



OAKWOOD
FOSTERING
Safe, Supported, Thriving

STATEMENT **OF PURPOSE**



Registered Address:

142 Stoney Lane, First floor, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, B12 8AQ

Ofsted URN:

2863552

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Introduction

Oakwood Fostering is an independent fostering agency committed to creating foster homes where young people feel safe, loved, valued, and supported emotionally, physically, and educationally. Environments where they don't just live but truly thrive, surrounded by a loving circle of skilled adults who are fully committed to understanding them and meeting their emotional, physical, spiritual, and educational needs.

Oakwood Fostering provides foster care for children who have experienced trauma and broken attachments. For these children, long-term stability, love and the opportunity for recovery are essential.

We specialise in offering homes that combine permanence with therapeutic care in its widest sense, ensuring each child receives an individual assessment and tailored support from people skilled in helping children overcome their early experiences.

Our therapeutic approach is embedded throughout every stage of our service from recruitment and training to supervision and ongoing support for foster carers and staff.

We believe that recovery begins with relationships, and we work closely with our carers to ensure they are equipped to meet the complex needs of the children they care for.

We also place great importance on giving children space to share their story. We listen carefully and use their voice to shape how we support them because each story matters, and together, they form the foundation of meaningful, lasting change.

Our Statement of Purpose is... shared with children fostered by our families in a child friendly format.



It has been developed in accordance with...

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children act 2004
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (Amendments 2013)
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Care Planning Placement And Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

And provided to all...

- Fostering families
- All people working for Oakwood Fostering
- Prospective foster carers
- Birth parents of children fostered
- Social workers, local authority commissioners and Ofsted



Oakwood's Story

Oakwood Fostering was co-founded by Kashif Mohammed and Jill Thorburn, two individuals with different journeys into fostering but a shared vision: to build the best possible fostering agency that is relational, responsive, and focused on the long-term well-being of children.

Kashif brings a unique perspective shaped by his close family connections to fostering. Seeing the profound difference that foster care can make in a child's life inspired him to create an agency that truly supports carers and values their role. With a professional background in business and innovation, Kashif brings strategic insight, operational leadership, and a strong commitment to doing things to the best of his ability and always with children's best interests at the heart.

Jill's journey to Oakwood is from 30 years as a social work manager working with children in care. In her spare time she was a foster carer. She has led numerous award-winning services highly rated by Ofsted. Her work has been recognised in government publications as a model of best practice. Throughout her career, Jill has been at the forefront of developing innovative approaches to improving services for children in care. She is known for driving high standards, building reflective teams, and creating services that are both relational and resilient and deliver what children need to thrive. Her leadership is grounded in compassion, practical expertise, and a deep understanding of what it takes to deliver high quality care for children.

Together, Kashif and Jill founded Oakwood Fostering to combine lived experience with professional expertise, creating a space where foster carers feel respected and equipped, and where children are given every chance to grow, heal, and thrive.

The Who's Who



Kashif Mohammed

The Owner

Kashif has chosen to start Oakwood Fostering because he witnessed firsthand the life changing impact that fostering can have on children's lives. Growing up around close family members who are foster carers, he witnessed how a stable, loving home can completely transform a child's life. He saw children come into care scared and unsure, and over time, with the right care and support, grow into confident and happy young people. These experiences inspired him to create an organisation that truly puts children first while also giving foster carers the guidance and support they need to provide the best possible care.

Kashif wants to be there for children not only during their time in care but also in helping them prepare for adulthood. He knows every child deserves to feel safe, valued and understood, and believes with the right support, every child has the potential to succeed.

He has always been a loving and caring person, and he wants to use those qualities to make a real difference in young people's lives. Kashif's goal is to help children be placed with foster families who are not only supportive, loving and nurturing but who will encourage them to live happy lives and face the future with confidence and hope.

Kashif believes every child should be given the tools and opportunities to grow into strong, independent individuals and wants to make a difference to children. He is passionate about wanting to make a difference to society however he can. Oakwood Fostering will be built on love, commitment and the belief that every child really does matter.

The Who's Who



Jill Thorburn
Responsible Individual

Driven by lived experience, Jill has dedicated her career to ensuring that children and young people are safe, supported, and well cared for. With over 30 years of social work experience, she has held senior leadership positions across statutory, voluntary, and private sectors, making significant contributions in all areas of children's social care.

Jill is also a former foster carer to an amazing young woman, a deeply personal experience that has shaped her understanding of the fostering journey and reinforced her commitment to creating services that truly support both children and carers.

She is passionate about co-producing services with children and young people, ensuring their voices shape the support they receive. Jill brings expertise in service improvement, project management, and strategic leadership, consistently delivering measurable results that lead to meaningful change. Her leadership has played a key role in achieving outstanding Ofsted outcomes and has been recognised in national government reports for excellence in social care.

Deeply committed to child-centred practice, Jill fosters a culture of innovation, collaboration, and high expectations. She takes pride in developing strong, high-performing teams and empowering professionals to deliver exceptional services for children and families.

The Who's Who



Sophia Bowland

The Registered Manager

As the Registered Manager of Oakwood Fostering Sophia brings over 15 years of frontline and leadership experience as a qualified social worker, specialising in the care and protection of vulnerable children and the support of foster carers and families. Her professional journey is grounded in a deep commitment to safeguarding, ethical practice, and achieving meaningful outcomes for children in care.

Sophia leads with compassion, integrity, and a clear strategic vision, ensuring the agency consistently meets and exceeds the standards set out in fostering regulations, the Children's Act, and the National Minimum Standards. With a strong focus on compliance and quality assurance, she is meticulous in ensuring that all policies, procedures, and practices are robust, transparent, and regularly reviewed. This commitment not only ensures the safety and well-being of children, but also builds confidence and trust with carers, staff, and partner agencies.

Her leadership style is collaborative and reflective. Sophia prioritises the well-being and professional growth of the team, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, learning, and accountability. She is passionate about creating a nurturing and supportive environment where staff and foster carers are empowered to provide the highest standard of care.

Above all, Sophia's goal is to ensure that every child placed through Oakwood is welcomed into a safe, stable, and loving family where they are protected, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive.



Mission, Ethos and Values of Oakwood Fostering

Mission...

At Oakwood Fostering our mission is to provide safe, nurturing, and therapeutic foster homes where children and young people can be accepted for who they are, grow, and thrive. We are committed to empowering foster carers through high-quality support, valuing every voice in our community, and delivering services rooted in compassion, trust, and excellence.



Our Ethos and Values....



- ✔ **Child-Centred Practice**
We champion each child's rights and individuality, ensuring their voice is heard, respected, and central to every decision. We strive to provide care that nurtures emotional well-being, promotes educational achievement, and supports positive social development.
- ✔ **Excellence in Foster Care**
We recruit, assess, train, and support foster carers to the highest standards equipping them with the knowledge, confidence, and resilience to provide exceptional, family-based care.
- ✔ **Safe, Therapeutic Homes**
We want every fostering family to provide a stable, supportive, and trauma-informed environment where every child is valued, protected, and encouraged to flourish.
- ✔ **Inclusion and Team Culture**
We foster a strong, inclusive team where every staff member and foster family feels respected, connected, and integral to our shared success. We celebrate diversity and actively challenge discrimination.
- ✔ **Reflective Practice**
We embrace the principles of a trauma-informed organisation cultivating openness, reflective thinking, mutual respect, and a commitment to lifelong learning.
- ✔ **Innovation and Ambition**
We act with courage, explore new ideas, and go above and beyond to drive best practice in delivering a high-quality fostering service.
- ✔ **Responsiveness and Growth**
We are a dynamic and evolving agency, committed to continuous improvement and responsive to the changing needs of children, carers, and the wider community.



We are here to...

- Offer Safe, Therapeutic, And Nurturing Family-based Care Where Every Child Feels Supported, Valued, And Empowered To Thrive.
- Recruit And Support Foster Carers Who Serve As Positive Role Models, Providing Nurturing, Family-based Care And Advocating For The Child's Holistic Development As If They Were Their Own.
- Support Foster Carers To The Highest Standards, Equipping Them With The Skills, Confidence, And Resilience To Provide Exceptional Care.
- Foster A Cohesive And Professional Team Culture Where Every Employee And Foster Carer Feels Valued, Included, And Integral To The Success Of Our Agency.
- Ensure Every Foster Family Actively Supports And Nurtures Each Child's Emotional Well-being, Educational Progress, And Social Development.
- Champion Each Child's Rights And Unique Identity, Ensuring Their Voice Is Heard, Respected, And Central To All Decision-making.
- Work Collaboratively With Local Authorities, Professionals, Carers And Birth Families In The Best Interests Of Each Child.
- Act With Courage, Embrace Innovation, Exceed Expectations, And Lead In Developing Best Practice.
- Embody The Holistic Values By Cultivating A Culture Of Openness, Reflective Practice, And Mutual Trust Where Continuous Learning Is Shared.
- Be A Dynamic And Adaptable Organisation Committed To Continuous Improvement And Responsive To The Evolving Needs Of Children, Carers, And The Wider Community.

We set out to provide...

Child-Centred, Trauma-Informed Care

- We create a safe, trauma-informed environment where behaviour is seen as communication, and every child is supported to reach their full potential.
- Care is delivered from the child's perspective, promoting inclusion, safety, and meaningful relationships.
- Our approach is grounded in emotional warmth, attachment, and a deep understanding of child development.
- We're committed to improving outcomes for children and preparing them for confident, independent futures.

Support for the Whole Fostering Family

- Foster carers are empowered to make everyday decisions that help children feel part of the family.
- Birth children of foster carers receive dedicated support and guidance.
- Carers have 24/7 access to professionals with direct fostering experience.
- Allegations are managed with fairness, clear procedures, and emotional support.



Professional Practice and Leadership

- Our team is led by qualified, experienced professionals committed to delivering high-quality services.
- Supervision is held bi-monthly with additional contact as needed.
- Staff and carers are offered leadership development, mentoring, and peer support.
- Training is available both online and in person, led by skilled, knowledgeable trainers.





We set out to provide...

Ethical and Inclusive Service Delivery

- We prioritise transparency, open communication, and financial sustainability.
- Our recruitment process is inclusive and regularly reviewed to attract and retain skilled professionals.
- We aim for our service to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

Financial Support

- Foster carers are fully informed about policies, payments, entitlements, and allowances.
- Payments and expenses are processed promptly and reliably.

Accountability and Continuous Improvement

- Clear complaints and appeals processes ensure all voices are heard.
- Governance procedures track outcomes and are shared through an annual report.
- We celebrate the achievements of children and those who support them.

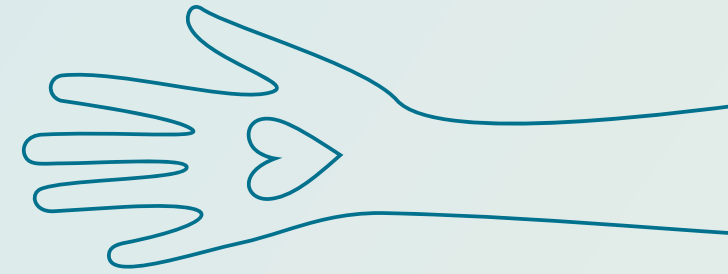
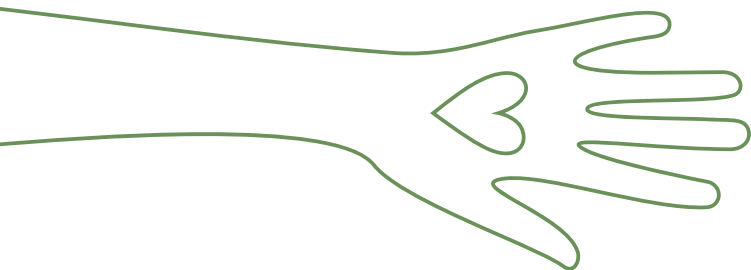


Services Provided

Children are individuals who have individual needs therefore we provide the following types of foster placements:

- Short-term and emergency placements
- Long-term and permanent placements
- Short breaks care
- Sibling group placements

Each placement is carefully matched and supported by our experienced staff to ensure stability and security for the child and the foster family.



Governance and Management

Our management structure is intentionally streamlined, with clear lines of accountability that support transparent decision-making and defined responsibilities. Directors and all staff share a collective commitment to upholding the agency's values and driving continuous improvement ensuring foster carers feel respected, supported, and empowered to thrive in their role.

Our structure

At Oakwood Fostering, we recognise the vital importance of a robust fostering panel and decision-making process in ensuring the highest standards of care for children and young people.

Our fostering panel provides a critical layer of scrutiny and independent oversight during the assessment, approval, and review of foster carers. This process helps us ensure that only individuals who can offer safe, nurturing, and resilient homes are approved. By bringing together a diverse and experienced group of professionals, our panel offers objective, balanced perspectives that help safeguard the welfare of children while promoting transparency and fairness.

The panel also plays an essential role in upholding regulatory compliance and contributing to the overall quality assurance of our service.

A strong decision-making framework not only supports safer outcomes for children but also enhances the experience of our foster carers.

Through constructive feedback and clear guidance, our panel process supports carers in their development, helps identify training needs, and ensures that placements are well-matched and sustainable.

It provides reassurance to local authorities and stakeholders that Oakwood Fostering applies rigorous, ethical standards in every aspect of our work.



Ultimately, our commitment to a thorough and reflective panel process strengthens placement stability, safeguards our agency, and ensures we continue to deliver a high-quality fostering service built on trust, accountability, and child-centred care.

How the Fostering Panel Works

The fostering panel is a formal part of the approval and review process for foster carers. It is made up of independent professionals with experience in fostering, social work, health, education, and care-experienced individuals. The panel reviews detailed assessment reports, considers evidence, and asks questions to clarify any issues. Applicants or foster carers are invited to attend (in-person or online video call) and may be asked to comment or respond to questions.

After discussion, the panel makes a recommendation about whether to approve, continue, or change a carer's registration. This recommendation is then passed to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM), who considers all the information and makes the final decision. The panel process helps ensure decisions are fair, thorough, and in the best interests of children.



Nicola Higham

Agency Decision Maker



Glynis Williams

Panel Chair



Rachel Edwards

Vice Chair

Health Background
Panel Member

**Social Work
Qualified >3 Years
Experience**
Panel Member

Foster Carer
Panel Member

Relevant Background
Panel Member

Relevant Background
Panel Member

Education Background
Panel Member



Our Operating Model

Oakwood Fostering is a hybrid fostering service that combines the flexibility of modern, remote working practices with the security and compliance of a dedicated physical base. Our operational model has been carefully developed to meet all regulatory standards while enabling a responsive, child-centred approach to care.

We operate from a registered base located at 142 Stoney Lane, Birmingham, which serves as our central administrative hub.

The office is used for:

- An administrative base
- Secure record-keeping and confidential documentation
- In-person meetings when required (e.g., inspections, supervision, carer meetings)
- Oversight of safeguarding and case management functions



Our Registered Manager is based within close proximity to this registered location, allowing for regular oversight, visits, and direct involvement in service delivery.

The agency utilises secure digital platforms for the majority of its day-to-day operations, including:

- Virtual meetings with foster carers, staff, and external professionals
- Online training and supervision
- Case recording and communication via a GDPR-compliant case management system

Where face-to-face interaction is essential (e.g., initial assessments, home visits, placement introductions), we attend in person as required. All staff, including our supervising social workers, are equipped for mobile and flexible working ensuring a consistent presence and availability for foster carers and children.

Our approach reflects both regulatory compliance and a commitment to providing high-quality support in a way that is efficient, adaptable, and reflective of the diverse needs of our foster families.

Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers

When someone expresses interest in fostering, we begin with an informal conversation to explore their motivation and provide a clear overview of the process. We are transparent about the emotional resilience and self-awareness needed to support a child who may have experienced trauma.

If the prospective applicant demonstrates a genuine capacity to meet the demands of fostering, we guide them through the formal application process. Early in the process, we conduct all necessary statutory and agency checks, including DBS, medical, local authority, home safety, financial, and references.

Applicants attend a preparatory training course, which is evaluated and contributes to the overall assessment. Suitable applicants are then assigned an experienced assessing social worker to begin the formal, in-depth assessment, typically lasting 12 weeks.

The completed assessment, along with checks and training outcomes, is presented to our independent fostering panel. Applicants attend the panel meeting, supported by their social worker. The panel reviews all information and makes a recommendation, with the final decision made by the Agency Decision Maker.

Once approved, foster carers are allocated a supervising social worker who provides guidance, supervision, and ongoing support. Foster carers are encouraged to engage in reflective practice, build confidence, and develop a personal development plan aligned with the needs of the children they care for.

In the first year of fostering, progress is closely monitored through regular supervision and a formal annual review. Reviews in the first and third years are presented to the fostering panel, providing an opportunity to revisit approval terms and ensure continued suitability and support.



All approved foster carers receive:

Comprehensive pre-approval training

Ongoing supervision, support, and annual reviews

Access to 24/7 on-call support and local support groups

Foster Carer Training

We provide all our foster parents with high-quality, relevant training to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care, and to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Each foster carer is required to complete a minimum level of training and learning, tailored to their role and agreed upon with their supervising social worker as part of their Professional Development Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Post-approval induction
- Completion of the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards workbook
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Managing challenging behaviour and de-escalation techniques
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Paediatric first aid
- GDPR and data protection
- Health and safety awareness
- Health, nutrition and wellbeing
- Food safety and hygiene
- Accredited therapeutic parenting (6-week programme)
- Understanding trauma, attachment, and building resilience



Support and Training for Foster Carers

At the heart of our fostering practice is the belief that training and professional development are essential for understanding and responding to the complex emotional and behavioural needs of children who have experienced trauma. We are committed to equipping our foster carers with up-to-date knowledge of legislation, best practices, and evidence-based approaches, enabling them to provide the highest standard of care.

Foster carers are recognised as key professionals in a child's life, and we expect them to take ownership of their continuous development. This includes building knowledge in areas such as child development, trauma, attachment, and preparing young people for independence and well-being in adulthood.

Each foster carer will engage in a personal development programme designed to build on existing strengths while identifying areas for growth. Working in partnership with their supervising social worker, carers will develop a tailored plan that addresses the specific needs of the children currently in their care and prepares them for future placements.

Self-reflection is a core part of this process. We create a safe and supportive space for carers to explore their development needs, share experiences, and receive constructive feedback from both peers and professionals. This reflective culture encourages openness, confidence, and accountability.

We offer a blended learning approach, combining in-person workshops, online training, guided reading, videos, and group discussions. This shared learning platform ensures that new knowledge is not only acquired but thoughtfully applied, with support from supervising social workers to embed learning into daily fostering practice.

Beyond mandatory training, our development programme is flexible and responsive to individual interests and aspirations, empowering foster carers to **grow professionally and demonstrate the benefits of lifelong learning to the children in their care.**



Skills to Foster Training

Skills to Foster is a nationally recognised pre-approval training programme designed to prepare prospective foster parents for the fostering role. It provides a comprehensive introduction to fostering, covering essential topics such as child development, attachment and trauma, safeguarding, working with professionals, and the daily realities of caring for children and young people who may have experienced adversity.

The programme encourages reflection, builds confidence, and helps applicants understand the expectations and responsibilities of fostering. It also offers a valuable opportunity to explore whether fostering is the right path for them, while ensuring they are equipped with the foundational knowledge and skills to begin their fostering journey.

It includes:

Understanding Fostering and the Role of a Foster Carer

What fostering is and why children come into care	Types of fostering (e.g., short-term, long-term, emergency, short breaks)	Roles of the foster carer, supervising social worker, and other professionals
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Child Development and the Impact of Trauma

Basics of child development across ages	Effects of abuse, neglect, trauma, and separation	Attachment theory and how it relates to foster care
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Keeping Children Safe

Safeguarding and child protection procedures	Safer caring strategies and creating a safe home environment	Allegations: what they are, how they are handled, and support available
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Skills to Foster Training



Understanding Behaviour and Managing It Positively

Reasons behind challenging behaviour

De-escalation and trauma-informed behaviour support

Positive reinforcement and setting boundaries

Working with Others

Importance of teamwork at Oakwood Fostering

Roles of social workers, schools, therapists, and birth families

Contact with birth family and supporting it appropriately

Equality, Diversity and Identity

Respecting and valuing difference

Supporting children's cultural, religious, and personal identity

Dealing with discrimination and bias

Life as a Foster Carer

Practical issues like finances, recording, daily routines

The assessment process and panel

Impact on the foster carer's own family



THE GROW MODEL

Oakwood Fostering's Therapeutic Care Framework

At Oakwood Fostering, we use our very own GROW Model as our guiding framework for therapeutic care. It reflects our belief that every child has the capacity to Grow, Recover, Open up, and Withstand life's challenges, when supported by safe, nurturing relationships and skilled therapeutic parenting.



G

Grounded in Safety

We start by creating a sense of physical, emotional, and relational safety. This foundation allows children and young people to begin trusting the adults around them. Safety is promoted through consistent routines, predictable caregiving, and attuned, trauma-informed responses to behaviour.

- Safe placements matched with care and attention
- Regulation over reaction
- Risk assessment as a dynamic, living process not a one off activity
- A commitment to safeguarding as everyone's responsibility

At the heart of our model is the belief that healing happens in relationships. We help foster carers build strong, secure attachments using approaches informed by the Secure Base Model, PACE, and Dyadic Developmental Practice.

- Relationships are prioritised over rules
- Foster carers are guided to connect in a way that suits the child
- Children are supported to form new, healthy internal working models of trust and self-worth
- High quality supervision and support for carers is a cornerstone of this relational work

Relationships that Repair

Children need more than safety. They need opportunities to succeed, to belong, and to be seen for their strengths and develop resilience. We work with foster carers and professionals to remove barriers and create chances for growth in education, hobbies, friendships, and personal achievements.

- Strengths-based planning for education, health, and social development
- A focus on identity, life story, and children expecting to have their voices heard from day one
- Supporting a sense of mastery by celebrating milestones, however small
- Promoting participation and building a future vision for each child

Opportunities to Thrive



Withstanding Life's Challenges

Trauma recovery is non-linear. Children and young people in care often face recurring emotional challenges in overcoming early trauma. Through therapeutic parenting, reflective supervision, and specialist clinical input when needed, we help children build resilience and support foster carers maintain their confidence.

- Regular reflective practice and wraparound support
- Stability and placement preservation strategies
- Trauma-informed language and behaviour support techniques
- A culture of holding, not fixing complex emotional needs

Why GROW?

Our GROW Model is accessible, practical, and deeply rooted in evidence-informed care. It empowers carers and professionals to support healing through connection, structure, and opportunity while recognising the unique story of every child. At Oakwood, we don't just want children to 'be' in care. We want them to grow and thrive within it.

Our vision for every child at Oakwood Fostering is one that reflects **emotional recovery, relational stability, and developmental progress**. We have a strong belief that every child has the capacity to heal and thrive when nurtured within a safe, loving, predictable and connected environment.

We want children and young people to leave our care with a strong sense of **safety, identity and belonging** having experienced consistent, therapeutic care that allowed them to heal, trust, and grow.

We do this by working hard to ensure all children:

- **Feel safe** in their home environment, physically and emotionally
- **Experience stable, nurturing relationships** with caregivers who are attuned, accepting, and able to hold their emotional world
- **Understand their story**, with support to make sense of past trauma and build a coherent narrative about their lives
- **Achieve educationally and socially**, with access to opportunities that match their interests, strengths, and ambitions
- **Develop emotional resilience**, self-regulation skills, and a growing sense of self-worth
- **Have a voice in their care** and in the decisions that shape their future
- **Transition into independence or permanence** with the confidence, skills, and support to flourish



Ultimately, our vision is that every child leaving Oakwood has not just survived their time in care, but having grown through it by being stronger, more hopeful, and more connected to their potential.



Children's Participation and Rights

At Oakwood Fostering we are committed to upholding the fundamental rights of every child in our care.

We ensure that children are not only kept safe but also respected, listened to, and provided with high-quality care and education.

Children placed with us are actively encouraged to participate in decisions that affect their lives, including placement planning, reviews, and feedback on their care experience.

We provide opportunities for children to take part in social events and consultation groups, helping them to feel involved, valued, and part of our fostering community.

Through this approach, we promote each child's right to be safe, be heard, be respected, and to thrive within a nurturing and supportive environment.





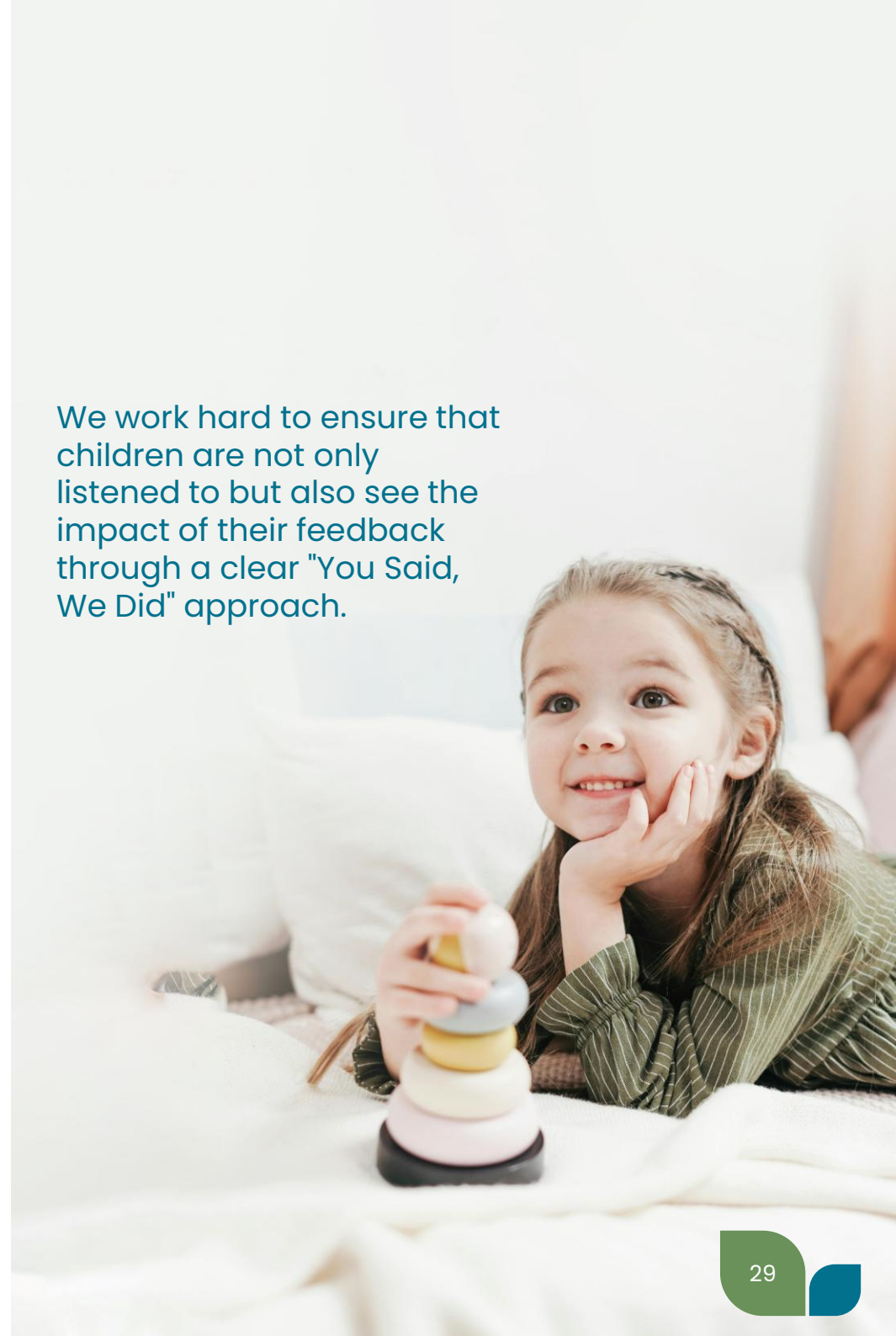
Our Commitment to the Voice of the Child

At Oakwood Fostering, we are committed to ensuring that every child and young person feels heard, respected, and involved in decisions that affect their lives. We believe that listening to children is central to safeguarding and achieving meaningful, lasting outcomes

We embed child participation in every aspect of our service by:

- Gathering feedback regularly through age-appropriate tools, such as one-to-one feedback sessions, well-being check-ins, and surveys following placement reviews or transitions.
- Including children's views in care planning and placement matching, ensuring they feel part of the process and that their preferences, interests, and needs are considered.
- Facilitating access to independent advocacy to support their rights, especially when decisions are being made about their care.
- Offering creative ways to engage, including art-based reflection tools, digital tools, and consultation groups tailored to different age groups.
- Celebrating achievements and amplifying voices through our "Young Voices" newsletter, awards, and opportunities to contribute to training for foster carers and staff.

We work hard to ensure that children are not only listened to but also see the impact of their feedback through a clear "You Said, We Did" approach.



Hearing the Voices of Foster Carers and Staff

At Oakwood Fostering, we recognise that the insights, experiences, and perspectives of our foster carers and staff are central to the quality and development of the service we provide. We are committed to creating a culture where carers and team members feel genuinely heard, respected, and involved in shaping both individual outcomes and organisational direction.

We actively seek feedback through regular supervision, reflective practice sessions, surveys, annual reviews, and informal check-ins. Foster carers participate in consultation groups and are invited to contribute to service evaluations, training development, and policy reviews. This feedback directly informs our decision-making processes and improvement planning. Where carers raise concerns or offer suggestions, we respond transparently and constructively.

For staff, open communication and psychological safety are essential. We promote a reflective, learning-oriented culture where supervision is both supportive and developmental. Staff are encouraged to share their experiences and challenges in team meetings, learning circles, and anonymous feedback forums. Their contributions are valued and regularly shape practice models, support systems, and agency strategy.

By listening closely to those delivering care and support, we not only strengthen our internal relationships but also enhance outcomes for the children and young people we serve. Our aim is to ensure every carer and team member feels empowered, appreciated, and included in our shared mission.

We believe that every individual holds unique value, potential, and the ability to positively impact the lives of others. By involving people in decision-making and fostering community participation, we create an inclusive environment where all voices are heard and respected.

Celebrating Diversity, Promoting Belonging

Oakwood Fostering values the unique identities, backgrounds, and experiences of every child, carer, and staff member. We are committed to creating an inclusive and anti-discriminatory environment where all individuals feel safe, respected, and represented.

We embrace diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for everyone involved in our service regardless of race, culture, religion, sexuality, ability, or geographic background. We aim to create conditions where children, foster carers, and staff can thrive and realise their full potential.

We actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion by:

- Recruiting foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences to reflect the diversity of the children we serve.
- Delivering mandatory EDI training for staff and carers, covering unconscious bias, anti-racist practice, gender identity, and cultural competence.
- Delivering culturally sensitive placement matching, taking into account language, religion, diet, heritage, and family traditions.
- Monitoring equality data to identify gaps and inform our strategic planning, ensuring we are meeting the needs of all children regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or background.
- Providing support to LGBTQ+ young people and carers, including access to specialist services and affirming training.
- Appropriately challenge each other and encourage reflection and learning. Discrimination in any form will be challenged, and our policies are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect and reinforce our commitment to inclusion and respect for all.
- Celebrating diversity through careful matching, direct work, and ongoing cultural awareness.

Our goal is to ensure that every child placed with Oakwood experiences a sense of belonging and pride in who they are. Inclusion is not an initiative at Oakwood Fostering it is woven into the fabric of how we recruit, train, support, and care.

Using Technology to Strengthen Care

At Oakwood Fostering, we are proud to be brave, forward-thinking, and willing to try new things when it comes to improving outcomes for children and young people. One of the ways we do this is by embracing technology that enhances the everyday experiences of foster carers, staff, and the children we support.

We use digital tools that help us stay connected, reflect meaningfully, and work more efficiently without ever losing the personal, human focus of our care. Some of the technology we use includes:

Storyteller

A life story work app that helps children and their carers capture memories, reflect on their journey, and build a stronger sense of identity in a creative, secure space.

Mind Of My Own

A child-friendly app that empowers children to express their views, worries, and wishes in their own words, helping them to participate in decisions that affect them.

Resero

Professional development software. It takes a whole-system approach to unlock potential, empower foster carers and practitioners.

By integrating these tools into our everyday practice, we ensure that our service is modern, responsive, and child-centred.

Technology at Oakwood isn't a replacement for care rather it's a way to enhance communication, increase participation, and support better outcomes for everyone involved.

Our Commitment to Listening, Learning, and Improving

At Oakwood Fostering, we are dedicated to providing a consistently high standard of service to everyone we work with. We take pride in doing things well and we recognise that feedback, including complaints plays a vital role in helping us grow and improve.

We welcome open, honest feedback in a supportive and respectful environment. Whether positive or critical, we see all feedback as an opportunity to reflect, learn, and enhance the quality of our service.

Our team is empowered to respond to concerns promptly and to resolve issues as early as possible. This proactive approach helps us build trust, strengthen relationships, and ensure people feel heard and valued.

We operate a clear and structured complaints process with three formal stages, and a fourth involving an independent professional if needed. Our aim is to respond promptly and resolve most issues within 14 days.

Where complaints involve foster carers or staff, we handle them in accordance with our safeguarding, whistleblowing, and HR policies ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness throughout.

Information about how to raise a concern or make a complaint is shared with children and young people in their welcome pack, ensuring they know how to speak up and that their voice really matters from the very beginning.

We review complaints and compliments annually as part of our commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance.



Monitoring and Quality Assurance



At Oakwood Fostering, quality assurance is not a standalone process but a continuous thread that runs through every aspect of our service. Our commitment to excellence is rooted in reflective practice, robust oversight, and a deep responsibility to provide the best possible outcomes for children and young people in our care.

We operate a comprehensive quality assurance framework that includes regular auditing of case files, supervision records, training logs, and placement outcomes. Our senior leadership team and Registered Manager meet regularly to review key performance indicators and ensure that compliance with fostering regulations, the National Minimum Standards, and internal policies is consistently upheld. All audits and learning outcomes feed directly into our service development plans.

Carer feedback, staff reflections, child reviews, and outcomes data are triangulated to give a clear picture of what is working well and where improvements are needed. Our “You Said, We Did” ethos applies not only to child participation, but also to how we respond to insights from foster carers, staff, and professionals.

We hold regular strategy and alignment meetings, alongside structured review processes (including annual service reports and quarterly quality review cycles) to monitor progress and drive innovation. This ensures that Oakwood Fostering remains responsive, resilient, and accountable.

The agency undertakes regular monitoring through:

- Monthly case file audits
- Auditing of supervision records
- Annual reviews of carers and staff
- Outcome Monitoring - Tracking progress of children (e.g. education, health, emotional wellbeing)
- Regulation 35 Reports (Reviews of Quality of Care)
- Review of all safeguarding incidents, concerns, and actions
- Training Evaluation – including feedback following training
- Panel performance monitoring including independent fostering panel oversight
- Complaints, allegations, and compliments monitoring
- Quarterly reviews by the Responsible Individual

Our aim is not only to meet regulatory standards but to exceed them, placing the voice of the child and the experiences of our carers at the heart of continuous improvement.



142 Stoney Lane, First floor, Sparkbrook,
Birmingham, B12 8AQ

0121 7981908

info@oakwood.com

www.oakwoodfostering.com

