Swiis Foster Care
Statement of Purpose

March 2018
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Having held senior management positions in local authority social services departments, I founded Swiis in 1988 to provide recruitment solutions in social care. Due to the many successful and productive professional relationships with social services departments, Swiis has since then been able to expand its range of services in both social and health care. As part of this development, in 2000 I established Swiis Foster Care.

My vision for setting up Swiis Foster Care was, and remains, to meet the growing need for quality assured placements offering the highest standards of care for children and young people whilst providing real placement choice for local authorities. My expectation of Swiis Foster Care is that in addition to exceeding all of the National Standards, our foster homes should be places where I would be happy for my own children to stay.

Experience to date has been very positive with real differences being made to the life chances of children placed with us. Our Health and Educational Outcomes significantly outperform the national Looked After Children Outcomes both from within the public and independent sectors.

Registration of our offices was completed through the Commission for Social Care Inspection and later OFSTED and we welcome the ongoing process of inspection and positive feedback in each area as support for our continuous improvement.

I believe that our commitment to putting children at the centre of all we do and working in genuine partnership with local authorities to genuinely improve the wellbeing of children are reflected in the following document and I commend it as an accurate reflection of the organisation as of March 2018.

Dev Dadral
Chairman, Swiis International Limited
As part of a national organisation our teams in Birmingham, Bristol, Lancashire, Leeds, Manchester and Durham, alongside our sister company, Swiis Foster Care Scotland, currently provide placements for a large number of children.

The focus of everyone involved in the placement process will be to ensure the specific needs of each individual child and young person is met.

We want each child and young person to achieve the best outcomes possible and we will use the key areas identified as essential within each national region in setting up our service:

**England**
- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Wellbeing

**Scotland**
- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

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**About us**

Swiis Foster Care is one of the UK’s largest and most established independent foster care agencies. We provide safe, well-supported placements for children and young people that maximise stability, security and successful outcomes.

**Our vision**

Our vision is to lead the way in foster care provision and be recognised as exceptional.

**Our promise**

To provide stable, caring, family environments in which children and young people will thrive.
Our values

Caring
We look after each and every person.

Committed
We’re with you every step of the way.

Honest
We are open and straightforward.

Understanding
We know what matters. We take the time to listen.

Exceptional
We go above and beyond for you.

Respectful
We hold others in high regard and are sensitive to their needs.
Our aim

We offer each child and young person a placement that meets his or her assessed needs and promotes the best possible outcomes through positive experiences and appropriate levels of support.

We aim to achieve this in the following ways:

- A team structure with an integrated approach involving social work, education, health and support professionals.

- Creating a team reflecting the diverse communities with social workers who are experienced in children and young people’s support services, whether that be via local authority or voluntary work experience.

- Recruiting and retaining a broad range of skilled and committed foster carers from diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

- Careful matching of each child/young person with the foster carer who can best meet their needs.

- Providing 24 hour support and advice to our foster carers.

- Actively encouraging children/young people, foster carers, carers’ own children and our partners to be integral to the continued development of our service via annual feedback, website, newsletters and group activities.

- Demonstrating a commitment to providing training for all our foster carers and staff members.

- Respect for individual differences and strengths, including recognising issues of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability, and sexuality in all placements.

- A commitment to training and personal development at all levels in the organisation.

- A service which actively values diversity and recruits staff and carers from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

- A focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance and meeting or exceeding the National Minimum Standards for Foster Care.
Our Services

Swiis offers a full range of short term, long term or respite foster placement choice for children and young people from 0-21 years. Carers receive comprehensive training both pre and post approval and our thorough, competence-based assessment process assists in ensuring the best possible matching.

The following placements are available:

- **Short term/task centred** placements; working towards specific goals. These may include assessment placements, bridging, and preparation for adoption, permanency or placements which meet other specific care plan objectives.

- **Planned longer term** placements for individual children or young people and sibling groups. Carers are available who are able to make long term commitment and offer stability for young people until they move to independence.

- **Sibling** placements are readily available as we recognise the importance of keeping families together and have carers who have been assessed as having sufficient space, skills and energy to take on this demanding task.

- **Parent and child** placements are offered with carers who have experience and interest in helping parents to develop their parenting skills and who can offer assessment and monitoring as required.

- **Placements for children with disabilities** will be offered on a full time or respite basis. Swiis Foster Care teams identify carers with skills and experience to meet this particular need and offer additional training where necessary.

- **Short break and respite** placements to support children’s current placement, provide respite for birth families or provide a ‘home base’ for children attending residential schools.

- **Unplanned, short notice or emergency** placements are also available including placement for asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors or other specialist placements.

- **Remand**
  
  Provide a safe environment for young people who have been remanded by the Courts.
Our expertise

Each placement is managed and supported by qualified and experienced professionals from within our multi-disciplinary team including:

**Supervising Social Workers**

Our social work staff link to a maximum of 15 carers in order for them to be able to spend sufficient time in supporting carers and children. They are all experienced and suitably qualified social workers.

Their inputs into placements include:

- Monthly recorded supervision with carers.
- Visits to see the child / young person in placement.
- Liaising with all professionals responsible for the child/young person.
- Contributing to the child / young person’s statutory reviews by supporting foster carers.
- Making unannounced visits to foster carers in accordance with the fostering regulations.
- Annual review of carers in line with the fostering regulations.
- Participation in the 24 hour support to carers.
- Participation and/or facilitation of training and support groups for carers and their children.
- Advocating on behalf of the child/young person when appropriate to do so.
Our expertise

Education Support Workers

Swiis provides extensive educational support to our looked after children and young people, ensuring that they have the best opportunities possible to achieve academic advancement.

This support includes:

- Research into suitable school placements and advocacy for the child/young person to secure a place based on their educational needs.
- In-class support.
- Support at home on educational issues in partnership with the carer.
- Regular contact with school staff to monitor progress.
- Support in the preparation of personal education and support plans.
- Contributing to the child/young person’s reviews.
- Advocacy for the child/young person and support around exclusions.
- Monitoring educational outcomes.
- Out of school hours learning encouraged, and events organised in school holidays.
- Supporting young people in their transition from school to further education, employment and independent living.
- Supporting young people in their transition from primary to secondary school.
Our expertise

Health Advisors

Our Health Advisors are all qualified nurses with substantive experience of working within a community setting.

Their input into placements includes:

- Ensuring that each child/young person is registered with all relevant health professionals – GPs, dentists, opticians.
- Ascertaining a child’s immunisation status where required.
- Identification of any health needs.
- Liaison with other health professionals involved with the child/young person and monitoring of outcomes.
- Contributing to the child/young person’s review.
- Direct work with child/young person on health-related matters.
- Providing workshops for carers on health issues such as asthma and epilepsy.
- Advice and support to carers on health related issues.
Our expertise

Placement Support Workers / Participation Workers

Our social work support staff are suitably qualified and experienced workers in the child care field.

This support includes:

- Supporting foster carers with childcare.
- Assisting with transport arrangements.
- Support packages to child/young person not in school.
- Activity workshops for all children and young people placed with us and for foster carers’ own children, with a view to enabling them to participate in the development of our agency.
- Facilitating support groups for carers’ own children.
- Producing a newsletter for our children and young people.
- Individual work with children and young people on issues around identity, self-esteem and ‘moving on’.

The role of placement support worker / participation worker allows for innovative ways of working with children and young people. This includes completing life story work in a therapeutic framework allowing a child/young person to explore their past, present and future and an opportunity to work through any associated feelings around these issues. This work is always done in a child-centred way and at the child/young person’s own pace.

Life story work offers children and young people a sense of identity and helps to promote self-worth.
Our procedures

How we go about recruiting, training, supporting and reviewing foster carers.

In line with the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011), we have an established process and procedure for recruiting, training and supporting carers. During the initial stages of their application, all prospective foster carers are provided with information about the agency, the fostering task, the assessment and checks process and the financial and support package. Initial information will be requested from all prospective applicants before information is sent out.

Following the initial telephone screening, an ‘Initial Home Visit’ will be arranged. (This information is also available via the Swiis Foster Care website www.swiisfoster.care).

Following a successful Initial Home Visit a 1 day preparation day is offered to the applicant(s) to help them determine if they wish to proceed with fostering. If a recommendation is made by the assessor undertaking the Initial Home Visit for the applicant(s) to proceed, a Day 1 training day is offered. Day 1 training has been designed to ensure that potential foster carers fully understand the impact which fostering will have not only on their lives, but those of their families. Day 1 also fully discusses the expectations for the carers in terms of the commitment, time and support required for any placement they have.

Once the potential foster carer has completed Day 1 training, the trainer will provide feedback on their input and understanding of the role, and we then contact carers to see if they wish to proceed.

If an agreement is made to proceed, a further 3 days of Preparation Training is delivered once the assessment begins and before the applicants go to panel. Feedback for each day / delegate is provided by the Trainer and is included within the assessment to support the overall assessment process.

It is anticipated that the application to become a foster carer will take between four and six months. Following approval by our Agency Decision Maker, all Swiis Foster Carers have a programme of ongoing in-house training and development as well as the opportunity to attend support groups. Annual Foster Carer Reviews are carried out in accordance with the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011). These are chaired by an independent person and feedback is sought from placing agencies, foster carers, children and young people, education staff and any others involved with the placement. The review focuses on the foster carers’ development and evidence of the competencies for foster care as assessed in the original fostering assessment. Training attended and future training needs are also explored. Carers’ annual reviews may be brought forward in certain circumstances, where appropriate, as detailed in Swiis Foster Care procedures.
Our procedures

Children/young people’s guide

Swiis Foster Care provides a guide for all children and young people and their families. This includes information about the agency, the service offered and a range of contact numbers.

The guide, produced in conjunction with young people, is available in two formats – for teenagers or younger children and can be translated into other languages as required. The English language guides and a range of useful links can also be accessed via our website at: www.swiisfoster.care

Details of the complaints/suggestions procedure and contact details for the relevant governing body are also included in the children’s guides.

Status and constitution

Swiis Foster Care Ltd is a national independent provider of Foster Care services to Local Authorities. The Company currently has offices in Birmingham, Bristol, Lancashire, Leeds, Manchester and Durham.

We accept referrals for the placement of children and young people from all areas of the UK.

Swiis Foster Care Ltd and Swiis Foster Care Scotland Ltd are private limited companies registered in England at Companies House, and are part of the Swiis International Limited group of companies.

The Companies are also registered, regulated and inspected under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards by Ofsted in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland. Copies of Inspection Reports and all other public documents can be obtained on request and also found on our website: www.swiisfoster.care, or can be obtained direct from the inspecting bodies opposite.
Number of foster carers

Swiis Foster Care are committed to increasing the number of carer households for Children Looked After and our commitment for 2018 is to grow our carer base by 20% across England and Scotland.

Local information in respect of current carer numbers is available within the regional appendices.

Due to the nature of the foster carer role, carer figures are expected to fluctuate throughout the year.

Complaints and Compliments

In accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (Reg 18) and National Minimum Standards (Std.1 & 21.11) Swiis has developed a written procedure for managing all complaints made by or about our foster carers, Children Looked After or Swiis Staff.

Details of both complaints and compliments are reported within the appendices of this Statement of Purpose and contain regional based information. (Appendices for each region are available upon request).
Our Management Structure

The national management group meets on a regular basis.
Swiss Foster Care Offices

Birmingham
24 Highfield Road, Edgbaston
Birmingham, B15 3DP
Tel: 0121 452 7120
Fax: 0121 455 6056

South Region
Units 39-40, Citibase Bristol
Aztec Centre, Aztec West
Almondsbury
Bristol, BS32 4TD
Tel: 0117 906 5299
Fax: 0117 376 3322

Leeds and Yorkshire
Unit 5 Pavilion Business Park
Royds Hall Road, Wortley
Leeds, LS12 6AJ
Tel: 0113 224 4300
Fax: 0113 224 4301

Dundee
Gateway West,
5 Luna Place,
Dundee Technology park,
DD2 1XF
Tel: 01382 561 771
Fax: 01382 564 079

Manchester
15 Warwick Rd, Old Trafford
Manchester, M16 0QQ
Tel: 0161 886 4580
Fax: 0161 886 4588

Dunfermline
Glenelvan House,
Enterprise Way
Carnegie Campus South
Dunfermline, KY11 8PY
Tel: 01383 842 284
Fax: 01383 842 288

Durham
Severn House Unit 15
Mandale Park
Belmont Industrial Estate
Durham, DH1 1TH
Tel: 0191 236 1150 /
Tel: 01325 387 780

Glasgow
Unit 1115, 251 Springhill Parkway
Glasgow Business Park,
Baillieston,
Glasgow, G69 6GA
Tel: 0141 773 6730
Fax: 0141 773 6731

Lancashire
Suite 4, St. Mary’s Chambers
Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall
Lancashire, BB4 6QX
Tel: 01706 833 130
We believe that this Statement of Purpose is an accurate reflection of the Fostering service we provide and the quality of care provided to our Children Looked After.

The information contained within this Statement of Purpose will be updated annually.

05.03.2018