

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2023

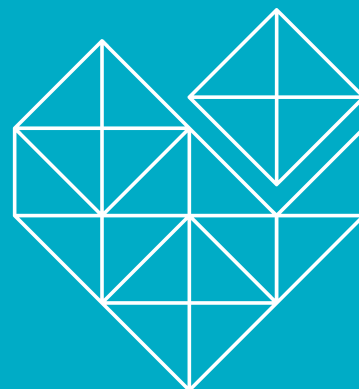


**fosteringfirst**

SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES



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# Introduction

This document sets out the Statement of Purpose of Fostering First Ireland (FFI).

Fostering First Ireland is a non-statutory independent Children and Family Services provider, which is part of the Key Assets Group.



Key Assets is a social enterprise, who provides children and family social services in Europe (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Ireland), North America (Canada) and Australasia (Australia, New Zealand & Japan). The Key Assets Board provides governance, oversight and accountability for all companies across the Group.

FFI provides Carer Reviews, Section 36 Assessments and Placement services to Tusla the Child and Family Agency.

Our purpose is to provide positive and lasting outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.

Key to what we do is our culture and core values of:

- Recognising everyone counts and is accountable
- Providing high quality and safe services
- Achieving excellence through continuous improvement
- Cultivating knowledge, innovation and learning.

The FFI Statement of Purpose provides a range of information, which is intended, for a wide audience including:

- Fostering First Ireland staff
- Foster carers and prospective foster carers
- Children, young people, their families and other clients who receive services from FFI.
- Tusla (The Child & Family Agency)
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Colleagues from other Social Care Agencies and Independent Fostering Agencies
- The general public
- DCYA

The Fostering First Ireland Statement of Purpose is intended to meet the requirements arising from:

- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020
- Child Care (Amendment) Act, 2007
- Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations 1995
- Children First Act 2015
- Children First – National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2017
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Child Care Act 1991
- Child and Family Agency Act 2013
- Children Act 2001
- Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Person) Act 2012
- Criminal Justice Act 2006, Section 176: Reckless Endangerment of Children Protected Disclosures Act 2014
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003
- Domestic Violence Act 1996
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Education Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2014
- Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- The Child Care Act 1991
- The Children Act 2001
- The National Standards in Foster Care 2003
- The General Data Protection Act (GDPR) EU 2016/679.

+This list is not exhaustive

# 1. Aims and Objectives of FFI

## ‘Quality Care in a Family Setting’

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Fostering First Ireland is an organisation offering high quality, compliant family placement services to children and young people who are in the care of Tusla. FFI provides opportunities for these children and young people to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives in the community.

FFI focuses on providing flexible and tailored services to children and young people including those who are sometimes described as “difficult to place”. This is not a description that FFI particularly welcomes or seeks to define but it is useful in emphasising that the agency often receives referrals for placement of children and young people who have complex and complicated histories and who make considerable demands on foster carers and whose placements may require more intensive support.

## FFI provides:

- High quality care in a family setting for children and young people who are placed with FFI foster carers.
- A commitment to a child/young person centred approach
- Stability in the lives of children and young people to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- Respect for and promotion of the racial, cultural, community of origin, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people.
- Consideration for the gender, sexuality, disability of children and young people when making placement decisions.
- A commitment to the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds so that FFI can offer appropriate placements for children and young people.
- 24 hour support for foster carers and children/young people.
- An inclusive partnership based approach which embraces children and young people, their families, foster carers, Tusla and other agency colleagues.
- A commitment to the ongoing learning and development of foster care households.
- A community based service.





## 2. Status & Constitution

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FFI, a non-statutory fostering agency, is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1963 - 2001 (Company Number 382265).

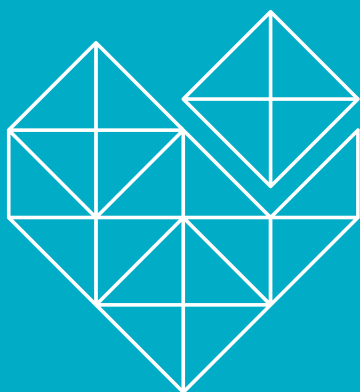
In accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 - 2001, FFI has produced a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association.

FFI has a Board of Directors that comprises

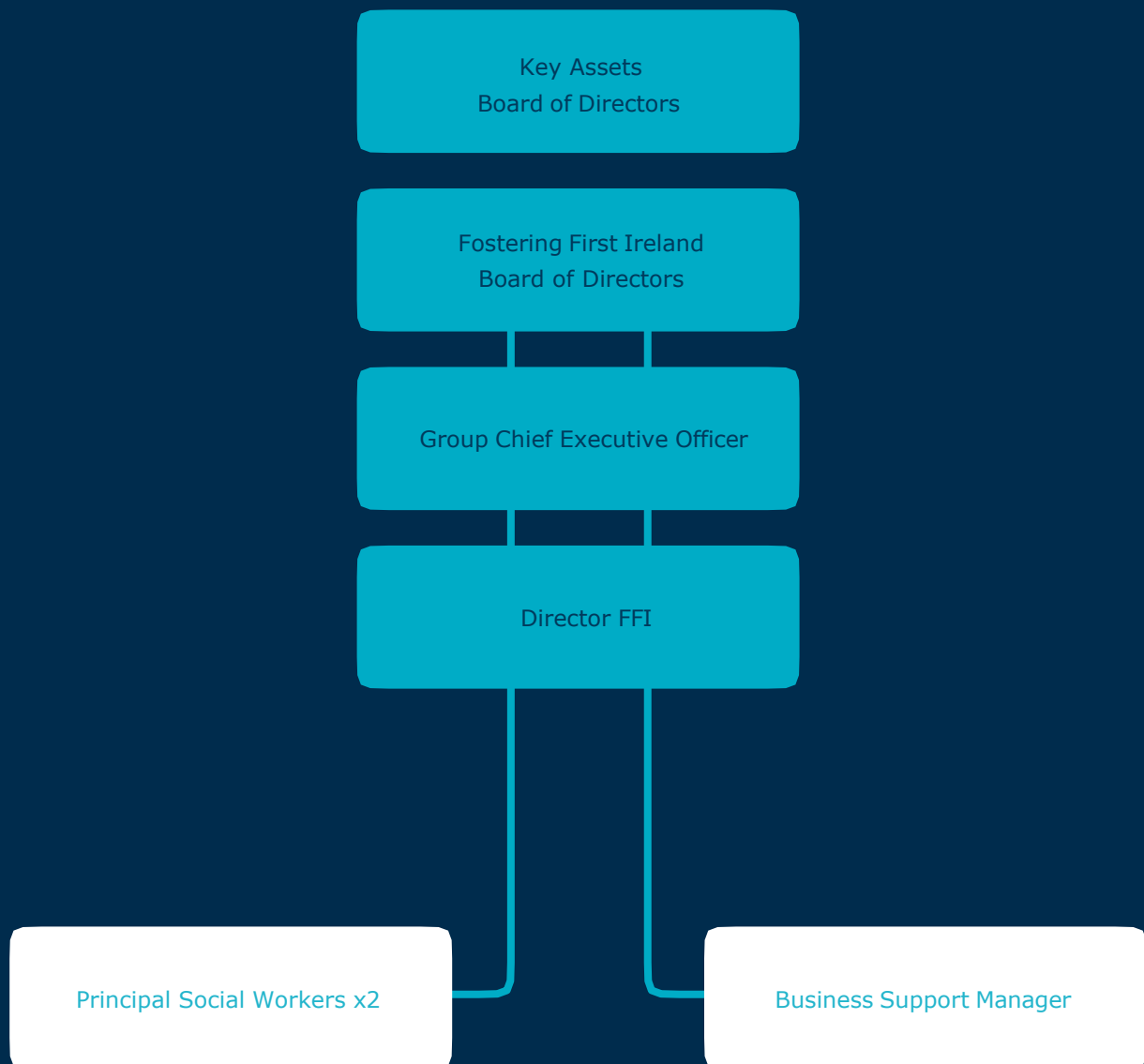
- Jim Cockburn, Executive Chairman.
- Marie Faughey, FFI Director

The FFI Board of Directors responsible for determining

- The agency's vision and mission.
- The values to be promoted throughout FFI.
- The strategic direction and goals for FFI and how these can be achieved.
- FFI's organisational structure and capability remains appropriate for implementing chosen strategies.
- The agency's policies.
- The annual business plan
- Major financial expenditure decisions.
- The effectiveness of agency business plans, strategies and policies and, in doing this, must fulfil the statutory duties and responsibilities (of Directors of a registered company), which are constantly changing and being extended.



### 3. FFI's Management & Reporting Structure



The FFI Director is part of the European Directors Group. This group comprises the Directors of all Key Assets Europe companies and meet weekly regularly to monitor service performance and implement service development. Additionally the group are responsible for the implementation of the group's strategic plan.



# 4. Recruiting and Supporting Foster Carers

## 4.1 Recruitment and approval process for foster carers

- On receiving an enquiry from a potential foster carer, FFI requests basic information and if the applicants meet the criteria forwards literature giving details about the work of the agency.
- An initial discussion takes place virtually or in the home of the prospective foster carers with a FFI Fostering Advisor. Where there is the need for a more detailed discussion a social worker will carry out a second visit. A decision is then made about whether the enquirer progresses to the next stage of assessment.
- The potential foster carer completes an application form, giving detailed information about them and their family and consent for FFI to complete necessary checks and enquiries to ascertain their suitability to foster.
- The information obtained forms the basis of an assessment report. FFI uses the Tusla National Fostering Assessment Report Template.
- Preparation training for becoming a foster carer is provided and is also part of the fostering assessment. The training covers the responsibilities of being a foster carer and working with FFI. All prospective foster carers must participate in this training.
- At any time during the assessment process the applicants or FFI may withdraw from the process and details for the termination of assessment are forwarded to their Tusla Foster Care Committee (FCC).
- The content of the assessment report, taking account of assessment of confidential references, is shared with the applicants, reviewed by relevant FFI Senior Managers and then presented to the relevant Tusla Foster Care Committee operating in the area in which the foster care applicant resides, for approval.

The application must be submitted with the following:

- Garda Vetting checks on all adult members of the family and regular visitors to the household. These involve disclosure of information about any criminal convictions or cautions and other information which may be held by An Garda Síochána or Government Agencies relevant to the protection of children.
  - The applicant is required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and the report is made available to FFI's Agency Medical Adviser for their comments about the applicant's health and any impact on fostering potential
  - Based on this information a decision is made on whether to proceed to the next stage of assessment.
    - The applicant is asked to identify at least three personal referees (2 unrelated and 1 related) who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process. FFI also undertakes employment references, financial checks and child protection checks.
  - A qualified social worker is assigned to carry out a full assessment. They visit the applicant's home, generally on 10 occasions, to meet and collect information about all members of the household and the applicant's experience and skills in relation to fostering.
  - FFI encourages applicants to attend the Tusla Fostering Committee meeting to assist in the decision making process and it is a general expectation from the Foster Care Committee that applicants will be present. At present FCC Meetings may be held online. The Tusla Foster Care Committee makes recommendations about the suitability of applicants to be approved as foster carers with Fostering First Ireland.
  - A nominated Manager in Tusla receives the recommendation of the Fostering Committee and on behalf of the agency, makes the final decision about approval.
  - Applicants are informed verbally and in writing about the decision to approve or not approve.
- In line with the National Standards, the assessment process takes 16 weeks and every effort is made to ensure there is no avoidable delay. All information obtained about prospective foster carers is held on the company's secure electronic file system in line with GDPR regulations. References from external agencies (An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive, Tusla, Medical) and personal references, which are provided in confidence, cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and relevant referees. Our Privacy Notice is available [here](#).



## 42 Training provided for Foster Carers

It is recognised that fostering can be demanding and complex. FFI is committed to providing high quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers. Training is viewed as an important element of FFI's support to foster carers. Each foster carer has a Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP) which includes a learning and development portfolio and evidence relating to learning and development, e.g.. Induction, training certificates, qualifications, reflective learning logs, records of learning and development.

Training is provided to:

- Help foster carers become better at fulfilling the requirement of their role.
- Improve knowledge, develop and refine skills.
- Understand the impact of trauma on children in care
- Establish an explicit, positive framework of values, which promotes equality of opportunity.
- Encourage foster carers to reflect and look at the effects of discrimination in all parts of the community, recognising that they care for children in the context of a wider society, and that for many children discrimination is a fact of everyday life.
- Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safe caring and in protecting children from harm.
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through the maintenance of their PPDP.

Training at all levels incorporates certain key elements:

### Statutory

- Children First e- learning module and the role of mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

Core Curriculum (in the first year post approval)

- Working with children who have been abused.
- Safe caring.
- Managing difficult behaviour.
- Managing and promoting contact.
- Valuing diversity and promoting equality.
- Good Record Keeping.

### Mandatory Training:

- Health and Safety
- First Aid
- Children First
- Online Safety

### Additional

- Preparing young people for moving on and adult independence.
- Attachment Theory and Practice
- De-escalation techniques
- Health care of fostered children/young people.
- Education of fostered children/young people.
- Empowering children/young people.
- Identity and self esteem
- Trauma based care

## 4 Support for Foster Carers

FFI values highly the work that foster carers do and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people.

Appropriate support for the families who foster is vitally important to a successful placement. FFI provides creative, tailored and flexible support arrangements for children/young people and their foster carers. Identifying and arranging the necessary level of support occurs when a child/young person and foster family are 'matched' at the placement planning stage. This support is then monitored and adjusted throughout the placement.

FFI offers a range of supports to all our foster carers including:

- Access to FFI Support Services 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days of the year.
- Supervision and support from a qualified and suitably experienced FFI Link Social Worker.
- Frequent visits and regular telephone contact from the Link Social Worker.
- Supportive respite, determined by need of the child in placement.
- Regular Carer Group meetings.
- Organised activities for children/young people and families.
- Support from, FFI's Education Officer in negotiating with schools and promoting children and young people's educational needs.
- Therapists who provide expert guidance and support to foster carers of children/young people who are experiencing serious emotional difficulties.
- An extensive training programme and opportunities to attend relevant conferences.
- A fostering allowance in line with the rates set out by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- Membership of the Irish Foster Care Association including insurance to foster carers.

Additional supports can be provided for children identified as having complex and intensive support needs and this may include;

- Support Service/Social Care Workers to work with children and young people, especially if they are not attending school.
- Support Service/Social Care workers to work with individual children or young people around identified needs and challenges.

FFI strives to ensure that foster carers are fully supported and that placements are successful. Children and young people referred to the agency may have experienced trauma and rejection and FFI attempts to minimise this happening again. Foster carers joining FFI are expected to be resilient and be prepared to work hard in what can be difficult circumstances.

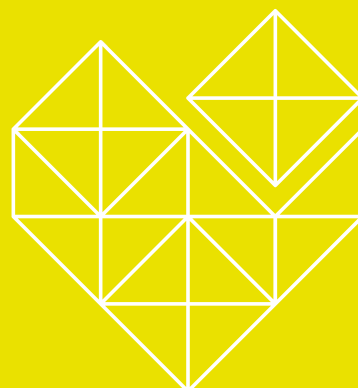
It is for these reasons that we recognise the value of good, high quality, relevant and responsive support.

## 4 Review of Foster Carers

FFI has a systematised procedure for the completion of timely reviews of foster carers, in line with the National Standards in Foster Care 2003. The FFI procedure sets out clearly other situations in which completion of an early foster carer review would be appropriate, for example, following a serious complaint or incident.

The FFI review procedure focusses on the core competences for foster carers identified at the assessment stage and including an appraisal of training and development needs.

FFI employ the services of IROs (Independent Reviewing Officers), all of whom are qualified and experienced social workers, fully vetted with professional indemnity insurance in place.



# 5. Services FFI Provides

## 5.1 Fostering Placements

FFI offers a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages with foster carers. FFI placements are underpinned by our unique Key Care Team Model (KCTM)® Framework. KCTM® is the result of empirical research, evaluation and practice wisdom. KCTM® provides a framework that facilitates a systemic approach to stabilising a child; once having established security and stability appropriate resilience based care can be undertaken in conjunction with educational and/or vocational interventions. The framework is strengths based and effective in the treatment of complex trauma and attachment disorder for children in care or for the development of family stability, positive parenting and resilience for children on the edge of care.

All placements are 'matched' to ensure a good fit between the needs of children and young people and the skills and experience of foster carers to meet those needs. Many FFI foster carers have extensive experience and/or training in specialised areas of care, for example, caring for those who have been sexually abused or dealing with challenging behaviour.

FFI has specifically designated 'Placement Officers' who are the first point of contact for enquiries about placement choices.

Each placement is subject to a signed funding and service agreement which is monitored by Tusla. In line with regulations, each placement has an individual placement contract.

### Standard Placements

All standard FFI placements incorporate the following supports:

- A standard fostering allowance in line with DCYA guidelines
- An allocated Link Social Worker who provides a responsive flexible support service
- Out of hours emergency support which includes a duty social worker and senior manager on call
- An Education Officer who provides support to children and foster carers to ensure that children have every opportunity to reach their full educational potential
- A team of Social Care Workers to provide direct support to young people
- Therapeutic support is provided by our team of experienced therapists

- Carer groups which meet monthly to promote peer support, information sharing and development opportunities
- A comprehensive training programme updated annually based on carer development needs
- Family activity days to provide informal opportunities for fun and building social networks
- Up to 10 nights of supportive respite

### Enhanced Placements

FFI recognise that some children and young people in foster care require additional inputs to support their placement and to assist them through a difficult period. FFI can offer an enhanced placement to meet those needs in a flexible and responsive manner.

For further information on our enhanced placements please [click here](#).

### Specialist Placements

Specialist fostering gives children with complex needs a placement within a family setting. Specialist fostering was developed to provide family placements for children who are in residential care or who may be at a high risk of entering residential care. FFI is striving to provide long-term sustainable specialised foster care placements for children and young people who have a history of multiple placement breakdowns or disruptions and behavioural issues. The model of work involves a 'wraparound' of support services including social work, childcare support, education and therapy which would sustain highly demanding placements.

For further information on our enhanced placements please [click here](#).

### Supported Lodging Placements

FFI's Supported Lodgings carers provide accommodation, support and a family setting to young people over 15 years who cannot live at home, but are not ready to live independently. These young people will have gone through a range of experiences and will require your support in making positive choices in their lives.

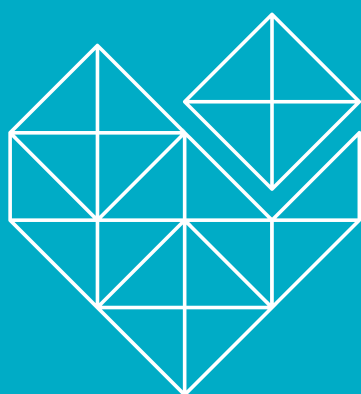
For further information on our Supported Lodging placements please [click here](#).

## 2 Placement Regulation

All Placements of children and young people with FFI foster carers are made and monitored in accordance with the National Standards in Foster Care 2003 and the Child Care Regulations 1995.

This means that:

- All Foster Carers are properly approved, reviewed and have signed a 'Foster Carer Agreement'.
- All children's placements are made using individual 'Foster Placement Contracts' which are prepared either before or at the point of placement and which include essential information sharing and care plans.
- Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including introductions between foster carer and children). For emergency placements, immediate care and placement planning priority and matching is continued throughout the early days of the placement.
- All placements with FFI will have a signed Placement Contract and we aim to ensure that placements have a signed Funding and Service agreement in place.



## 3 Social Work Service

All children and young people placed with FFI foster carers should have their own Social Worker from the relevant Tusla area who will maintain contact with them throughout placement, make care planning decisions conduct statutory visits

Additional to the child's Social Worker, an FFI Link Social Worker is allocated to support and supervise every FFI foster carer with the placements they provide.

FFI Link Social Workers will:

- Maintain frequent contact with the foster carer and children in placement through placement visits and telephone calls
- Make unannounced visits to the foster home
- Provide advice, guidance and support to the foster carer on their care of children in placement
- Participate in out-of-hours support to foster carers
- Co-ordinate other support services as appropriate, for example, social care work, respite care provision
- Liaise with other professional service providers who may be involved and contribute to formal meetings about care plans
- Identify and help respond to foster carer's training needs
- Keep careful records of the progress of placements
- Maintaining good communications with the child's social worker
- Lead KCTM® Meetings.

FFI employs experienced and CORU registered Social Workers who offer a wide range of expertise. For example, some of our staff are trained and experienced in undertaking Life Story Work with individual children/young people and can offer this service where so requested. FFI social workers also offer training on Attachment, De-escalation Techniques and Trauma.

## 5.4 Children and Young Person's Support Service

Fostering First's Resource Service operates within the wider practice framework called the Key Care Team Model. FFI is committed to providing placements where both the fostering family and the child in placement feel supported. The Resource Service supports and sustains placements by meeting the needs of individual children, young people and their carers where a need has been identified.

Fostering First employs Social Care who work directly with young people where it is agreed with Tusla that additional support is required to assist in meeting the young person's needs. Social Care support is also provided to placements in response to crises or emergencies or where placements require short term respite support.

The Resource Service facilitates the support that FFI offers to Foster Carers, children and young people through the provision of the following services:

- Child care support to foster carers in order to enable them to attend Foster Carer Groups, carer training, or Foster Carer Reviews in the absence of available support people.
- Social Care work with foster children where a specific need has been identified in order to support a placement. Support is individually designed to ensure purposeful and meaningful objectives, goals, and outcomes.
- Social Care support in response to crises and emergencies.
- Social Care support to the birth children of foster carers.
- At the request of Tusla, Social Care Workers can provide a supervised access service between a child and their birth family.
- A Life Story Work service which is commissioned and funded by Tusla.
- Support for children to attend FFI activities/events.
- Holding activity days for foster families.
- Holiday events such as Christmas and Summer outings
- Children's forums.
- Other services including National/International events which enable children/young people and carers to attend.

The Resource Service is designed to be flexible and responsive and the above examples are not exhaustive. The Resource Service is managed by the Children's Services Manager who is supervised by a Fostering First Senior Manager. Additionally the Children's Services Manager works closely with Link Social Workers to ensure that the voice of the child/young person and their participation is central to the delivery of services within Fostering First.

Fostering First staff working within this part of the service include full time Social Care Workers and a pool of Sessional Social Care Workers. All Social Care Workers are fully vetted and supervised by the Children's Services Manager.

### Children's Participation

The right to participation is a fundamental right of children and young people. This right is outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. FFI believes that children and young people should be facilitated to express their wishes, feelings and views about the care they receive and should be enabled to participate in decisions affecting their lives. All children placed with FFI will be provided with the opportunity to have their views and opinions heard regarding all aspects of their care.

The Children's Services Manager arranges, facilitates and co-ordinates children and young people's participation in FFI by organising activities and events for children and young people to get involved in throughout the year. Mechanisms for children's participation are developed based on feedback from children and young people. This may include organising workshops based on need identified by children and young people. The Children's Services Manager also organises summer family activity days on a yearly basis.

There are various means of facilitating children's participation in FFI including:

A young people's forum Chatter Matters has been established to promote children's rights and to give children and young people a voice and influence on the fostering service that they receive from FFI. The FFI Children's Services Manager is responsible for co-ordinating the forum. It is lead by a care experienced Young person FFI's Participation Ambassador and it is made up of a group of young people who are either currently in foster care or who have care experience. The purpose of the forum is to give children/young people in foster care with FFI the opportunity to:

- Speak out about issues that affect them
- Be listened to, valued and understood
- Be involved in planning and developing services
- Provide user feedback about the quality of service FFI provides
- Realise their rights.

Fostering First has recruited a Participation Ambassador who is a care-experienced young person to work alongside the Children's Services team to develop children and young people's participation in FFI.

## 5.5 Education Service

Fostering First believes that it is every child/young person's right to receive an appropriate education that will help them to achieve their full potential. The overall purpose of the Education Service is to support young people and their foster carers in navigating the education system, ensuring each young person's educational needs are being met so that they can reach their maximum educational potential and experience a positive school journey.

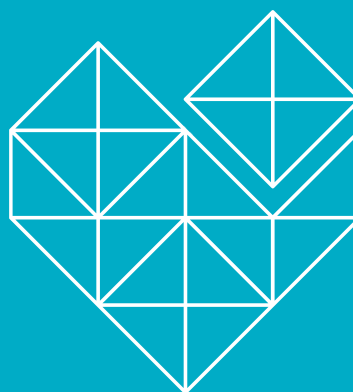
The Education Service aims to support young people in foster care with FFI and their carers at key stages of their education journey. It supports foster carers in being advocates for young people with their education and supports schools in understanding the needs of young people in care. The Education Support Officer works in collaboration with Tusla, young people, foster carers, and link social workers to ensure the educational needs of a young person are being met.

### Education Officer

Fostering First has an Education Officer whose responsibility it is to support the educational placements of children and young people placed with Fostering First foster carers. FFI recognises the pivotal role that Foster Carers play in improving the educational life chances for the young people placed in their care. The Education Officer provides support to foster carers with all issues that might arise regarding the educational needs of the young person placed with them and are dedicated to supporting carers and their placements with any issues around education.

### What does the Education Service offer?

- Assistance to Tusla with sourcing a school placement for a young person.
- Provide advice and guidance to foster carers around how best to support young people with their education.
- Direct educational support to young people at pivotal times in their school journey such as exam years and transitioning from primary school to secondary school.
- Attendance at school meetings with foster carers and the young person's Tusla Social Worker.
- Support to students with study skills and time management.
- Support to young people with CAO applications, SUSI grant applications and college choices and options.
- Group workshops with young people in specific school years.
- Support to the Tusla Social Worker with any school or educational concerns in order to obtain the best outcomes for young people.
- Liaises with schools and offers support and guidance in relation to the child's educational progress as required.
- Monthly Education Clinic Days for foster carers and young people to discuss any educational concerns.
- Workshops for foster carers and young people on specific educational themes.



## 5.6 Therapy Service

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FFI has a commitment to a child centred service through the promotion of a broader understanding of the emotional needs of children/young people and the implications for their carers.

### Qualified and Experienced Therapists

FFI employs qualified, accredited and experienced therapists and psychologists who work locally in multidisciplinary teams and within KCTM Meetings. The Governance of FFI's Therapy Service have taken account of the ethical guidelines of professional organisations which oversee training and accreditation of therapists.

### Multi-Disciplinary Teams

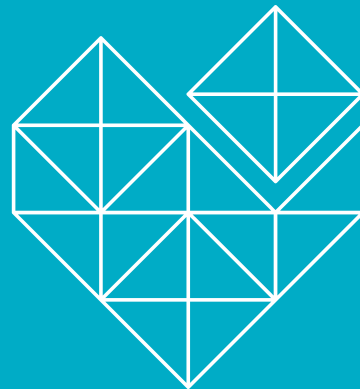
All young people placed with us will receive consideration of the ways their placement will be able to address their therapeutic needs. This process is facilitated by having a Therapist as part of a multi-disciplinary team supporting placements for example through, consultation with the carer(s), liaison with external mental health providers etc.

### Support to Placements

Therapists can work with others in the FFI team supporting the young person in placement to consider and agree who, in each situation is the person best placed to carry out particular pieces of work. The focus of our attention is to make placements more successful and to help young people have positive relationships and experiences. Information gained will also help us develop a system of identifying and measuring the beneficial aspects from our approach in order to continue to inform practice.

### Individual Therapy for the Young Person in Placement

If therapy for the young person is indicated in line with their care plan, this will be supported with suggestions about which approach (e.g. art therapy, play therapy, psychotherapy) is recommended and the implications of this. FFI can source a suitably qualified therapist and work in conjunction with Tusla to facilitate such an intervention. Throughout a young person's placement a Therapist is available for consultation by the carer and those supporting the placement.







## 6. Number of Foster Carers

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The Key Assets Group has over 1,402 foster carers (January 2023).

FFI has 126 foster families (January 2023).

The number of referrals received by Fostering First always outnumbers the available foster carers we have at any given time and so foster carer recruitment is a continuous and high priority activity.

## 7. Number of Foster children/young people placed

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There are over 1,566 children and young people in placements across the Key Assets Group and Support Services are provided to a further 2,306 families.

There are 162 Children and Young People placed with FFI Foster Carers (January 2023)

Average age of current children in placement: 10.07 Years

Percentage of children in placement over 1 year: 74% or 121 children and young people.

Percentage of children in placement over 5 years: 30% or 48 children and young people.

## 8. Staffing

The Key Assets Group has 1166 full time and part time permanent staff (April 2021).

Fostering First Ireland has:

1x Director.

1x Financial Controller

2x Principal Social Workers.

1x Business Support Manager.

1x Quality and Training  
Manager

4x Team Managers

1x Placement and Marketing Manager

11x Link Social Workers.

1x Children's Services Manager.

2x Social Care Workers

1x Senior Social Work Practitioner

2x Therapist

1x Education Officer.

1x Fostering Advisor.

1x Business Support Officer - Finance.

5x Business Support Officers (Placements/ Carer Approvals  
and Reviews and Administration .

The Group employs senior managers (Directors) who have operational management responsibility for service delivery within defined geographical areas. They are supported by the Group Chief Executive Officer.

All Senior Managers within the Group are professionally qualified in a range of areas including social work, teaching, behavioral science, nursing and youth work with considerable post qualifying experience across the public, private and voluntary social care sectors. Many already hold, or are in the process of obtaining management qualifications.

Some social work staff, in particular Team Managers and Senior Social Work staff, undertake specialist responsibilities in relation to foster carer recruitment, reviews of foster carers, foster carer training and coordination of work with foster care approval committees.

All FFI Link Social Workers are registered with CORU under the requirements of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2004.

Our Education staff are appropriately qualified with experience of the education system and have received specialist training on the impact of abuse, neglect and trauma on young people's educational and overall development.





The Therapy Service requires that therapists hold appropriate qualifications, full membership of a training body that includes registration with a nationally recognised organisation and have relevant experience. Therapists have professional indemnity insurance in place.

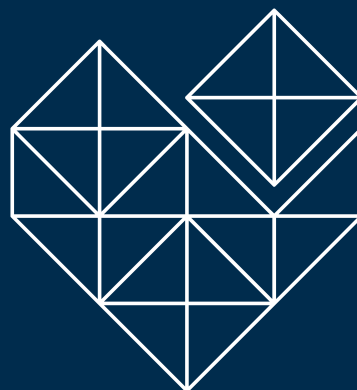
FFI's Children's Services Manager/Social Care Workers have obtained the Degrees, Certificates or Diplomas in Child Care or a relevant qualification.

In addition to permanent staff, FFI has a pool of contracted workers who undertake work for the agency.

A considerable number of people work for FFI on an independent, contracted basis across a variety of roles, for example, social workers completing assessments of prospective foster carers, education support workers involved in direct work with a child/young person temporarily not attending school or providing additional input within a classroom setting. FFI also employ the services of Sessional Social care Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs).

For all contracted staff, verification of any necessary formal qualifications in relation to the work undertaken is assured and FFI carries out a range of checks and enquiries, comparable to those for permanent staff, to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is safeguarded.

All staff including contractors who undertake work for FFI – have job descriptions, contracts of employment and/or contractual project briefs.



## 9. Complaints and Outcomes

The Complaints Procedure places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level, i.e. Stage 1. Records of investigations and outcome of complaints resolved informally are held by the Complaints Manager and collated in summary form for analysis by the Senior Management Team and the Board of Directors.

Stage 2 complaints are those where resolution at Stage 1 has not been possible or where a complainant has elected to invoke Stage 2 of the procedure direct. Complaints of this nature are dealt with by the FFI Complaints Manager and Independent Investigators are appointed to carry out formal investigations. Complaints are maintained on a central database and are reviewed quarterly by the senior management team.

The Representations and Complaints Procedure has scope for a complainant, if dissatisfied by the response received at Stage 2, to request that the matter be referred to a Complaints Review Panel comprising of a Senior Manager or a person with relevant background experience who is independent of the organization.

FFI is committed to implementing an effective process for responding to and addressing complaints about the services we provide. We encourage our staff and foster carers to be receptive and sensitive to complaints made about our services, and ensure that the voices of children are listened to. We are committed to proactively resolving any issues of disagreement or shortfall in our services, and regard complaints as a potential learning experience contributing to service improvement.

Our complaints leaflet for young people was designed with input from the Chatter Matters Group.

All stakeholders are informed of their right to complain and the processes to be followed. Accurate records are maintained of all complaints and outcomes, and complaints, representations and feedback are included in the monthly report for the Key Assets Board



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