



Cornerstone

because foundations matter.

Statement of Purpose: Post Adoption Support 2020



Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and Fostering Service
Room 2 Oxford House, Sixth Avenue, Doncaster - Auckley, DN9 3GG
Tel **0191 5656423** Email **info@cornerstoneuk.org**

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

Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance including, but not limited to: The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 and supporting statutory guidance and regulations; The Care Standards Act 2000, The Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011), The Children and Adoption Act 2006, The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and accompanying statutory guidance, The Children and Families Act 2014, National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. These form the basis of the regulatory framework for the provision of Post-Adoption Support services and provide the framework of the National Minimum Standards used by Ofsted to inspect all adoption services. Ofsted has responsibility for the regulation and inspection of Children's Social Care Services in England.

Cornerstone is the trading name of Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and Fostering Service, a Christian agency and a company limited by guarantee (number: 5663749). Initially launched in January 1999 as a "not for profit" voluntary fostering agency, the company was incorporated on 29 December 2005 in England and Wales and, following registration with CSCI as an Independent Fostering Agency on Friday 29 March, began trading as Cornerstone on Monday 3 April 2006. There are no conditions of registration. Cornerstone was registered as a Charity on 16 May 2006 (number: 1114213) and registered as a Post Adoption Support Agency on 19 June 2006. The registered office is in **Doncaster**, and there is a hub office in **Sunderland**.

CornerstoneUK is the trading name of Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and Fostering Service, a Christian agency and a company limited by guarantee (number: 5663749). The company was incorporated on 29 December 2005 in England and Wales and, following registration with CSCI as an Independent Fostering Agency on Friday 29 March, began trading as Cornerstone on Monday 3 April 2006.

Contact Details

Currently the registered office is:

CornerstoneUK, Room 2 Oxford House, Sixth Avenue, Doncaster - Auckley, DN9 3GG

Tel: **0191 5656423** Email: **info@cornerstoneuk.org**

Cornerstone's Post Adoption Support Service was rated as a GOOD service by Ofsted in March 2019.

There are no conditions of registration for the fostering agency.

Cornerstone was registered as a Charity on 16 May 2006 (number: 1114213) and registered as a Post Adoption Support Agency on 19 June 2006. The trading office is in Sunderland.

The conditions of registration were that Cornerstone:

- may provide adoption support services to children and adults; and
- may provide birth record counselling and intermediary services.

Cornerstone's Core Values, Aims, Objectives and Principles

- 1 Unity** – We are Christians who love God and all people, and we work together as a faith community.
- 2 Children** – We put vulnerable children at the centre of all we do to change their stories within the context of a loving family.
- 3 Development** – We provide holistic support to children, carers and staff to reach their full potentials.
- 4 Stewardship** – We strive to be good stewards of God's gifts in our lives and God's creation by using our resources in a wise and ecologically friendly way.
- 5 Reverence** – We listen and communicate with respect and care.
- 6 Integrity** – We work diligently and from our hearts out of love for God to demonstrate our life in Christ throughout our personal lives and the entire organisation.

Registration Authorities

Cornerstone is registered with Ofsted as a Post Adoption Support Agency (Registration: SC066944)

All enquiries should be made to:

Ofsted, National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: **0300 123 1231** Email: **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**

Aims

- 1** To ensure that any child or young person placed with one of our foster carers, and who has subsequently been adopted, is cared for kindly and respectfully in a safe nurturing environment by highly skilled and informed adults. This is to promote the best possible outcomes for the child/young person and empower, equip and support them in fulfilling their life's opportunities, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation or ability.
- 2** To place the greatest importance on the safety and protection of children and young people, complying with all legal and regulatory requirements and exceeding the National Minimum Standards for Adoption.
- 3** To provide post adoption support to Cornerstone families. Where it is in the best interests of the children, Cornerstone welcomes adoption and supports foster carers and the children through the process. In response to the demand from carers and parents, Cornerstone has developed post adoption support services, which offers ongoing personalised support to all carers, parents, adopters and children that extends throughout the lifespan of the children into adulthood, including outings and an annual holiday for the families.
- 4** To form clusters of families in geographical regions who will operate as teams in delivering a high standard of care and to extend Cornerstone's reach into other regions of the United Kingdom for Fostering, Adoption and Post-Adoption Support Services, creating stronger links with other national Christian initiatives and local church partners. Currently there is one cluster in the North East (Tyne/Wear/Tees) region supported from the Sunderland office and another in the North/South Yorkshire and Humber region supported from the Doncaster office. 2019 saw plans to expand into other regions of the North East up into Northumberland and into North East Lincolnshire. We are currently looking at the Nottingham/Derby/Leicester areas and assessing families in this area as well as exploring interest in the South of England and Scotland.
- 5** To register as a Voluntary Adoption Agency to allow existing Foster Carers to become approved as adopters for children already in placement as well as to recruit couples who wish to provide permanence through Adoption directly or through the new Foster to Adopt route which requires applicants to be approved as both adopters and foster carers.

Principles

- 1** All children have a right to experience positive family life and values, which encourage a sense of belonging and identity that will enable them to move successfully into adulthood. They have a right to be safe and to experience a home life where their physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs are fully met.
- 2** Respect and recognition is given to the importance of all aspects of equality and diversity including ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language, gender and sexual orientation of the child, their families, their carers and adopters. Consideration is given to any disability of the child being cared for or adopted, so that individual needs are met in every placement.
- 3** Upon adoption the child is regarded as a full member of his or her family, who can meet their needs throughout childhood and beyond. Every child has the right to be listened to, have their wishes and feelings taken into account, have an enjoyable childhood, and to benefit from education and a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills and talents.
- 4** Each individual family shall be free to function as is natural to them and shall not be subject to unnecessary interference on the part of Cornerstone, whilst acknowledging that each family is accountable to the agency for carrying out their duties in accordance with legislation and Cornerstone principles.
- 5** Cornerstone is a Christian agency and therefore all families are aware of, and in agreement with, the ethos and values of the organisation. We respect the right of every child or young person to follow the faith of their adoptive family, any other or no faith.
- 6** Cornerstone believes in continuous development. Regular written and verbal evaluations of training, as well as consultations with adopters and staff, are used as a tool to look at future training and development needs.
- 7** Children will be encouraged to give their views from time to time. Although it is not always possible to act upon children's wishes, children should always know they have been taken seriously and the reasons for their views not being accepted will be given and explained in a way that they can understand.

- 8 Children have a right to independent advice and support. The Children's Guide, which is given to every child, contains details of how a child can obtain help from someone independent whom they can contact directly and in private.
- 9 The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care. In agreement with their parents we will seek to monitor their development to ensure that each child is reaching his or her full potential.
- 10 Each child should be:
 - encouraged and supported where appropriate in maintaining constructive family time/contact with birth family, friends and everyone who has played a significant part in their life. Together with Life Story work, contact will help to promote a child's identity;
 - able to enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills and talents;
 - encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions in a way that is appropriate to their age and ability;
 - helped to develop the skills needed to make and sustain friendships;
 - supported if they encounter discrimination or bullying; and
 - encouraged to exercise choice and gradually be prepared to become as independent as they are able, as they move into adulthood.
- 11 The skills, knowledge and services of a wide range of professional and lay people shall be drawn upon to ensure that each child reaches their potential, as far as they are able, and that families are adequately resourced and equipped in their task.

Model of Care

- 1 Cornerstone seeks to provide placements to meet the needs of individual children and young people and sibling groups within the environment of stable and supportive families, who are themselves supported and enabled to carry out their tasks.
- 2 Cornerstone provides a permanent "forever family", whose commitment to a child or young person extends beyond the age of eighteen. Many of the young people have benefited from therapy advocated for and sourced by Cornerstone.
- 3 Each young person has their own service specific 'Children and Young Person's Guide' and they are encouraged to feed back their comments to the agency in ways that reflect their age and ability level. We also give each child a fun and functional 3-Dimensional aid in the form of a Rubik's Cube, which has all the contact details of Cornerstone. Questionnaires are circulated to young people and to their carers to ascertain their views, but we recognise that in relation to post adoption, this is entirely voluntary. We adopt a range of methods to seek consultation with the children and young people regarding their wishes – be that verbal, written or through electronic means.
- 4 Continuity and consistency of training has a high priority, as a means of supporting the carers, parents and staff, in order to enable them to meet the needs of the young people. Whilst recognising that this is not a requirement for adoptive parents it is promoted and encouraged. Some adopters remain approved as foster carers by Cornerstone.
- 5 We place great importance on safeguarding any child placed through our agency. To this end we ensure that our carers and parents are trained in all aspects of safeguarding vulnerable groups and their role and responsibilities in respect of this. Our supervision and support of carers and parents reflects this priority and monitoring their practice in this area is of paramount importance to us. Adopted adults will have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in family time/contact or communication with birth family members.
- 6 Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved – adopted adults, birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual's life. Whether Cornerstone has a formal adoption support package or not, the agency has and will always provide help and support to adopted children and parents.
- 7 Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life and Cornerstone will facilitate this through our specially trained staff members.

Assessment of needs

- Cornerstone has a duty to ensure that all post adoption support services provided are appropriate to each person involved and in line with an assessment of needs.
- Families will know what specific services will be provided, based on this assessment.
- Where services cannot be provided 'in house' the adoptive family will be referred to another agency/service which can meet the identified need.
- Cornerstone has been successful in assisting families to access therapeutic services funded by the **Adoption Support Fund** and will continue to do so.
- All families have a named worker, and therapy can be accessed for any young people, including birth children, as appropriate.

Services

Our objective is to meet each child's personal, social, health and educational needs and to achieve this by helping adopters and by offering training and support visits.

Cornerstone provides the following services for all adoptive families:

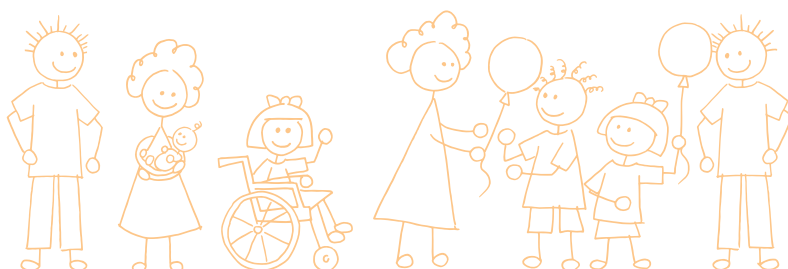
- 1 Family support will be provided by Cornerstone from a qualified social worker in addition to that given by the placing Local Authority. Moreover, informal support, training and advice is available from the Cornerstone team at any time.
- 2 All adopters have access to a 24-hour emergency cover 365 days of the year.
- 3 Ongoing training will be offered by Cornerstone to all adopters through the planning and delivery of tailored packages, taking into account current qualifications and skills.
- 4 An assessment of the needs of adoptive parents, and all other family members as applicable, will be undertaken and services will be provided accordingly.
- 5 The needs of the children are met 'in house' where possible but outside agencies are used if their services are more appropriate, or where Cornerstone cannot meet the need.

- 6 The frequency of support visits varies as adopters individually decide on the type and frequency of the support they would find most helpful.
- 7 Support in relation to family time/contact, in particular helping adopters to comply with agreed arrangements and helping them to manage any difficult emotional or other issues they may have because of family time/contact. In so doing, full account will be taken of the child's age and level of understanding, and the individual capacities of all other parties.
- 8 Cornerstone maintains records on children previously fostered and subsequently adopted in line with General Data Protection Regulation 2018. We are aware that over time, professional knowledge and case records might not be readily available and on this basis, Cornerstone will continue to keep records to assist adopted adults in potential search and reunion requests.
- 9 Birth records counselling will be given to all young people adopted by previous Cornerstone foster carers to help them understand the possible effects on them and their family of the outcome of their search.
- 10 Information about the **Adoption Contact Register** and how to register a wish for contact or no contact; and about absolute and qualified vetoes and the potential benefits and disadvantages of registering a veto can be provided on request.

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Cornerstone values everyone. Our aim is to listen to and attempt to resolve problems and difficulties in an atmosphere of mutual care and respect. The children and young people are our primary focus and concern. All children and young people and all adopters are made aware of the complaints procedure in their on-line handbooks/guides, which are age appropriate and identify clearly what to do in the case of a complaint.

The full Complaints Policy is available from Cornerstone on request.

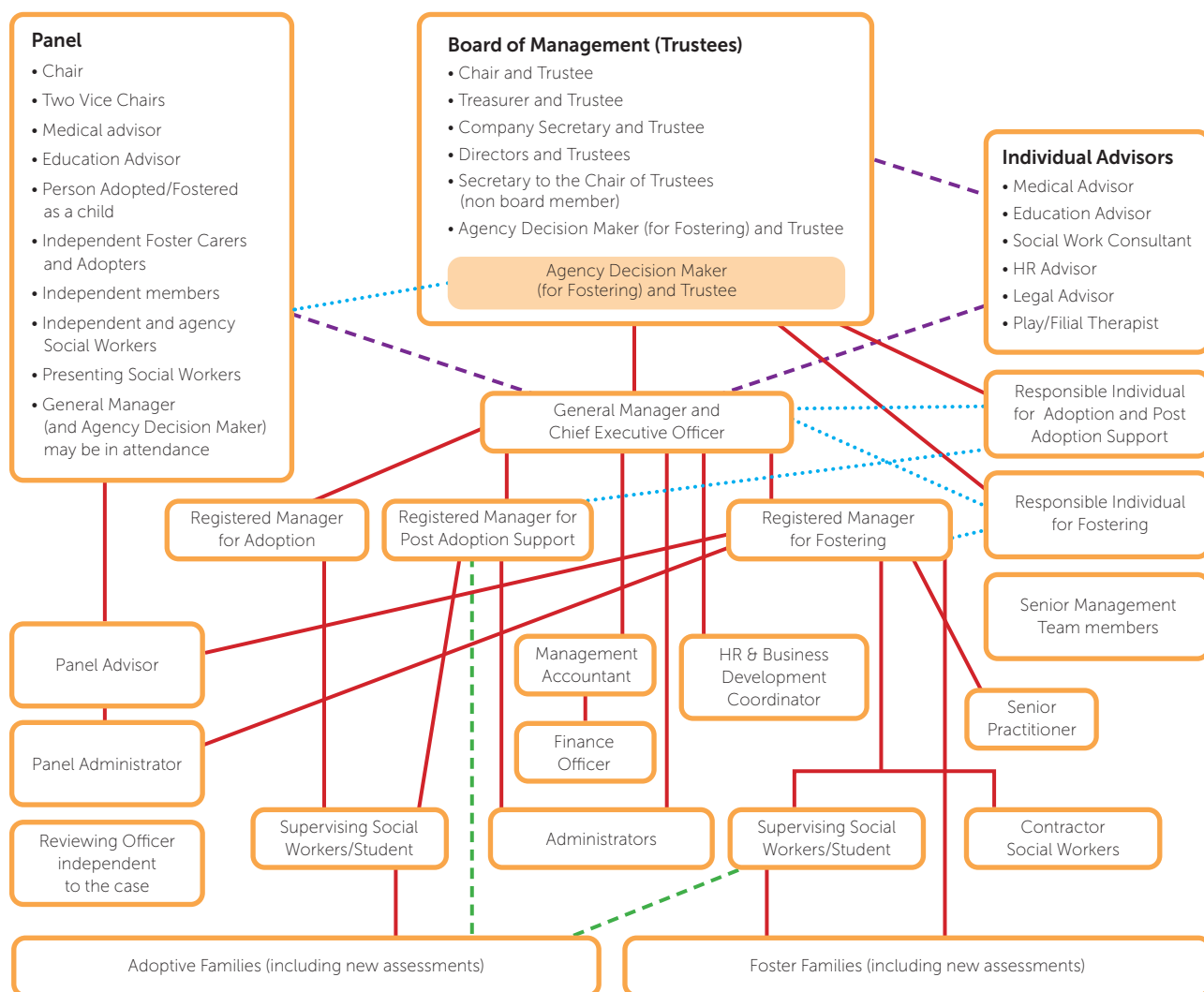


Staff 2020

All staff and volunteers who work for Cornerstone hold a range of appropriately recognised qualifications, dependent on their role, and all social work staff are registered with Social Work England. They have management, teaching, administrative and technical experience to ensure that the needs of Cornerstone are met. All staff receive regular supervision, support, and training. Pre-employment checks are undertaken, and all references are followed up. Enhanced DBS checks are undertaken.

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, but more frequently as and when information changes.

Cornerstone Organisation Chart



KEY TO RELATIONSHIPS

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

Council of Management (Trustees): Directors/Trustees including Company Secretary
Responsible Individual for Fostering CEO and Post Adoption Support Manager: Pam Birtle
Responsible Individual for Post Adoption Support: Christine Osman
Reviewing Officer independent to the case for Fostering: Becky Anderson, Charlotte Stothers
Fostering Manager: Linda Roets
Proposed Adoption Manager: Pam Birtle
Proposed Responsible Individual for Adoption: Janet Lancefield
 Room 2 Oxford House, Sixth Avenue, Doncaster - Auckley, DN9 3GG

UPDATED:
06 September 2020.