no: 1114213

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Review Matrix

Updated	Scheduled Review Date	Author	Approving Body	Date Approved	Reason	Ofsted notified
02 March 2014	02 March 2015	Jo Ferguson	Trustees	8 March 2014	Changes to RI, new GM	Yes
15 Sept 2014	15 Sept 2015	Pam Birtle	Trustees	20 Sept 2014	New office location	Yes
17 Oct 2014	17 Oct 2015	Pam Birtle	Trustees	8 Oct 2014	Changes to RI and Registered Manager	Yes
01 March 2015	01 March 2016	Pam Birtle	Trustees	9 March 2015	Update in line with new legislation	Yes
10 July 2015	10 July 2016	Pam Birtle	Trustees	15 June 2015	Personnel changes	Yes
9 Nov 2015	09 Nov 2016	PB & JL	Trustees	24 Nov 2015	Consistency	Yes
11 Jan 2016	11 Jan 2018	PB	Trustees	11 Jan 2016	Personnel changes	Yes
17 Jan 2018	17 Jan 2019	PB	Trustees	1 Feb 2018	New office location	Yes

Introduction BRIEF HISTORY

Cornerstone was launched on 2 January 1999 as a “not for profit” voluntary fostering agency. Although the work grew, a change in legislation meant that the original Directors, who were themselves foster carers, could not continue both to foster through Cornerstone and to run the agency. Consequently, in April 2002, Cornerstone was handed over to CARE, (Christian Action Research and Education), a large national Christian charity, and became a project of CARE Fostering Services. In October 2005 the Trustees of CARE made the decision to leave the fostering field and on the 31 March 2006. Cornerstone NE was then established as an Independent Fostering and Post Adoption Support Agency specialising in offering permanent homes to children in the care of Local Authorities. One of the original Directors returned in 2014 as General Manager.

OPERATIONAL STATUS

Cornerstone is the trading name of Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and Fostering Service, a Christian agency and a company limited by guarantee (number: 5663749). The company was incorporated on 29 December 2005 in England and Wales and, following registration with CSCI as an Independent Fostering Agency on Friday 29 March, began trading as Cornerstone on Monday 3 April 2006. There are no conditions of registration. Cornerstone was registered as a Charity on 16 May 2006 (number: 1114213) and registered as a Post Adoption Support Agency on 19 June 2006. The trading office is in Sunderland.

Contact Details

Currently the registered office is the only office (details as follows):

Cornerstone
The Fuse Box
90 Coronation Street
Sunderland
SR1 2HE
Tel: 0191 5656423
Email: office@cornerstonenortheast.co.uk

Cornerstone's Overall Aims and Objectives

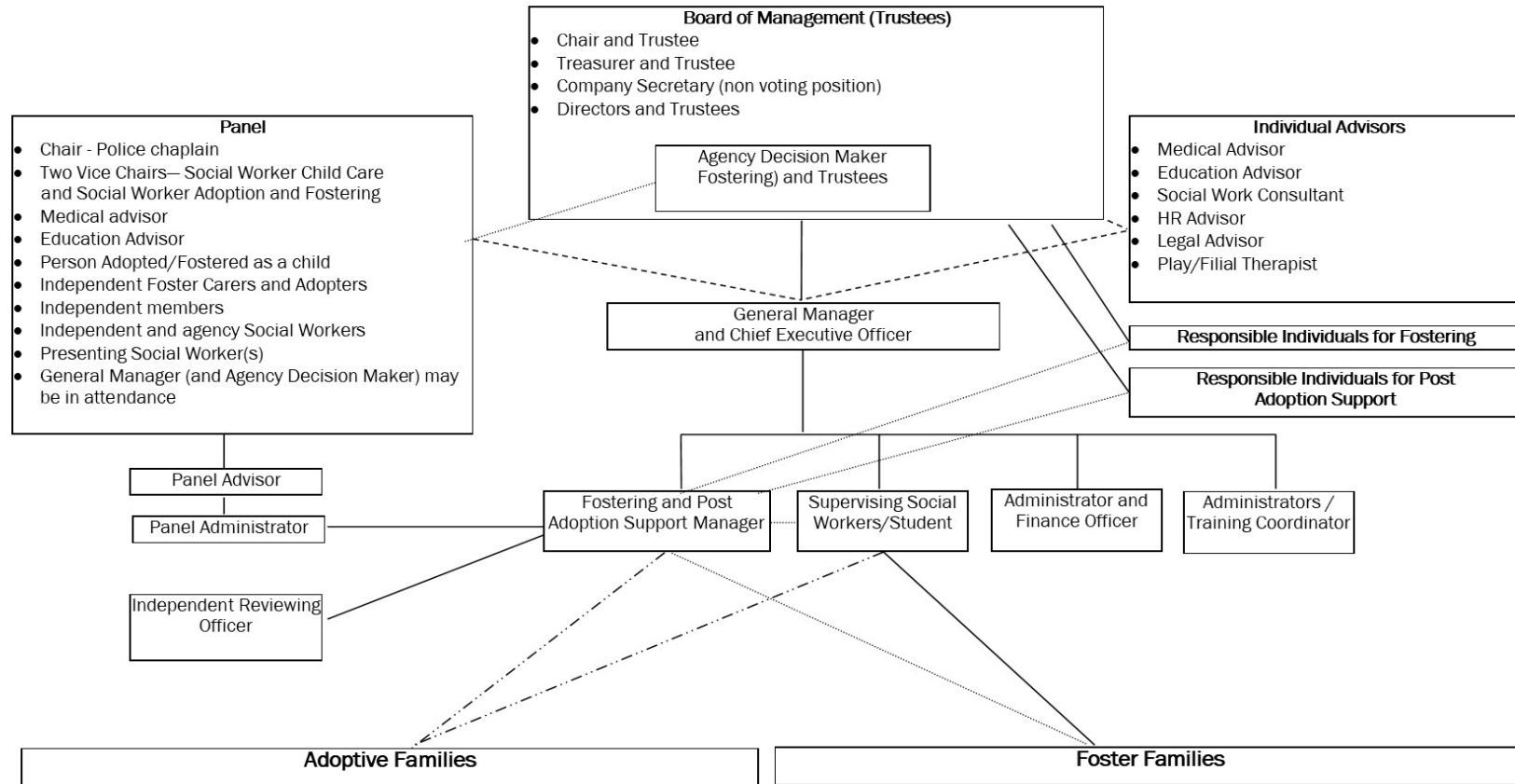
1. To ensure that any child or young person placed with one of our foster carers is cared for kindly, respectfully in a safe and caring environment by highly skilled and informed carers. This is to promote the best possible outcomes and empower, equip and support the child/young person to fulfilling their life's opportunities.
2. To comply with legal and regulatory requirements and placing the greatest importance on the safety and protection of children and young people.
3. To provide a service to looked after children, foster carers and Local Authorities which values and respects the rich diversity of ethnicities, cultures, religions, sexual orientation and abilities within our societal context.
4. To provide a range of fostering placements to meet the needs of young people and children who need planned long-term placements and to extend the scope of our work to embrace the expressed needs of Christian families who wish to offer a variety of placement opportunities including Foster to Adopt (Early Permanence), Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Minors, Parent and Child placements and Shared Care.
5. To continue to develop an expertise in providing and supporting the placement of single children, those with complex needs and sibling groups into 'forever families'. 'Forever family' is a concept of permanence that extends beyond the children's or young people's time in care.
6. To form clusters of families in geographical regions who will operate as teams in delivering a high standard of care and to extend Cornerstone's reach into other regions of the United Kingdom for Fostering, Adoption and Post-Adoption Support Services, creating stronger links with other national Christian initiatives and local church partners. Currently there is one cluster on Teesside but there are plans to expand into the regions of the North of England as we currently have carers in Durham, Tyne and Wear, Yorkshire and Staffordshire.
7. To provide post adoption support to Cornerstone families. Once children and young people become part of a 'Cornerstone family', many of them want to be adopted. Where it is in the best interests of the children, Cornerstone welcomes adoption and supports foster carers and the children through the process. In response to the demand from carers, Cornerstone has developed post adoption support services, which includes training, support and outings for the families.
8. To register as a Voluntary Adoption Agency in 2018 to allow existing Foster Carers to become approved as adopters for children already in placement as well as to recruit couples who wish to provide permanence through Adoption directly or through the new Foster to Adopt route which requires applicants to be approved as both adopters and foster carers.

Objectives

1. To recruit a number of foster carers so that we can manage, supervise and monitor their work in order to ensure that the service they provide to the children and young people is of the highest quality.
2. To provide an honest and attractive recruitment strategy to encourage and foster the interest of a wide range of carers in terms of ethnicity, culture and expressions of the Christian faith as outlined in Cornerstone's Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct.
3. To provide high quality assessments of carers within 8 months of the acceptance of their formal application using the 2-Stage CoramBAAF Process.
4. To establish Training and Development profiles on all our carers reflecting their on-going achievement of skills and awareness.
5. To continue to develop the Play Therapy service and Filial Therapy training for Cornerstone families

Management Structure

Cornerstone: Organisation Chart



KEY TO RELATIONSHIPS

- Accountability
- Supervisory
- Advisory
- - - - - Post Adoption Support

Council of Management (Trustees): Directors/Trustees including Company Secretary
Responsible Individual for Fostering: Christine Osman
Responsible Individual for Post Adoption Support: Janet Lancefield
Independent Reviewing Officer for Fostering: Janet Lancefield
General Manager, Fostering and Post-Adoption Support Manager: Pam Birtle
Contact Address: The Fuse Box, 90 Coronation Street, Sunderland, SR1 2HE

UPDATED: 7 Jan 2018

Current Staff 2018

Name	Position	Qualifications and Experience
Pamela Birtle	General Manager Accountability/ Supervision	Holds a Foundation Degree in Leadership and Management and has been a qualified social worker since 1980 and was the Founder of Cornerstone in 1999. She also holds a BA (hons) in Humanities. She has been a Foster Carer and Adopter for 20 years. Pam is directly accountable to the Trustee body as a whole and Janet Lancefield provides general oversight of her work
Pamela Birtle	Manager, Fostering and Post Adoption Support Supervision	See above Janet Lancefield, the Responsible Individual (Post Adoption Support), provides oversight and supervision in the running of the services.
Christine Osman	Responsible Individual for Fostering Supervision	Christine is a retired Health visitor and Play Therapist with over 30 years' professional experience. She has peer supervision with the RI for Post Adoption Support and is accountable to the ADM.
Janet Lancefield	Responsible Individual for Post Adoption Support and Independent Review Officer for Fostering Supervision	Janet is an HCPC registered Social Worker with over 30 years' social work experience. She has previously been a university lecturer and is now a Practice Educator. She has peer supervision with the RI for Fostering and is accountable to the ADM.
Linda Roets	Senior Social Worker Fostering Service and Post Adoption Support Supervision	She is a HCPC registered Social Worker with over 15 years of professional international experience. She has a Leadership Management qualification and is a qualified Play Therapist. Pam Birtle is her supervisor.
Paul Richardson	Social Worker Supervision	He has qualified in 2004 and has many years of experience in adoption, he has previously worked for North Tyneside and Safe Families for Children. Pam Birtle is his supervisor.
Phil O'Neil	Administrator / Finance Officer Supervision	Phil has started in Cornerstone in April 2016. He has many years of experience in administration and finance in the private sector. Pam Birtle is his supervisor.
Réka Goodson	Administrator / Training Coordinator Supervision	MA in Communications and Public Relations (2003) BA in International Relations (2004) Réka is an Administrator and Training Coordinator. She has worked for Cornerstone since 2013. She speaks 4 languages. Pam Birtle is Réka's line manager.
Helen Crooks	Play Therapist and Children's Counsellor Accountability/ Supervision	MA Play Therapy and Children's Counselling. Helen has worked as a therapist since 2004, and is currently employed by Cornerstone on a sessional basis. She is accountable to Pam Birtle for work at the Cornerstone office. Helen also receives independent supervision from a professionally qualified therapist.
Mary Schuch	Administrator Supervision	Mary has many years of secretarial and administrative experience in the private sector. She started in December 2016. Pam Birtle is her supervisor.

Vacancy	Social Worker	
	Supervision	
Becky Anderson	Social Worker	Becky is an HCPC registered Social Worker with many years in Fostering and Adoption. Her main experience is in Safeguarding.
	Supervision	Pam Birtle is her line manager
Katy Wilson	Support Worker	She has years of experience as a Family Support Worker with Looked After Children and children with disabilities.
	Supervision	Paul is her supervisor.
Amy Calvert	Administrative Assistant	She is a student at Durham University. She is doing scanning and filing.
	Supervision	Pam is her supervisor.

Services & Facilities

Model of Care

Cornerstone seeks to provide homes to meet the needs of individual young people and sibling groups. The agency provides care in a family setting through a variety of care options.

Our aims and objectives allow for the needs of children and young people in the Looked After System to be met within the environment of stable and supportive families, who are themselves supported and enabled in their task.

Cornerstone provides a permanent “forever family”, whose commitment extends beyond the age of eighteen. Permanency may be provided through long term fostering or adoption. Many of the young people have benefited from the help of Cornerstone’s play therapist.

Once children and young people become part of a ‘Cornerstone family’, many of them want to be adopted. Where it is in the best interests of the children, Cornerstone welcomes adoption and supports foster carers and the children through the process. Having known Cornerstone well and fostered through them for several years, carers want Cornerstone to continue supporting the family. Cornerstone has therefore developed post adoption support services, which include training, support, organising therapy for the children, and outings for the families.

Except for the statutory requirements, which must be met, no distinction is made in service provision for Cornerstone carers. Cornerstone offers ongoing personalised support and training to all carers, adopters and children. This extends beyond our statutory duty and throughout the lifespan of the children into adulthood. This also applies to invitations to all activities and outings.

Each young person has their own ‘Children and Young Person’s Guide’ and they are encouraged to feed back their comments to the agency. Questionnaires are circulated to young people and to carers to ascertain their views, age appropriately. We adopt a range of methods to seek consultation with the children and young people regarding their wishes be that verbal, written or through electronic means.

Respect and recognition is given to the importance of all aspects of equality and diversity including ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language, gender and sexual orientation of the young person, their families and the carers. Consideration is given to any disability of the young person being cared for, so that individual needs are met in every placement.

Continuity and consistency of training has a high priority, as a means of supporting the carers and staff in order to enable them to meet the needs of the young people.

We place great importance on safeguarding any child placed through our agency. To this end we ensure that our carers are trained in all aspects of safeguarding vulnerable groups and their role and responsibilities in respect of this. Our Supervision of carers reflects this priority and monitoring their practice in this area is of paramount importance to us.

Adopted adults will have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members.

Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved - adopted adults, and birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual’s life. Whether Cornerstone has a formal adoption support package or not, the agency will always provide help and support to adopted children and parents.

Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life and Cornerstone will facilitate this.

Statement of Principles

1. All children have a right to some experience of positive family life and values, thus encouraging a sense of belonging and identity which will be of benefit to them in moving more successfully into adulthood. Children have a right to be safe and to experience a home life where their physical, emotional and psychological needs are fully met.
2. All children placed, for whom the plan is permanence (whether through fostering or adoption), shall expect to be regarded as a family member with all the relational rights and privileges of a family member beyond the age of leaving care.
3. Each individual family shall be free to function as is natural to them and shall not be subject to unnecessary interference on the part of Cornerstone, whilst acknowledging that each family is accountable to the agency for carrying out their duties in accordance with legislation and Cornerstone principles.
4. Cornerstone is a Christian agency and therefore all families are aware of and in sympathy with the ethos and values of the organisation.
5. Cornerstone is a Christian agency and therefore all families are aware of and in sympathy with the ethos and values of the organisation. In accordance with the Children Act 1989, Cornerstone is committed to the spiritual, emotional, and physical development of each individual young person. We are respectful of their right to follow the faith of their adoptive family, any other or no faith.
6. Carers are a central part of the Cornerstone team: they have a right to all information about their child and they will be given the maximum appropriate flexibility to take decisions on behalf of their child. Unless there are particular identified factors to the contrary, foster carers should be able to make day to day decisions about their child in relation to health, education and leisure. The extent of such delegated authority will be stated in the child's agreed placement plan.
7. Children will be helped to give their views on all aspects of their care. Although it is not always possible to act upon children's wishes, children should always know they have been taken seriously and the reasons for their views not being accepted will be given and explained in a way that they can understand.
8. Children have a right to independent advice and support. The Children's Guide, which every child is given, contains details of how a child can obtain help from someone independent whom they can contact directly and in private.
9. The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care. Outcomes for all children will be monitored to ensure that each child is reaching his/her potential.
10. Each child should be:
 - subject to their care plan, be encouraged and supported in maintaining constructive contact with birth family, friends and everyone who has played a significant part in their life. Together with Life Story work, contact will help to promote a child's identity;
 - able to enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills and talents;
 - encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions in a way that is appropriate to their age and ability;
 - helped to develop the skills needed to make and sustain friendships;
 - supported if they encounter discrimination or bullying; and
 - encouraged to exercise choice and gradually be prepared to become as independent as they are able, as they move into adulthood.

11. The skills, knowledge and services of a wide range of professional and lay people shall be drawn upon to ensure that each child reaches their potential, as far as they are able, and that families are adequately resourced and equipped in their task. (People are our greatest asset).
12. Family support will be provided by Cornerstone from a qualified social worker in addition to that given by the placing Local Authority. Moreover informal support, training and advice are available from the Cornerstone team at any time.
13. All carers have access to 24-hour emergency cover, for 365 days of the year.
14. Ongoing training will be provided by Cornerstone to all carers through the planning and delivery of tailored packages, taking into account current qualifications and skills.
15. Cornerstone believes in continuous development of staff and carers. Annual Reviews of carers and staff appraisals are partly used as a tool to look at future training and development needs.
16. Cornerstone will operate according to the statutory responsibilities of a childcare organisation as defined by the 1989 Children Act; The Adoption and Children Acts 2002 and 2006; the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011, Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 and associated regulations and guidance and relevant aspects of the new Children and Families Act.

Services

Our aims and objectives allow for the needs of looked after children and young people to be met within the environment of stable and supportive families, who are themselves supported and enabled in their task.

Our objective is to meet each child's personal, social, health and educational needs and to achieve this by helping carers through training, support and supervision.

Cornerstone provides the following services for all foster and adoptive families:

1. Family support, provided by Cornerstone from a qualified social worker in addition to that given by Local Authorities.
2. Ongoing training for all carers through the planning and delivery of tailored packages, taking into account current qualifications and skills.
3. Cornerstone will facilitate the provision of respite for foster carers as appropriate.
4. Emergency cover (24 hours per day for 365 days per year). Each carer receives contact details as part of their Handbook.
5. Play therapy, therapeutic packages, or any other additional pieces of work can be provided directly, or arranged with other agencies, by Cornerstone at an agreed cost.
6. Whereas supervision and support visits take place monthly in relation to foster carers, post-adoption support varies as adopters individually decide on the type and frequency of the support they find most helpful.
7. All foster carers are reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum requirement in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011. A report is prepared and feedback is sought from carers, their children, the child/young person in placement and the placing Local Authority. A report is then presented to the Cornerstone's Panel for a recommendation as to whether the carer should continue to be approved. This is also an opportunity to give carers positive feedback for the work they have done and Panel members will often suggest other services/sources of support that might be helpful with the child/ young person in placement.
8. The Trustees have made the decision in 2016 to extend the scope and reach of the service Cornerstone provides to include short term, mother and baby, shared care and emergency placements.

Number of Children

Since the last Ofsted inspection in July 2015 until today we have/had:

- 2 siblings still in 'Staying Put' arrangements
- 15 children in long term placements (5 of those adopted already, 8 with plans of adoption)
- 6 children receiving post adoption support without fostering first
- 7 short term placements
- 1 mother and baby placement
- 1 emergency placement (child moved to hospice care)
- There have been no adoption break downs in 19 years
- There have been 1 unplanned moves due to a fostering placement breakdown relating to foster carers' health
- There have been 2 planned moves
- We placed 2 sets of sibling group of 4 (one set is mixed heritage)

Recruitment and approval of foster carers

Cornerstone will use a range of methods to recruit interested applicants.

1. No person who has been approved as a foster carer with another agency can be approved by Cornerstone unless that approval by the other agency has been terminated.
2. Following an enquiry, all applicants will be contacted within 5 days of their enquiry. They will be sent an information brochure and either an informal visit to their home will be arranged; or they will be invited to the office for an informal discussion; or they will attend an Information Evening.
3. As a faith based charity, we recruit Christians who want to be involved in fostering and adoption. Cornerstone's governing documents specify that the charity will only recruit Christian staff, volunteers and carers.
4. All enquirers will be treated with respect and anyone the charity cannot help will be treated courteously. Staff will pro-actively assist by redirecting enquirers to either a local authority or to another agency that could help them. Cornerstone has links with many independent agencies in the area.
5. Following the informal discussion (point 3 above) all suitable applicants will be seen again to discuss fostering/adopting and they will be asked to complete an initial information form, which will include details about the couple and all other members of the applicant's household and family.
6. A second-opinion visit will be made and, if the decision is made to continue, applicants will be asked to complete an application form. We will comply with the BAAF recommendations in terms of time scales in the two stage process.
7. References will be taken up. Applicants will be invited to attend induction/training sessions and will also be encouraged to attend training and support meetings of existing foster carers. At the end of the initial course, applicants will be given the opportunity to discuss whether to proceed further.
8. Cornerstone will assess foster carers by completing the necessary 'Form F' The social worker will discuss the information she/he will require, which will include age, health, personality, religion, employment, leisure and experience of caring for other children, including previous fostering experience if any. A plan for gathering the necessary evidences of skills, experiences and knowledge, for the foster carers' portfolio will be made and the applicants will be informed of Cornerstone's aim to complete the assessment to the stage of formal approval (or rejection) within 8 months.

9. Where a previous request or application to foster or adopt children, or to register as a child minder, has been made by the applicants or any other member of the household, Cornerstone will contact the relevant Local Authority or agency for a reference. Applicants may be asked to consent to Cornerstone requesting an inspection of the relevant records compiled by the other agency in relation to the applicant.
10. If the applicants currently foster through another agency the Fostering Network's Protocol will be followed. The protocol will be discussed with the applicants.
11. Throughout the process, the social worker will discuss how the assessment is going and what information is still needed. Other members of the household will also be seen.
12. Enhanced DBS Checks for all applicants and members of the household aged 18 and over will be required. Checks with other agencies will also be carried out by Cornerstone. Certain specific information will be required (for example, a birth certificate or a passport as proof of identity).
13. Cornerstone will obtain all information required under Schedule 3 of the FSR 2011: Regulation 26.
14. Where applicable, references will be taken up from the Local Authority with whom the applicants currently foster, and arrangements made to consult with relevant Local Authority personnel who have knowledge of the applicant's child care capabilities.
15. A Spiritual Reference and two personal references plus employer's reference(s) will be taken up and the referees will be interviewed. A report on the interview will be written and presented to Panel.
16. A LA reference from the area in which the applicants live will be sought, and any other applicable references e.g. from schools, health visitor, former partners.
17. A full medical examination will be arranged and the results will be sent to the Medical Adviser to Cornerstone's Fostering Panel for comment.
18. Cornerstone's social worker will then write a report, pulling together all the information collected during the assessment process. The report will outline applicants' skills, training needs and areas of vulnerability and provide the Fostering Panel with an assessment of the suitability of the applicants to foster and whether the household is suitable for a child. The social worker will recommend terms of approval, for example the number and age of children the applicants' could foster.
19. There is a 'usual fostering limit' of three children (Schedule 7 of The Children's Act 1989). Unless the children are closely related to each other, foster carers will be considered as running a children's home if more than three children are placed at the same time. The Local Authority in whose area the foster carers live, however, have the power to make exceptions, but the guidance accompanying the regulations makes it clear that the placement of more than three children in a home should not be taken as normal. Exemptions, when granted, will be for specific children and will expire when those children move on. Foster carers who are dissatisfied with decisions on exemptions can appeal and should use the representation procedure of the Local Authority in whose area they live.
20. Applicants will see the report at least 10 days before it is submitted to Panel and will have the opportunity to comment on it verbally and in writing.
21. The report will be presented to Cornerstone's Fostering Panel by Cornerstone's social worker. Applicants will be invited to attend. If the applicants choose to attend Panel, they will be invited into the meeting after Cornerstone's social worker has presented the report and will be given the opportunity to give their views and to ask, and to respond to, any questions.
22. Following the meeting of the Panel, applicants will be informed of the decision orally within 2 days and in writing, giving the terms of the approval, within 7 working days.
23. If the application is approved, Cornerstone will enter into a formal written agreement with the foster carers and their named Cornerstone social worker will guide them through the next steps.
24. If applicants are not approved, a written notice of the decision will be given to them, together with the reasons for the decision and a copy of the fostering panel's recommendations. The applicants will be invited to submit any written representations within 28 days of the date of

the notice, or apply to the Secretary of State for a review by an Independent Review Panel, within the 28 days.

25. Cornerstone's Fostering Panel will meet to consider any written representations. Applicants will be informed of the decision in writing.
26. If within the 28 days a representation to the Secretary of State for a review by an Independent Review Panel has been made, Cornerstone will make a decision, taking into account the recommendation of the Independent Review Panel and the recommendation of the Fostering Panel.
27. The applicants will be informed in writing of the decision and the Independent Review Panel will be sent a copy of the notification.

This assessment is carried out in line with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

Training for Foster Carers

All prospective foster carers are to attend the preparation to a foster course run over three days. The topics for this training include:

- Child development
- Loss and Separation
- Feelings of Birth Parent
- Role of a foster carer
- Identity
- Collaboration

All foster carers are expected to undertake the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care as developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council now known as TS&D (Training Skills & Development). The agency makes arrangements for foster carers to undergo training in the development of new skills and knowledge and provides courses and seminars to update foster carers where important changes to legislation are introduced (or where there are significant developments in the fostering field or role). In particular, all of our foster carers are required to complete a series of 'core training'.

An evaluation of training is carried out annually and a training and development plan is drawn up. In addition, the needs of all foster/adoptive carers and staff are discussed on an ongoing basis during supervision.

All agency training for foster carers fits within a framework of equal opportunities, and anti-discriminatory practice as required by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The agency provides practical and other assistance to facilitate attendance on training courses by carers, and also organises the times, venues, etc. to maximise attendance by its carers.

We operate a 3 stage system, consisting of:

Stage 1 – Pre-approval training:

- Skills to Foster
- First Aid course

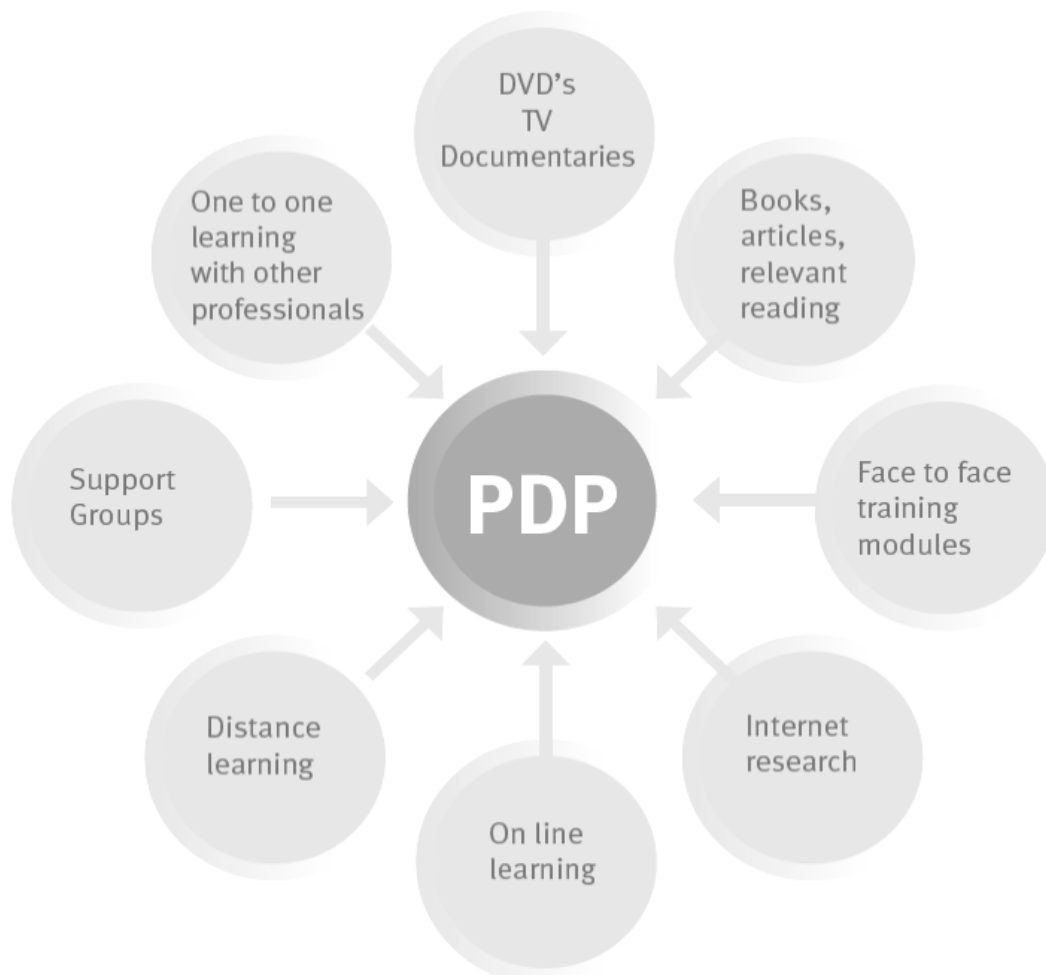
Stage 2 – Post-approval training

- Induction modules
 - Introduction to Cornerstone's policies & procedures & forms
 - Achieving health & wellbeing of children in care
 - Guide to education
- Core modules (within 12 months, repeated within 3 years)
 - Attachment
 - Child development (0-18 years)
 - Child protection
 - Managing challenging behaviour

- First Aid (repeated every 3 years)
- Infectious diseases – Handling medicines
- Child sexual exploitation
- Cyber security

Stage 3 – Continuing Professional Development

- *Make a lifelong difference for a child'* (Fostering Changes, 2011)
- CEL&T modules through the University of Sunderland
- Sunderland's LSCB online courses
- Continued learning and development within your role
- Needs to be discussed with your Social Worker and action plans drawn up together to achieve new goals
- Available courses within Cornerstone as part of the annual training plan which covers Mandatory and Optional courses including
 - Creatively communicating & engaging with children
 - Improving literacy / numeracy
 - Keeping children safe from bullying
 - Child law
 - Life Story work
- Annual Cornerstone Holiday for all families
- All-day training, support and family events
- Child-Parent Relationships – 10 weeks long therapeutic parenting course
- Development can be achieved and evidenced through various ways:



Support for Foster Carers

Following approval, each foster carer signs a formal agreement with Cornerstone. This agreement outlines the expectations for each party, and the main features of the relationship. Carers are given written policies, procedures and advice relating to their role as a foster carer. The Carers' Handbook gives detailed advice and direction on a number of important aspects of caring, such as payments and allowances, child care reviews, child protection procedures, restraint policy, missing children, etc.

Each foster carer is also directly supported by a named supervising social worker employed by the agency. The social worker advises and offers support to the foster carer and monitors the standards of care given to the child or young person. The social worker visits the carers at least once every month to offer support and monitor how a placement is progressing. The social worker reports any concerns or difficulties in the home or with the placement to his/her manager or liaises with the placing authority about any issues needing attention or discussion.

Supervisory visits are a forum whereby the carers can raise any issues of concern arising from the fostering task. Often it is the main carer who is seen on these visits. However, research informs us that a significant factor leading to placement breakdowns and carers deciding to give up fostering is the effect fostering has on the children of the foster carers. Social workers will ensure that all the members of the household are seen at least every three months

Social workers will make a least one unannounced visit to the foster home every year. Social workers will maintain regular contact with carers who do not have children / young people placed. Home visits will be made monthly. Social workers will also visit each child / young person in placement every eight weeks to seek their views on all aspects of the care they are receiving.

In addition to the supervising social worker allocated to each carer, the agency offers 24-hour telephone contact, support and assistance to carers with urgent need of advice and / or support.

Pam Birtle, General Manager

January 2018



Christine Osman, RI

