

Statement of Purpose
(LONDON & SOUTH)
December 2024



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**



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Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance including:

- The Children Act 1989;
- The Care Standards Act 2000;
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011;
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services, 2011 (updated 2013)
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Please see Page 9 on the agency's response and management relating to COVID-19. This remains under review as Government Advice is updated and revised.

The Statement of Purpose, produced in accordance with Fostering Services Regulation 3, includes:

- Statement of the Aims and Objectives of Sunbeam's fostering service;
- Statement as to the services and facilities provided by the fostering service.

A copy of this Statement of Purpose is available on our website and copies will be made available, upon request, to:

- Any person working for Sunbeam Fostering Agency
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer
- Any child or young person placed with Sunbeam
- The parent/person with parental responsibility for a child or young person placed with Sunbeam.

This Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed by Sunbeam Fostering Agency's Management Team whenever there is a change, and at least annually.



About Sunbeam

Sunbeam is an established Independent Fostering Agency that provides a range of fostering placements to meet the needs of looked after children. The organisation is managed by a team of experienced, qualified professionals who provide an innovative and needs led service to children and young people in foster care.

Sunbeam was set up largely in response to a perceived need for a prompt co-ordinated service, which provides packages of care to meet the needs of individual children and young people, especially children from ethnic minorities.

We currently provide services to over 75 Local Authorities in London, South East, South Central and Midlands regions and are geographically expanding into further areas to recruit more foster carers for the benefit of children in care.

Sunbeam is registered with Ofsted as follows:

- **Sunbeam London & South Office:** Sunbeam House, 12 Waterside Drive Langley, Slough SL3 6EZ
- **Midlands Office:** 383 Broad Lane, Coventry, West Midlands, CV5 7AX

We are accredited by the relevant professional bodies such as London Care Placements, Commissioning Alliance South Central Framework Authorities, East and West Midlands Childcare Consortia and Eastern Regions Consortium. Sunbeam is a member of the Fostering Network and NAFP. All our foster carers are individual members of Foster Talk.

Sunbeam is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1989 (Company Registration No – 3948662).

The company was founded by three qualified social workers and these founders remain at the heart of the business.



About Sunbeam

Equality and Diversity

Sunbeam Fostering Agency is committed to the principles of equal opportunity in all areas of its service. All staff and foster carers are inducted and receive appropriate training and support in anti-discriminatory practice.

As a service, Sunbeam Fostering Agency embrace diversity and is committed to fulfilling its role without discrimination in terms of colour, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, HIV status, disability, age, religious belief or any other status.

All staff and foster carers of the Agency will seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and good relations by recognising and valuing diversity.

As an equal opportunities employer Sunbeam Fostering Agency aims to:

- Promote equality of opportunity, good relations between people of different races and groups and contribute in any way it can to community cohesion
- Recognise and value the differences between individuals
- Wherever possible make a contribution to the community generally as well as to children and young people in public care collectively and individually

Our Equalities policy aims to have the following desirable outcomes:

- Provision of services that are accessible and fit for purpose, especially services provided for looked after children and young people
- Provision of information about the Agency's services which is accessible and easy to comprehend
- To ensure that no child/young person, foster carer or staff member receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential

Participation and consultation

We value feedback from children, young people and foster carers.

Supervising social workers are expected to regularly speak to children and young people during visits to obtain their views about their care. We also seek regular feedback from children and young people to shape and develop our service through questionnaires and support groups.

Foster carers are also consulted with during visits, support groups and annual questionnaires.

Aims & objectives and principles of care

Sunbeam's focus is always the child or young person in our care. We aim to provide children and young people with a positive, safe nurturing experience of substitute care within a family environment.

In agreement with the Children Act 1989, we subscribe to the view that a child is best brought up in their own home with both parents playing a full part in their upbringing. We recognise that this is not always possible. Wherever it is considered to be in the child's best interests to be removed from their birth family, however, Sunbeam Fostering Agency will work positively with the placing Local Authority to return the child to her/his parents or extended family, where this is part of the care plan.

Sunbeam's key objective is to develop services in order that children and young people can develop and grow within the five key outcomes areas of "Every Child Matters":

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

At all times Sunbeam Fostering Agency expects its staff and carers to positively embrace each individual child/young person's heritage. Our value base is that all people, children and adults alike, are individuals who are to be respected and treated as equals, whatever their circumstances or difficulties.

By the same token we at Sunbeam, regard foster carers as the bedrock of our service. A core purpose of Sunbeam is to ensure that a wide range of placements is available for children/young people. In order to protect the choice of placements for children, we believe it is necessary to offer foster carers a robust package of professional support and financial remuneration in order to be able to care for the child or young person.

Our overall aim is to recruit professional, resilient carers who can provide foster children with a positive and nurturing experience of family care.

We are a progressive organisation and with this aim in mind all staff and others working on behalf of the Agency are required to be conversant with the national minimum standards for foster care as well as the code of practice on the recruitment, assessment, approval, training, management and support of foster carers.

We are single minded about identifying and recruiting foster carers who can comply with the National Minimum Standards and work towards meeting the Training, Support and Development standards (TSDS) for foster carers.

Standards of care required of Sunbeam Fostering Agency

Sunbeam is a forward thinking, progressive organisation and we are keen to implement and exceed the national minimum standards for foster care. All relevant policies and procedures are written and subsequently monitored and reviewed with reference to the framework of expectations laid down by government in regulations, guidance and standards.

We have produced a role description for a foster carer, which includes the competencies required for fostering. This has been taken directly from the Fostering Network Code of Good Practice on the recruitment, assessment, approval, training, management and support of foster carers. As such, it is one yardstick against which Sunbeam Fostering Agency can evaluate its practice.

Sunbeam Fostering Agency also sets out to be compliant with fostering regulations and to meet and exceed the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.

Sunbeam's achievements and ability to meet all the minimum standards and to develop its services further is reviewed regularly by Ofsted and commissioning Local Authorities. This is evidenced in our inspection reports, which can be downloaded from the Ofsted website.

Our foster carers can expect a minimum of four weekly supervisory visits along with a minimum of two unannounced visits a year. Supervising Social workers will keep in contact with their carers weekly and visit more frequently if required. Regular progress reports will be sent to the placing authority sharing the progress of the child/young person. All carers have to meet the competencies set out by the TSDS within twelve months of approval and will be supported by their supervising social worker and a comprehensive training programme to achieve this.



Standards of care required of Sunbeam Fostering Agency

Carers will undertake a minimum of a yearly review to assess their competencies and commitment to the fostering task. Carers have the opportunity to provide feedback on the services we offer to them. At this point we also seek feedback from the children in foster care and also their social worker. The outcome of the review is to agree continued approval and terms of this.

The supervisory role is primarily for the foster carer; however, supervising social workers will also spend time with the looked after child listening to them and ensuring they understand any decisions that may have been made for them. Such relationship building, we find is essential to maintaining placements and enhances the carers ability to provide a good standard of parenting.

Support to Foster carers

Supervisory home visits

Foster carers receive regular supervision from their Supervising social worker. Supervision provides a space for carers to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children /young people in placement. The training and development of foster carers is also monitored.

Unannounced visits

Foster carers will receive two unannounced home visits a year. This is to complete checks to ensure a high level of care is being provided by the carers.

Transport

Day to day transport for looked after children is managed by foster carers for instance for school runs and contact with birth parents. Although this is the responsibility of the Foster Carer, if for any reason this is not possible, we will do our best to provide the support.

Appreciation

Activity days are organised for our fostering families such as trips to the seaside and fun days. We also hold foster carers awards ceremony annually where foster carers are appreciated and recognized for their hard work. The achievements of children and young people are also celebrated on a regular basis.



Standards of care required of Sunbeam Fostering Agency

Foster carer reviews

All foster carers have a review to reflect on the previous year. New goals are then set for the year ahead. Training needs are also discussed and any other recommendations are made. This process looks at feedback from carers and birth children, involved professionals and children/young people.

Record Keeping

Foster carers are expected to record regular logs for the children in their care. These logs are then reviewed by the supervising social worker. Recording is an essential part of the foster carer's role which help monitor the child's journey.

Policies and Procedures

All our foster carers have access to the foster carer's handbook which has the key policies and procedures along with useful guidance. We also have a wide range of policies and procedures which foster carers have access to.



COVID-19 update and your support

COVID-19 update and your support

Sunbeam Fostering continues to follow Government Advice relating to COVID-19 and ensuring that the best support and practice is provided.

Our key priority is to ensure the well-being and safety for all children, young persons, foster carers, staff and other third parties the agency works with.

Case levels across the agency are far lower and the impact of COVID-19 has significantly reduced. The agency is however remaining structured and focused on its management and support.

Ongoing measures and support include (but are not limited to):

- Testing is being undertaken where needed for any expected cases and periods of isolation for any positive cases are being followed
- Recording of all cases for management, safety and internal records
- Continued promotion of the booster take ups and vaccinations (if not already received)
- The agency has returned to face-to-face events, training and panel but is balancing these alongside continued virtual meet ups where these are best and preferred
- If there is any COVID risk, it will be assessed prior to any contact.
- Continued sharing of information and best advice with everyone

If foster carers, children or other parties have any questions or concerns, please do contact us.

COVID 19 GUIDANCE

Services provided by Sunbeam Fostering Agency

Fostering Services

We pride ourselves on finding the closest possible match when children need to be placed in foster care and identifying any additional training, support or resources required. We work in partnership with Local Authorities and all other agencies to achieve the best possible outcome for all children who need to be looked after.

Sunbeam offers the following types of placements:

Emergency

Sunbeam provides a 24 hours a day emergency service. Many carers choose to specialise in short term work and are able to accept unplanned, emergency placements. An emergency placement ideally should not exceed a few days and it would be anticipated that the child or young person should be moved to a more suitable placement within a week in a planned way.

Short term placements

Provision of short term care that could be for a few days, weeks or months, whilst plans are made for the child's future by the Local Authority. Foster carers work with children /young people and their families as appropriate to fulfill the objectives of the care plan, whether this be for reunification or another type of placement such as long term fostering.

Respite placements

Respite placements are provided to give parents a break from their children within a set time frame for the children to return home and offers additional support to the birth parent where they often do not have their own support network. In addition, respite is also offered to our foster carers and is available in order to support the foster carer with the child or young person's level of needs and care.

Long term placements

These placements are where adoption is not an option, and the foster carer will care for a child/young person up to and into adult independence.

All of the above placement may involve caring for a single child or caring for a sibling group.

Parent and child placements

Placements are available for mothers and /or fathers and their child/baby, where foster carers can provide support and guidance to parent (s) and help them develop parenting skills. If requested, and by arrangement with the placing Local Authority, a formal assessment of parenting ability can be undertaken by Sunbeam. Comprehensive written assessment reports, for use in child protection conferences, planning meetings, statutory reviews or court proceedings, can be prepared.

Services provided by Sunbeam Fostering Agency

Core Enhanced & Complex Placements

Local Authorities define children and young people's needs and behaviour as either core, enhanced or complex. Where a placement is determined as core the foster carer can expect the common behaviours and needs of those children and young people who have been removed from their birth family sadly because of the loss, bereavement and due to past adverse childhood experiences.

For enhanced placements, this would be where the child or young person is suffering from trauma related behaviours to a greater level. After recognising the growing need for therapeutic foster placements we have purchased the licence for the Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC) treatment framework to caring for traumatised children and young people developed by Dr Blaustein and Kristine Kinniburgh of the Trauma Centre, Massachusetts USA. The framework provides overarching principles to assist carers with therapeutic parenting and supervision in order to fully support the child's and young person's emotional well-being. Such placements can vary in time from emergency, short term and long term however we are often looking for carers who will provide a permanent foster placement.

Complex placements would also include those young people who are stepping down from a residential placement. Please see our Enhanced Fostering with ARC© booklet for further information. Other complex placements may involve caring for a child or young person with significant health needs or disabilities such as autism, profound global developmental delay and palliative care.

Solo placement

We also care for children and young people who can only be placed in a household where there are no other foster children. This may well be for a number of reasons such as level of risk they pose to other children, the level of need and support they require and as a result the Local Authority request from the onset that the child / young person needs to be placed on their own.

Management structure

Company Director (Responsible Individual)

Karamjit Dhull, MA (Social Work), Practice Teaching Award in Social Work, LLB, BSc (Hons), Dip in Training & Development

Company Director

Muhammad Haneef, MA (Social Work), PG Dip in Child Forensic Studies : Psychology & Law, BA (Hons) Economics

Company Director

Naseem Ahmed, MA (Social Work) and BSc (Hons)

Head of Operations

Seamus Jennings , BA (Hons) Sociology and Social Studies , Diploma in Applied Social Studies , Diploma in Advanced Social Work (Children and Families) , Certificate of Qualification in Social Work.

Head of Service

Catherine Moore , BA in SW, NVQ Level 5 in Leadership and Management , Masters in Advanced Child Protection.

Senior Manager Assessment and Placement

John Collins, Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work , BSc Sociology & Politics , Certificate in Management and Practice Teachers Awards

Interim Registered Manager

Jonathan Lung - BA History & American Studies, MA/ Diploma in Social Worker, Child Care Award, Practice Teacher Award

Agency Decision Maker

Alison Lamb , Diploma in Social Work , Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies, NVQ in Management , MSc in Advancing Practice in Family Violence

Business Development Manager

Nicola Westley , BA Hons in Business Management , NVQ level 3 in Business Administration.

LEADERSHIP



Background on Management

Background on **Company Director**

Company Director & Responsible Individual - **Karamjit Dhull (Board member)**

Karamjit has over 30 years of social work experience both within statutory setting and private sector as a social worker, manager and children guardian and acts as Responsible Individual for Sunbeam London and Midlands. Karamjit joined Sunbeam in 2001 and oversees our business performance and HR areas. Karamjit is also a member of board.

Background on **Company Director**

Company Director - **Muhammad Haneef (Board member)**

Muhammad has over 30 years of social work experiences both within statutory setting and private sector as a social worker, senior social worker and manager. Muhammad is one of the founding member and set up the Agency in March 2000. Muhammad oversees finance and manages our key relationships with our bank, suppliers and other external parties. Muhammad is also Responsible Individual for our sister agency, Sunbeam Pride Fostering Service.

Background on **Company Director**

Company Director - **Naseem Ahmed (Board member)**

Naseem has over 30 years of social work experience both within the statutory and private sector both as a practitioner and in management, quality assurance and service development. Naseem provides valuable input and advice on our operation and is one of the founding members and set up the Agency in March 2000.

Background on **Head of Operations**

Head of Operations – **Seamus Jennings**

Seamus Jennings has joined Sunbeam as Head of Operations and brings extensive experience of managing and leading fostering services for local authorities and independent agencies. Seamus has considerable knowledge about Sunbeam's work from having been the Independent Chair of our Fostering Panel. He has an abiding commitment to Sunbeam continuing to provide high quality family based care for vulnerable children and young people to make a lasting, positive difference in their lives and supporting foster carers so that they help them achieve the best possible outcomes. Seamus has been a qualified social worker since 1978 and has post graduate qualifications in social work and experience as a Children's Services Manager.

Background on **Head of Service**

Head of Service - **Catherine Moore**

Catherine obtained a Bachelor in Social Work from Australia in 1993. Catherine has worked in rural Victoria initially then in Melbourne in Non-Government Organisations including: Community Health, Domestic Violence, Strengthening Families and Family Counselling. Catherine has worked in England in Child Protection and from 2001 within the fostering sector. Catherine has an NVQ 5 in Management and in 2019 obtained Master's in Advanced Child Protection from the University of Kent. Catherine has been a Registered Manager in 4 Independent Fostering agencies, achieving Outstanding and Good ratings from Ofsted, consistently. Catherine is highly motivated to improving the lives of children in fostering; supporting foster carers to invest in their role in providing aspirations of improvement through stability and care for the children that join their families; which will in turn, makes a positive difference to our whole society.

Background on Management

Background on **Senior Manager Assessment and Placement**

Registered Manager – **John Collins**

John has over 30 years of experience in social care and over 25 years experience in working for Independent Fostering Agencies. John has worked as a supervising social worker through to Registered Manager and Responsible Individual. John has joined Sunbeam Fostering in 2018 and become Registered Manager in February 2021. He particularly enjoys seeing the achievements and development of children and young persons supported by the agency.

Background on **Interim Registered Manager**

Interim Registered Manager – **Jonathan Lung**

Jonathan qualified as a social worker in 2001 and has over 23-years' experience in frontline statutory children's social care, working for two large Local Authorities prior to joining Sunbeam. He has been in management positions since 2009, including as Service Manager. During this social work career, Jonathan has undertaken a range of further training and development, including completing the Child Care Award, Practice Teacher's Award, Systemic Supervision in Social Work, and Leaders in London. Jonathan joined Sunbeam in 2024, as the interim Registered Manager. Jonathan is an analytical practitioner who seeks to think holistically about children's needs and experiences and is keen to promote services which continue to develop and improve.

Background on **Agency Decision Maker**

Agency Decision Maker – **Alison Lamb**

Alison has been qualified as a social worker since 1993. She holds a Diploma in Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies. Alison also has a NVQ qualification in Management and an MSC in Advancing Practice in Family Violence. Alison has many years of experience in the field of child protection and experience of running a fostering panel as the chair. She is highly motivated and committed to keeping our children and young people safe and ensuring they have the best possible outcomes so they can achieve and become successful adults.

Background on **Business Development Manager**

Business Development Manager – **Nicola Westley**

Nicola joined the Sunbeam Family in 2004 and has gained extensive knowledge and experience within Sunbeam. Nicola is our Business Development Manager, her responsibilities include managing our placements, recruitment and administration teams. Nicola holds strong knowledge of our contractual arrangements and supports the agency to work collaboratively with our Local Authority partners through contract and relationship management.

Management and board overview The Board of Sunbeam includes the Directors and Director of Quality Assurance, which works extensively with the management and staff team to cover:

- The agency's strategic vision
- Annual business plan and review system
- Performance targets
- Financial management and expenditure
- Development issues
- Quality assurance
- Policies and procedures
- Values, principals and culture of the organisation
- Compliance with legislation and standards

Sunbeam's Fostering Panels

In accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Sunbeam Fostering maintains a central list of people suitable to sit on fostering panels and has established regular fostering panels whose overriding objectives are to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care. Our fostering panels meet in London and other branch offices on a regular basis. Panels have a balance of gender, ethnicity and qualifications and reflect our commitment to bring together individuals from different backgrounds. Each panel has access to specialist legal and medical advice as required.

The Independent chair has been a social worker for 22 years and held social work and senior management posts across many children's services organisations in the UK. Our Independent chair also has extensive knowledge of children services, fostering and adoption. She says "I am proud and take great pleasure in being the Independent Panel Chair at Sunbeam Fostering Agency which has been providing high quality placements for children and young people for many years."

Our central list of suitable panel members includes two social workers who have been working as social worker for nearly 20 years with extensive experience in community mental health and children's services. Our panel members also include a lecturer who has been teaching Computing and Mathematics for more than 25 years to young people between the age of 16 to 19, a foster carer, a care leaver currently working with NSPCC children's charity, a former looked after child and a Community Development Officer.



Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

Sunbeam Fostering Agency makes use of the competencies approach in all stages of the recruitment, assessment and approval of the foster carers.

We endorse the view expressed in the Fostering Network Code of Practice that the use of common, standard assessment tools, such as those produced by the Fostering Network and the CoramBAAF Form F, will enable fostering services to achieve uniform standards.

We therefore make full use of the above tools in the recruitment, assessment and approval stages of fostering applications to Sunbeam.

We also seek to actively promote the Fostering Network values underpinning the competencies approach and to ensure that they are an integral part of the assessment process.

These are that:

- Child safety is paramount
- Individuals are respected
- Difference and diversity is valued
- Equality is promoted
- Discrimination is challenged
- Confidentiality is maintained
- Advice and feedback is provided in a constructive way
- Applicants are supported to demonstrate their competence
- Standards of childcare are explicit and agreed

Recruitment

Sunbeam Fostering Agency subscribes to the following statement:

“The aim of our recruitment campaign will be to attract potentially suitable people who may want to take up fostering and provide them with significant information for them to decide whether or not to make a formal application”. (Fostering Network Code of Practice)



Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

Sunbeam's advertisements and other recruitment materials aim to promote the Agency's preferred applicant's skills or experience, which are as follows:

- Previous employment in children's services – paid or unpaid
- Applicants with particular skills and experience in specific areas as learning difficulties, medical problems etc
- Applicants who show a willingness to work towards meeting care standards for fostering
- Applicants with experience of previous fostering and/or close involvement with someone who has already fostered
- An ability to reflect on life experiences and to mature through them
- An ability to see beyond child's behaviour, and to link it to past trauma.
- An empathy for and natural ability to nurture children, traumatised by separation from their birth families
- Applicants able to accept teenagers
- Applicants comfortable with parents visiting their home if appropriate.
- If living with a partner/ spouse, the relationship should be established and secure

In addition, Sunbeam will expect the applicants to have these mandatory requirements:

- A spare bedroom
- Plenty of physical and emotional stamina
- A commitment to attend training events and support groups
- Availability to prompt contact and offer supervision
- A willingness to support a child's/young person's attendance for therapy, hospital appointment etc- including the provision of transport where necessary

All interested people who either respond directly to an advertisement or apply to Sunbeam in between recruitment campaigns, will have their enquiries recorded on a registration of interest form. If appropriate, the Agency will send out a guide to becoming a Foster Carer in order to help the enquirer decide whether they feel they have the necessary skills for the role.

Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

Enquiry form

Once the potential applicant has had an opportunity to find out about fostering and is keen to apply, they will be asked to complete an enquiry form over the phone or online. If the enquiry form is positive an initial home visit will be arranged.

Initial Home Visit

During the home visit, applicants will be given further information about fostering. The roles and responsibilities of the Agency staff will be discussed as well as the assessment process itself. The need for all adult members of the household to consent to a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service, previously referred to as CRB) and other statutory checks will be explained and information on these checks (including medicals) will also be supplied.

In addition, Agency requirements in terms of health and safety standards will be provided to ensure applicants meet certain essential criteria.

If the home visit is positive, an application form can be completed either prior to the home visit or after the visit.

Planning the assessment

All assessments will be carried out by appropriately qualified and experienced social workers.

The first assessment meeting will be to plan the assessment with the applicants. At this stage, Sunbeam will provide the applicants with information on the assessment process. The guide to the assessment process explains what the competencies are and how applicants will be expected to help identify and collect evidences towards their fostering portfolio.



Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

When they have the first assessment meeting with applicants, Sunbeam assessors will explain to them that:

1. Certain requirements will be made of them during the process e.g. attendance at a preparation group, permission for statutory checks and references etc.
2. The assessment has two stages and that specified statutory and safeguarding checks are undertaken under stage 1. These include the DBS, local authority, medical, references (interview of referees and fostering reference if previously fostered) and other checks are begun at this stage in respect of suitable applicants. If it is decided not to continue with an assessment because of information collected as part of stage 1, this will be communicated formally in writing.
3. Under stage 2 of the assessment, they will be able to see any "brief" report or final report and record any disagreement with it before this is considered by a fostering panel.
4. The assessor's report will make a recommendation to the fostering panel about their suitability to foster, including those children whom they might best be matched with, as well as their training and development needs for the future.
5. Applicants will be encouraged to give honest answers and not to exaggerate or give false information about their skills and/or experience. Doing this may lead to them not being able to cope in certain future placements.
6. The assessor will explain the competencies required for fostering and give initial help and advice in enabling applicants to link evidence with the skills required for fostering e.g. 'can you think of a time when you needed to be patient?' etc.
7. Leading on from the above, the assessor will also help the applicant identify skills or abilities they may find most difficult or need to develop.
8. Form F assessments also known as home study explores in detail the applicant's family background, childhood experiences, own parenting experiences (where applicable), employment history, current and past relationship and skills, knowledge and experiences to care for vulnerable children and young people.

Preparation training

Applicants will be invited to attend a Skills to Foster preparation course along with other applicants. The course is led by experienced social workers and foster carers. We provide specialist training where carers will be approved for more challenging children.

The assessment process

Assessment of prospective foster carers is undertaken using a competencies approach and the CoramBAAF Form F report. Having explained the competencies, the assessor will then discuss each of them with the applicant and explore how they may obtain the evidence for each competency.

Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

Gathering evidence or information

The Sunbeam assessing social worker will undertake the assessment in the following settings:

- The applicant's own home
- During the Skills to Foster preparation course
- In other relevant settings e.g. a relevant workplace, such as a playgroup etc.

A variety of techniques will be used to gather evidence or information regarding the applicants suitability to foster. These may include:

1. The CoramBAAF Form F guidance and competencies list to assist applicants and assessors to work out what existing skills they already possess and what new ones they need to acquire.
2. Ecomaps, family trees and/or other personal history tools to gain information on an applicant's motivation to foster and how their past history may impact on future fostering.
3. Witness statements from other adults who can corroborate the applicant's ability to relate to and care for children - e.g. babysitting circle, helping out at school etc.
4. Discussions
5. Records and reports
6. Assignments and case studies
7. Role playing and simulation
8. Observations from the "Skills to Foster" preparation course
9. Shadowing other foster carers for a day, if appropriate

Care will be taken by the assessor to stand back and pay due attention to the life history of the applicant - rather than concentrating solely on the applicant's current functioning and circumstances.

The completed assessment will include a recommendation by the Sunbeam assessing social worker.

Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

Statutory checks and references

Following written consent from prospective carers, Sunbeam will ensure that satisfactory clearance is received in relation to the following checks and references before the approval stage is reached.

1. Statutory checks and good practice

- Proof of identity
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on all household members
- Children's Services Department's record
- School reference if applicable
- Cafcass (if appropriate)
- Ofsted (if appropriate)
- Registration and inspection units
- Previous fostering reference or if any fostering applications made
- Overseas check (if appropriate)
- Any other checks we deem appropriate

2. References

Personal X 3, each of whom will be visited by the assessing social worker, ex-partner where applicable, current employer reference (if applicable other employer reference if working with children), Health Visitor (if applicable) and school for birth children if attending school.

3. Health report

4. Health and safety inspection

5. Final Steps in the assessment process

Following satisfactory clearance in relation to all the statutory good practice, as well evidence that the applicant complies with health and safety requirements, the Sunbeam assessor will reach a point in stage 2 of the assessment when enough information has been collated about the applicant in order for an assessment recommendation to be made. This may be in the form of a brief report or a final report to a fostering panel.

At this stage, the applicant will be told the recommendation and reasons for it. Feedback should be given in a clear and constructive way and recorded in order to meet legal and Agency requirements.

The structure of the final report will be within the framework of areas covered by the CoramBAAF Form F, including the competencies and consideration of the applicant's learning and development needs to enable them to achieve the TSDS (Training, Support and Development) standards within twelve months.

Prospective foster carers will sign the assessment report prior to submission to panel and where applicants suggest changes to the report, these are negotiated with the assessing social worker. Applicants have the right to add written comments or other information to their report if they wish.

Copies of brief reports or the completed CoramBAAF Form F report are circulated to the Sunbeam fostering panel members in advance of their meeting.

The social worker will attend the fostering panel meeting to present her/his report. Applicants are invited to attend and may bring a supporter with them.

Recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers

Approval

Sunbeam's fostering panel makes recommendations about the approval of prospective carer/s. The Agency Decision Maker considers the recommendations before notifying the applicants in writing. Where the decision is to approve them, the letter will specify any terms of approval for age range, number of children and type of placements.

Following approval, foster carers and Sunbeam sign a written agreement (the Foster Care Agreement) that sets out the terms and conditions of the fostering household's relationship with Sunbeam.

If, following consideration by the fostering panel, and a review of case papers and the final panel minutes, the Decision Maker considers that an applicant is not suitable to act as a foster carer the Decision Maker will write proposing not to approve them together with reasons (qualifying determination) and will invite them to submit written representation within 28 days of the notice or to request a review by an independent review panel through the Individual Review Mechanism (IRM) (further details can be provided).

If Sunbeam does not receive any representation within the above said period and there is no referral to the IRM, it may proceed to make its decision.

If Sunbeam receives written representation it will refer the case to its fostering panel for further consideration; and the Decision Maker will make its decision, taking into account any fresh recommendations made by the fostering panel, and will notify their decision to the applicant in writing.

If Sunbeam receives any recommendations from an independent review panel through the IRM, the Decision Maker will take this into account and then make their decision, and will notify their decision to the applicant in writing.

Sunbeam Fostering has the following Decision Makers:

Decision Makers – applications to foster

Alison Lamb - Agency Decision Maker

Seamus Jennings - Agency Decision Maker (Backup)

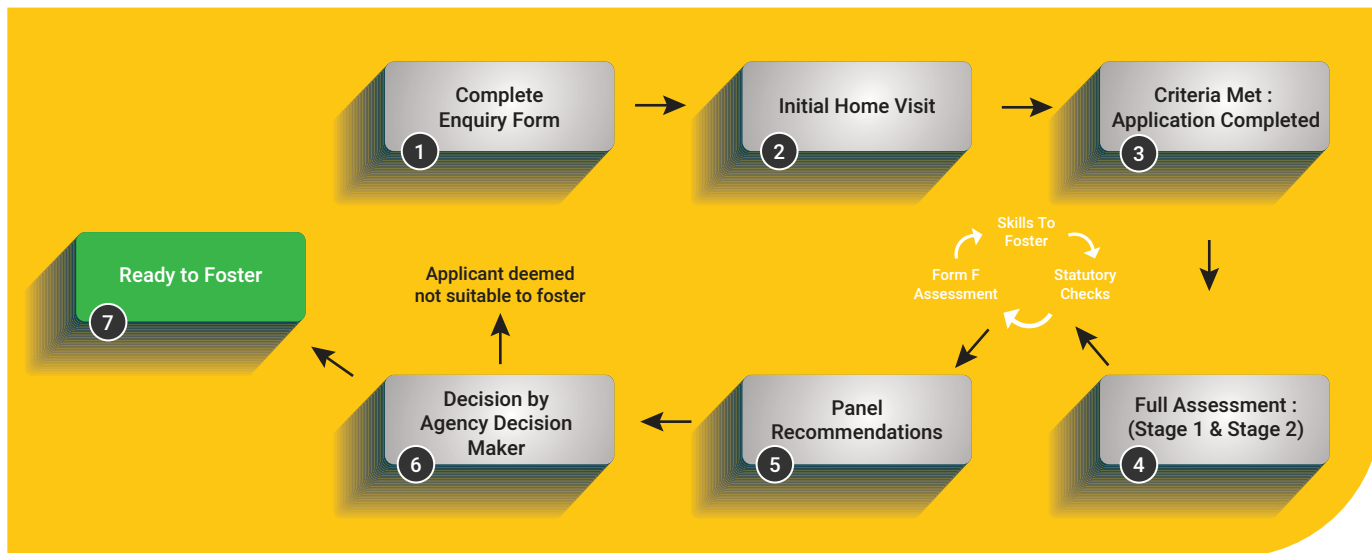
Decision Makers – foster carer reviews

Alison Lamb - Agency Decision Maker

Seamus Jennings - Agency Decision Maker (Backup)

Assessment and approval process

Please see an overview of the application process (from enquiry to approval) for foster carers. Further details are included in our Guide to Foster on our website or please email us on info@sunbeamfostering.com



Contact Sunbeam Fostering Group

Registered/ Head Office Address

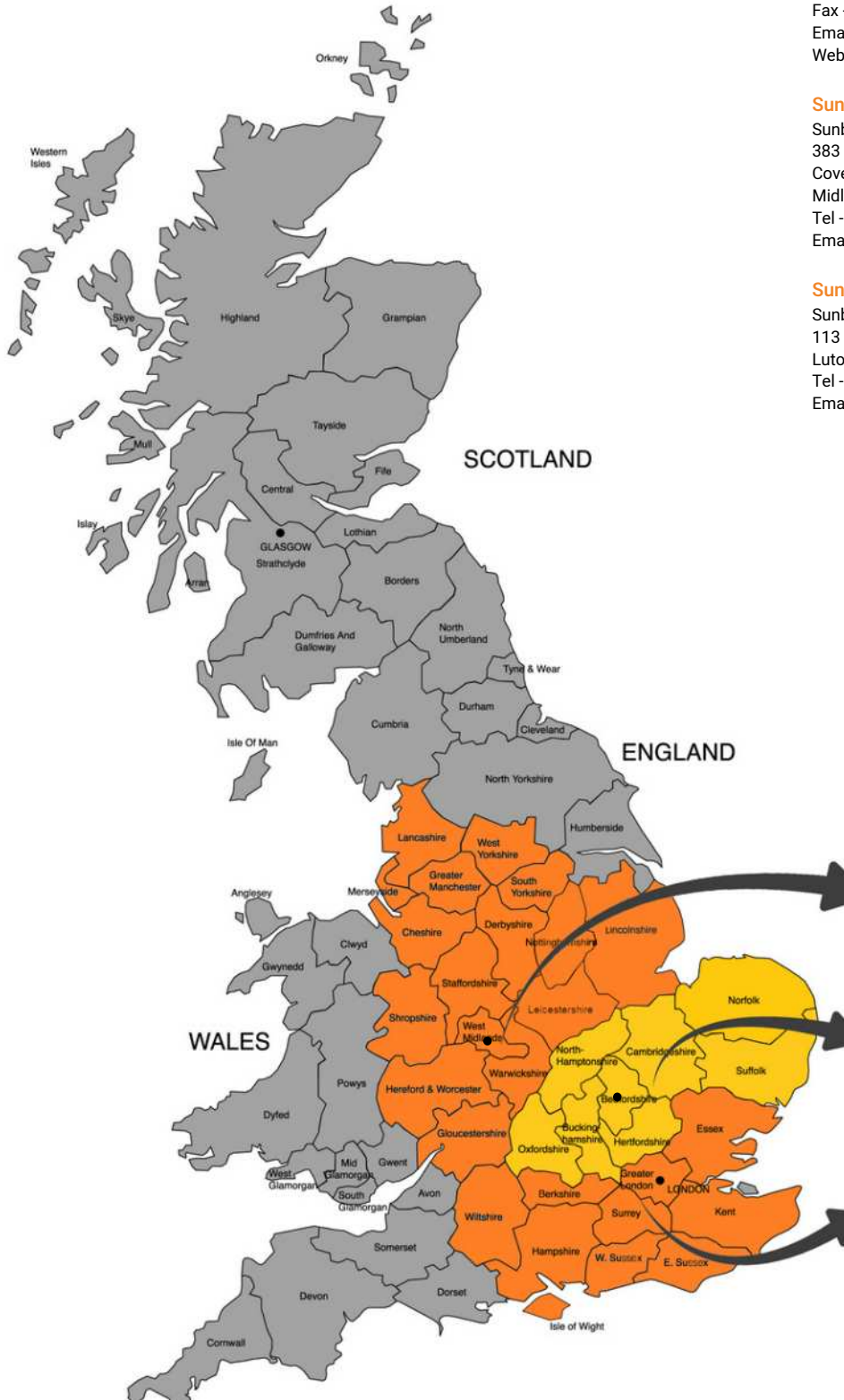
Sunbeam House,
12 Waterside Drive,
Langley, Slough SL3 6EZ
Tel - 020 8799 0930
Fax - 0208 8103949
Email - info@sunbeamfostering.com
Website - www.sunbeamfostering.com

Sunbeam Midlands Registered Office Address

Sunbeam Fostering Agency
383 Broad Lane,
Coventry West
Midlands, CV5 7AX
Tel - 024 7642 0390
Email - info@sunbeamfostering.com

Sunbeam Pride Registered Office Address

Sunbeam Pride Fostering Service Ltd
113 New Bedford Rd.,
Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 1LE
Tel - 01582 218228
Email - info@sunbeamfostering.com



Sunbeam West Midlands

☎ 02476 420 390



Sunbeam Pride

☎ 01582 218228



Sunbeam London & South

☎ 0208 799 0930

Portsmouth	Blackburn	East London	South London	West London	Birmingham	Nottingham	Northampton
Gatcombe House, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5EJ, UK	Suite 3, The Beehive, Lions Drive, Shadsworth Business Park, Blackburn BB1 2QS	Sunbeam Family Support Centre, 14 Prospect Hill, Walthamstow, E17 3EL	Sunbeam House, 610 Mitcham Road, Croydon CRO 3EL	Viglen House Business Centre, Alperton Lane, Wembley, HA0 1HD	Arion Business Centre Harriet House, 118 High Street, Erdington, Birmingham B23 6BG	Melrose House, 9 Waverly Street, Nottingham, NG7 4HF	Office 137, Regents Pavilion, 4 Summerhouse Road, Moulton Park, Industrial Estate, Northampton NN3 6BJ

Contact Sunbeam

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or have any concerns about a child in care with Sunbeam or otherwise, please contact:

Jonathan Lung – Complaints Officer & Interim Registered Manager

Tel – 0208 799 0930

Full details of our Comments, Compliments & Complaints Procedure can be obtained by contacting Jonathan Lung or emailing us on:

JonathanL@sunbeamfostering.com or
info@sunbeamfostering.com

Safeguarding

For any Safeguarding matters, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer – Jonathan Lung.

JonathanL@sunbeamfostering.com

Tel – 0208 799 0930





STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

(LONDON & SOUTH)

December 2024

TELEPHONE
020 8799 0930

EMAIL
info@sunbeamfostering.com

WEBSITE
www.sunbeamfostering.com