

Credo Care

Disability Foster Placements

**Statement of Purpose**

2020-2021

## Company information – status & constitution

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### Legal Status:

Credo Care Ltd is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee

Registration No: 4062744

Year of Registration: 2000

Company Directors: The Rt Revd. Damien Mead DipTh, FVCM(tH), MInstD  
Roy Hipkiss CQSW

Registered Manager: Richard Powell Dip SW, BA (Hons), MBA (Open)

Responsible Individual: Roy Hipkiss CQSW

## Organisation details

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## Legislative Framework and Standards of Care

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Credo Care Disability Foster Placements operates within the Fostering Service Regulations 2011 made under sections 22 and 48 of the Care Standard Act (CSA) 2000 and the powers under the Children Act 1989 (s59).

As an independent fostering provider, we are governed by, and committed to ensuring we meet, the National Minimum Standards laid down by the Department for Education under sections 23 and 49 of the CSA 2000. However, as a specialist agency keen to achieve and maintain best practice it is our expressed goal to exceed them wherever possible.

Following is a non-exhaustive list of relevant and applicable legislation, regulation and guidance.

## Relevant legislation, regulation and guidance

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- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Children & Young Persons Act 2008
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Care Leavers Regulations 2010
- The Children & Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability & Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations Act 1976 and amendment 2000
- The Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Fostering Service Regulations 2011 & 2013 amendments.
- National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families DoH 2000
- Children's Safeguarding Boards Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for the area in which any child/young person resides
- Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Care DfE 2012
- The Equal Opportunities Code of Practice
- Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services
- Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement & Case Review
- National Minimum Fostering Allowance & Fostering Payment Systems: Good Practice Guidance
- IRO Handbook: Statutory Guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and Local authorities on their Functions in Relation to Case Management and review for Looked After Children 2010
- Sufficiency: Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children
- Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
- Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health & Well-being of Looked After Children
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care 2014
- The Children & Families Act 2014
- Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption & Fostering) Regulations 2009
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Safeguarding Disabled Children. Practice Guidance DfE 2009

## Aims & Objectives

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The aim of Credo Care is to provide a multi-disciplinary foster care option for children and young people with complex needs. We specialise primarily in providing planned placements and short breaks for children who are on the autistic spectrum, have learning difficulties, physical disabilities, communication or medical needs as an alternative to residential or hospital care. Some of the children we look after require palliative care and have life limiting or life limited conditions.

Our objective is to place children and young people with families who can meet a very wide range of needs, according to their care plan, or child in need plan, ensuring they are able to access education and services in their local communities however complex their individual needs are.

Credo Care provides this high-quality fostering service by ensuring:

- All adults who work for Credo Care are required to demonstrate a positive model for communicating effectively with the children and young people placed.
  - Each child or young person is provided with a thoroughly and appropriately matched, well-experienced, skilled and trained carer or carers, who are committed to meeting the needs of the children and young people placed in their families.
  - Each child and young person is provided with more than enough opportunities to achieve personal integration into their communities
  - Most importantly, that each child and young person is provided with the experience of a stable, caring and nurturing family environment.
  - For every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, the support they need to achieve the five outcomes to:
- **Be Healthy**
  - **Stay Safe**
  - **Enjoy and Achieve**
  - **Make a Positive Contribution**
  - **Achieve Economic Well-Being**

## Values & Principles

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In its mission to meet and surpass wherever possible its aims and objectives, Credo Care is run with one over-riding principle which is for the primary benefit of the children and young people that we provide a foster home to.

However, it is also our aim that any person associated with each child placed, e.g. their placing Local Authority and its representatives, any member of the child or young person's family or any person significant to them, will consider the service they receive is of the highest possible standard.

Alongside this principle there are certain values we hold as essential to our 'child-focused' approach of the agency. These are:

**a) Each child is an individual who has the right:**

- To develop to their full potential
- To a safe family environment
- To be heard
- To be valued
- To be involved in decision making about their lives
- To access high quality education, development and play opportunities
- To have access to their family and/or significant others
- To be cared for by adults who offer respect, concern, affection and experience appropriate to their individual needs.

**b) That all adults responsible for their care should:**

- Be aware of the significance for children of their birth families, race, ethnicity, culture and religion
- Recognise the child's potential
- Provide opportunities for self-realisation
- Recognise & respect the child as an individual

**c) That Credo Care should:**

- Provide an environment that promotes and facilitates the best interests of each child placed.
- Recognise and acknowledge the achievements of all members of the agency.
- Encourage enthusiasm, imagination and individual contributions to the team effort.
- Maintain the systems and structures which enable the delivery of childcare to a high standard.
- Maintain effective liaison between local authorities, children, the families and foster families, schools and therapists.
- Value creativity.
- Provide young people with the necessary preparation for independent living.
- Provide experienced, trained foster carers.
- Provide, where appropriate, respite care.
- Provide transport and supervised contact where needed.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for staff, carers and children that encourage their continued personal development that are always conversant with current best practice.
- Embrace the spirits and intentions of the Foster Carer's Charter.

# Every Child Matters and Better Outcomes for Children

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Credo Care is committed to helping children in care to achieve the five outcomes which have been identified as being important to their well-being and development. The five outcomes are:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-Being

Children in care can only achieve these outcomes if the whole service is committed to working with foster carers to help them to promote these objectives.

## Being Healthy

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In line with Every Child Matters, Credo Care views the health needs of children and young people in a holistic sense i.e. they should not be restricted to simply physical needs but should include their emotional, cultural, mental and sexual health needs as well.

Supervising Social Workers ensure these are monitored and assessed through the regular supervision of Foster Carers, visits to the foster home and liaison with appropriate health professionals. Reports detailing this work and any identified issues are provided for all Looked After Reviews. Health matters are monitored by the Registered Manager on a monthly basis in the regulation 35 reports which are reported to Ofsted.

Each child placed should have a designated doctor or nurse for looked after children from their placing authority. Children and young people placed in foster care should have an initial health assessment carried out by a community Paediatrician. Children and young people are encouraged to have an annual health review that is carried out by a School Nurse or Health Visitor.

Foster Carers are committed to obtaining dental and optical checks for children in their care. The uptake of medical and dental checks is monitored and reviewed.

All health assessments checks and immunisations will be carried out in line with legislation (Children Act 1989), and recorded in children's health booklets.

There is an on-going programme of health training which has been developed to meet the needs of Foster Carers and the children in their care. This includes information on consent, confidentiality, initial and review health assessments. In addition, practical training sessions are run for Foster Carers to enable them to provide a safe and healthy home environment; these include personal hygiene, dental care and medicine management.

All Foster Carers must undertake paediatric first aid training as part of their mandatory post approval training.

Foster Carers who offer care to high medical needs children are offered specialist training to meet the needs of individual children prior to placement and this is regularly updated and certified by the appropriate community nursing teams.

As part of the assessment process of prospective Foster Carers, a health assessment is undertaken by their own GP which the agency Medical Adviser considers. The Medical Adviser is available to advise on all meetings of the Fostering Panel and can comment to panel on the health information provided on applicants in relation to fostering. All Foster Carers have a further health assessment every three years.

Foster Carers are encouraged to provide a healthy environment and pay attention to a healthy diet and providing opportunities for physical exercise and activities.

## **Staying Safe**

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The assessment of carers includes the taking of full employment and accommodation histories. Checks with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) are completed on everyone aged over 18 living in the household. A range of referees are contacted and visited this includes taking up a reference from a family member. Children of applicants are routinely interviewed as are the ex-partners of applicants.

Safe caring is an important part of foster carers' training and all carers are required to devise their own household safe care plan. This is extended further when a young

person is placed – a child specific Risk Assessment is devised and agreed by the Foster Carers, their Supervising Social Worker and the Local Authority placing Social Worker.

All our children, young people and everyone who works within Credo Care should feel and be safe. Key areas include:

- Safe Care plans in all carer households.
- Risk assessments on every child which is updated on on-going basis in all households.
- Young people are helped and encouraged to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Comprehensive child protection policy.
- Health and safety.
- De-escalation.
- All carers are monitored, supervised and supported by qualified social workers.
- Children are matched to placements with foster carers who can keep them safe.
- Excellent and implemented recruitment policies.

Children and young people are encouraged to participate and to be part of family safe care and Risk Assessments.

Issues of bullying and discrimination are addressed as part of on-going supervision along with, placement stability, security, self-awareness and protection for all. Workers in the team are aware of the vulnerability of disabled children.

Credo Care undertakes two unannounced visits per year and provides detailed recommendations on areas that require improvement.

Allegations against Foster Carers are investigated using an established procedure and in conjunction with the Local Authorities involved. An independent person chairs the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process.

## **Enjoying & Achieving**

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All young people are expected to attend school and efforts are made to maintain children in their existing schools. All young people have the opportunity and can

contribute to a Personal Education Plan (PEP) as well as an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Credo Care endorses the right of every individual child to reach their full potential through accessing education that is appropriate to his/her learning needs. We consider this to be of importance for looked after children who may, through their personal circumstances, be required to overcome greater obstacles than their peers.

We also believe children should, wherever possible, be educated within Local Authority mainstream provision (including specialist schools). To this end, Credo Care has established close working relationships with several local authorities to ensure appropriate school provision for children placed in our area.

Foster Carers are expected to provide space for children to complete their homework and educational equipment including use of a home computer with internet access.

Supervising Social Workers ensure the educational achievements and progress of children and young people are monitored and assessed through the regular supervision of foster carers, visits to the foster home and liaison with schools. Reports detailing this work and any identified issues are provided for all Looked After Reviews.

Credo Care encourages Foster Carers to make IT equipment available to young people in their homes. Foster carers are aware that it is unacceptable to take children and young people out of school for family holidays.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

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At Credo Care, leisure and recreational pursuits are an important part of a child's social education, as well as important in the holistic development of 'self'. Whether the leisure pursuit is just for enjoyment or indeed, one where a young person is particularly gifted, participation in such activities will be encouraged, in line with the child's wishes and potential.

Involvement in activities is monitored, as with the rest of our service, and any health and safety issues will be considered, as necessary. All children are encouraged to pursue hobbies and interests important to them. The children embrace a wide range of exciting activities to help them enjoy and achieve in their lives. Where children find it hard to be involved in community activities and activities outside the home, we have

Support Workers who can help them gradually develop more interests and hobbies and grow in their confidence.

## **Achieving Economic Well-Being**

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Carers receive specific training, guidance and support on assisting young people to achieve economic well-being through meeting their educational and developmental needs – this is monitored during supervision.

All children and young people have their own individual savings accounts and Foster Carers are expected to make additional savings accounts for all our Looked After Children. Children looked after for 12 months or more may be entitled to a Junior ISA, section 25B (2) Children Act 1989.

All children and young people to be encouraged to participate in choices in relation to food, personal requisites, clothes, preparation of food and drink etc. (within reasonable limits).

Foster Carers who have young people will be supported to consider “Staying Put” with the young person so that they can understand the changes that inevitably happen as young people move into adult hood. Unfortunately, this option is only available to young people who can meet their own personal care needs, if they need personal care, Foster Carers explore “Shared Lives” schemes for adult services or Health Authority funded care packages.

Pathway plans and transition plans for children with disabilities should be in place by this stage to support transitions from ages 16 to 18 and beyond in consultation with the young person and placing local authorities a clear timetable identified and worked towards.

Young people who have left school are encouraged and helped to attend further education, a training scheme place, or if possible, employment.

Our young people are supported to feel confident in being able to meet daily domestic tasks and encouraged in the development of social and practical skills for employment. We have highly skilled Support Workers to help young people with their independence skills.

## Services Provided

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### Referrals and Placements

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Credo Care has maintained a very good success rate in terms of disabled children foster placements since specialising in 2003. This remarkable achievement is through the comprehensive matching process that ensures the young person's needs can be comprehensively met by Credo Care Foster Carers. This can be a lengthy and time-consuming process but one that is essential to providing a high quality fully matched foster placement.

When a Local Authority requests a placement, we obtain comprehensive information from the allocated Social Worker and other carers where possible. This is managed by Credo Care's Referrals and Placements team. All information is shared with the proposed carers and visits arranged before the child is placed.

Prior to placement, information is comprehensively gathered in respect of the young person's needs. This is completed by our staff and others responsible for the care of the young person using our matching and 'About Me' documents. This collates information from all the young person's previous caregivers (including parents/family, school, hospital, community nurses, social workers, etc.).

The information includes: Eating & Drinking, Sleep & Rest, Communicating with Me, Toileting, Helping my Development, Lifting & Handling, Health & Medication and Family & Contact.

The details are important to us, as it may be essential for the child to take his/her toy to bed. It may be essential that they have a walk every day after lunch. Essential does not mean a life or death situation, it means what is essential for the well-being and quality of life for the child.

Once the information is collected, it is then copied and given to all the care-givers (main Foster Carer, Respite Foster Carer or Support Worker) to provide consistency in care. The 'About Me' document is particularly helpful for children who are non-verbal or autistic, where routine is important to help the child anticipate what is happening next in their lives.

## Child Progress Reports

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Child development work is monitored through child progress reports that track LAC Reviews. These seek to gather information from the child, carers, staff, school and other service providers to demonstrate progress.

The young person's school plays an important part in this process, often being the instigator of such work using an 'Individual Educational Plan', we see our role as supporting the child's carers to put improvement goals in to practice in the home environment. This could include the use of 'PECs' (picture exchange cards), 'TEACH' methodology, Makaton or other interventions.

## Medical Needs

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Information in relation to every young person's medical needs is collated to ensure that our Foster Carers provide appropriate medical care. Every young person's health requirements are researched by our staff who liaise between the placing area health authority and the responsible authority where the Foster Carers live. This ensures that Paediatric Consultants are advised of the proposed move, services are established in the area and that the medical history is transferred. All necessary medical training for our carers is undertaken prior to placement.

In order to provide this service, we have taken the precaution of providing additional medical negligence insurance for our Foster Carers.

## Palliative Foster Care

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By the nature of our specialism in caring for children who have severe disabilities and life limiting and life limited conditions we have become expert providers in palliative foster care. We are fortunate that families put themselves forward to do this very sensitive role. It requires very dedicated carers who are sensitive to the wishes and feelings of the child's birth family whilst meeting the needs of the child in their care.

With our support the carers can meet their statutory obligations to the placing authority as well as caring for the child in a way that is expected by Paediatricians and health specialists. They are supported by our qualified Social Workers and Support Workers (providing practical help such as sitting to give the carer a break). This is in addition to the specialist care advice and services and increased amount of

community-based support through the use of multi-disciplinary children's community teams. Access to specialist end of life care is highlighted as a key component of our palliative care services. Where possible we ensure that an end-of-life plan is in place that is agreed by everyone in the child's life to ensure that when the child does pass away that arrangements have already been agreed to avoid confusion and worry. At this stage Foster Carers need specialist support and advice with psychological, emotional and spiritual care and bereavement support. After the child's funeral we offer bereavement counselling to the carers and their family to help them cope with their loss.

We are honoured to work with dedicated carers providing this sensitive area of care, particularly when they choose to continue to look after life limited children as their fostering career.

## **Autism and Behaviour Support**

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We employ a full time Behaviour Specialist and provide an intensive foster care option for children and young people with complex needs, children with autistic spectrum disorder, mild to moderate autism and Asperger's syndrome. There are also children with accompanying learning disabilities and/or epilepsy with or without ASD.

Most of our care givers have previous experience as nurses or worked in the provision of social care or education. Carers receive in addition to their statutory training, autism specific training, including bespoke training i.e. Makaton 2-day workshop, Epilepsy, Picture Exchange and behavioural management. They also will attend courses specific to the needs of their foster child. This is underpinned by PROACT SCIPr-UK® behaviour management and Intensive Interaction support to encourage communication.

Our autism specific work identifies core needs and strategies which will support the child in placement. We endeavour to work with the child's school in order to achieve continuity in care at both home and school where behaviour management and communication strategies are harmonised to help the child to continue to improve. We aim for the most flexible and appropriate transfer of the child into foster care and therefore pay special attention to their needs as part of our initial matching work. Carers are pro-active in accessing the community and a wide variety of social activities for the child including swimming, riding, brownies and youth clubs.

Carers are monitored with regard to the effectiveness of their autism management in monthly supervision and continued mentoring from the Behaviour Specialist.

## Promoting Contact

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Credo Care is committed to the promotion of contact with family members (or connected persons) for the child, believing that it is essential for their emotional and physical well-being, providing that it is in line with the care plan. Where contact is not appropriate, then we would wish to ensure that the child has updated information/knowledge about the people of most importance to them.

Credo Care can provide a Contact Supervisor upon request who can produce written reports process recordings. The provider also has access to a team of experienced, independent social workers who are able to complete specific pieces of work aimed at promoting family relationships for the child. These could include:

- Life story books.
- Family group meetings.
- Meetings with individual members of the family, either with the aim of rehabilitation or to assist in the preparation of court reports or other assessment processes.
- Any other task considered appropriate.

## Respite Care

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Respite Care is seen as an important part of retaining Credo Care's Foster Carers and is available on a regular and planned basis up to 21 nights per year. Additional respite is also available to carers in emergency situations such as family bereavement.

Credo Care provides respite care in-house with carefully matched alternative Foster Carers. Some families choose for their Support Worker to stay in the family home to care for the young person which maintains routine and home surroundings.

Whenever possible and appropriate, family members of Foster Carers are assessed and approved as specific respite carers for children to help maintain a sense of family life for children, who then see respite as having time with extended family.

## The Social Work Team

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Credo Care has an experienced, qualified social work team. It is committed to working in partnership with Local authorities to ensure the best outcomes for children and will undertake within this role to:

- Work with local authorities in the planning of children's placements
- Coordinate assessments provide reports for, and attend, looked after children reviews.
- Deal with any matters of child safeguarding and complaints.
- Arrange individual programmes for children by liaison with the local authority social work teams.
- Liaise with education services, therapists and Foster Carers.
- Assist in the implementation of the child's care plan.
- Organise training and development of foster carers with the Learning Coordinator.

## Support

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The philosophy of Credo Care is very much based on a 'team approach' to fostering and, in promoting this, the following support services are offered to our Foster Carers:

- A dedicated experienced Social Worker for monthly supervision and continued contact. Additional visits are essential during the early stages of the placement and may also be required at other times. Our Social Workers either have children and family work experience or specialise in the provision of social work services to disabled children.
- Support Workers are employed to work directly with children providing a range of activities (both in and outside the foster home): escort children to contact and supervise as needed; provide daytime breaks for carers.
- Out of hours support telephone support/help line available 24/7, including bank holidays.
- Annual leave/respite: whilst carers are expected to have their own network of support, they are entitled to 21 days paid annual leave/respite per year provided by other Foster Carers. If families choose not to use this provision, a cash equivalent of unused days is paid to them.

- Support groups and regular meetings (either in-person or by video conferencing) with other Foster Carers in the organisation.
- Holiday activity days out for carers and families.
- Additional specialist services are available by negotiation.

## Recruiting & Approving Foster Carers

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Credo Care is committed to the recruitment of high-quality foster carers who can provide placements that meet the needs of young people placed with Credo Care. We employ several strategies to recruit foster carers. Due to the specific needs of the children that we look after, we try to target our recruitment towards people who have experience in care or education of children and young people who have additional needs. We also look to recruit families who have previously looked after a birth child who has disabilities, they have already learned to meet their own child's needs and these skills could now be utilised to care for foster children.

### Foster Carers Process of Application

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- Following an enquiry or response to an advertisement, a member of the recruitment team will contact the prospective applicant(s). Information about the provider, its services, the assessment process, fees and allowances are sent to them. Staff will complete an initial enquiry call obtaining basic information and answer any queries about fostering or the organisation that may arise at that time.
- If suitable, a further screening call will be undertaken, and an initial visit arranged.
- An initial visit report is compiled and then recommendations are considered by the Deputy Fostering Manager.
- If it is decided not to proceed any further, then the registration of interest is passed back to the recruitment team to close.
- If successful, an Application Pack is sent out which details
- Should the applicants wish to proceed further (with a completed application form) then they can progress to stage one of the assessment, this includes: 'Skills to Foster' preparation training programme. The course is led by Social Workers and experienced Foster Carers.
- Health and safety assessments together with statutory checks and references are then applied for (including an employment reference). The applicant(s) will also be asked to undergo a medical with their GP and the completed AH Form will be forwarded to the provider's Medical Advisor for a health assessment and recommendations.
- The Registered Manager will decide whether to proceed with Stage 1 and 2 concurrently or separately. At the end of stage one of the assessment, a

decision will be taken whether to proceed to stage two of the assessment or not.

- The Agency write to those carers who will not be proceeding.
- After successful completion of the first stage the stage two assessment is then commenced. The assessment is always undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced social worker. This information is recorded on the BAAF Form F that sets out the 'evidence' of their ability and suitability to foster.
- Once completed the Form F assessment is presented to the fostering panel where their assessment is considered; the applicants are invited to attend Credo Care's panel.
- The Credo Care Fostering Panel then decides whether to recommend approval and if so, the criteria e.g. age and number of children to be fostered, for the foster carers.
- This recommendation is then passed to the ADM for a final decision.
- If a decision is taken not to recommend approval the applicant is informed in writing that they may (within 28 calendar days) of the determination by the ADM seek a review of this determination by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) or make representations to Credo Care.
- Following their successful approval all new Foster Carers are expected to undertake induction and core modules of training as part of their on-going development. They are expected to complete the Training Support & Development Standards and are encouraged to take up further certified training in Caring for Children and Young People.
- From a prospective carers' application being accepted, to actually being registered as foster carers (where applicable) with Credo Care, will take less than eight months and aim to achieve this within 6 months.

## Approval & Panel

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The assessment processes take account of the Fostering Service Regulations and Guidance; they are transparent and thorough.

Recommendations to approve and advisory terms reflect the suitability of the household to foster (approval) and the best match for the household (matching recommendation.) The role of two local approval Panels, drawn from the central list of members, is to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people by their consideration of assessments and reviews. They provide a quality assurance function independent of the provider.

The panels make recommendations in relation to new applications, annual reviews, post allegation/complaint reviews, terminations of approvals. They may also consider policy and development issues. Panels meet in Kent, the Midlands and the East of England. Their memberships have a balance of gender, ethnicity, life experience and qualifications in order to consider all matters from wide perspectives. Panels have access to legal and medical advice as required.

The independent chair and vice chair carry significant experience of working with children and young people in the statutory sector and independent capacities. The central list of members includes:

- Foster carers and adopters
- Care-Experienced young people
- Education advisors
- Social workers with extensive experience in work with young people approaching independence and leaving care and family placement
- Qualified nurse
- Qualified doctor
- Panel members also receive regular training and annual appraisals.

The final decision for approval is made by the Agency Decision Maker who is social work qualified. If the foster carers are unhappy with the final decision, they have the right to appeal. This can be made direct to Credo Care or direct to the Independent Review Mechanism.

## **Foster Carer Training & Development**

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At Credo Care we are committed to providing our carers and staff with training opportunities, advice, information and support to ensure the continued development of the necessary skills and knowledge to create nurturing and safe environments for the children in our care.

Our aim has been to develop a framework which encourages continuous professional development and meets both individuals' development needs and relates to the requirements of our organisation. Everyone is supported and empowered to make informed decisions about the most appropriate learning opportunities which have been identified and reviewed through their individual Personal Development Plan.

Credo Care run a wide range of courses using internal and external trainers, all of whom are experienced childcare practitioners. Most of our carers have previous experience as Foster Carers, Nurses or have been involved in the provision of social care. Our comprehensive training programme and carer support groups include specialist sessions about autism, epilepsy, Makaton, caring for children who have severe medical needs and other aspects such as safe caring. Those who have no previous fostering experience will receive expert guidance every step of the way from their supervising social worker and other support staff.

Learning opportunities are provided using formalised training events, small workshops and individual sessions. We will also be utilising a diverse range of delivery methods including home study and webinars.

If carers share a specific learning need that has been identified in their personal development plan and not been included in our training schedule, wherever possible we will attempt to identify an appropriate course.

In year one, following approval, carers will undertake induction training which includes core training and completion of the TSD Workbook. All training in year one is mandatory and is a requirement under the National Foster Carer Standards.

Following the Foster Carer first review (within one year of approval) carers are able to attend the year two intermediate courses and advanced courses in year three onwards and invited to undertake the Diploma Advanced Skills in Foster Care.

However, at times carers may identify an area of learning that would be of benefit which is outside their length of service to date. On these occasions Personal Development Plans will be updated to reflect the importance of this learning opportunity.

The thinking behind having courses that have been determined by the length of the carers' fostering career to date is not to be restrictive, but to ensure that everyone has completed the required core training and that all training is individualised to their own personal development.

All courses in years 2 and 3+ are based upon our experience, advice from course facilities and feedback over the years from carers.

## Foster Carer Reviews

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In line with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, (Regulation 28), and the review policy of the provider, the approval of all foster carers is reviewed on an annual basis. As well as the carer review self-assessment, enquiries are made with the placing Social Worker, young people in placement, their families and the foster family, as to their suitability to continue as Foster Carers or for any changes to their approval to be considered as necessary.

The review is coordinated and chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer who is a qualified Social Worker. At the conclusion of the review the IRO produces a written report setting out whether the carer continues to be suitable and whether the terms of approval continue to be appropriate. The review report will be referred to the Fostering Panel (after the first year of fostering, then subsequently every fourth year after that or if there are changes in the fostering household or registration criteria) for consideration. Foster Carers are provided with a copy of the review decision sheet as soon as practical.

Health and safety audits are carried out annually on all foster homes and safe caring family policies are reviewed at least once a year. Local Authority update checks are renewed on a two-yearly basis, DBS annually and Medical three yearly.

## Complaints & Child Safeguarding Procedures

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Credo Care has adopted the KSCB (Kent Safeguarding Children Board) child protection guidelines and operates within the Local Authority guidance of the area where the children are placed. Credo Care also has its own child protection reporting procedure which is provided to all staff and carers. The Credo Care child protection procedures set down a clear format for reporting any child protection matter to the Credo Care Registered Manager. The overall aim of the use of the child protection procedures is to ensure the protection of children. On receipt of any allegation Credo Care instructs the child's placing authority and liaises and consults with the relevant area Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and notifies Ofsted. In addition, we have adopted KSCB "Safer Recruitment & Employment" for the recruitment and selection of staff.

All Credo Care staff and carers attend updated safeguarding training on a rolling programme.

The complaints officer can be contacted at the following address: Complaints Officer, c/o Credo Care Ltd, 12 High Street, Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9AJ.

## Safeguarding and Safe Care

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All families participate in writing a safe care plan, which is updated when there are any changes in the family and reviewed on a yearly basis. Each child in placement has a risk assessment which is regularly reviewed and updated, with clear actions on how to minimise any risks posed by a child or to them.

Health and Safety checks on the home are in place, reviewed at least annually and regular unannounced visits to carers are undertaken by the provider (at least two per year).

Children's safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. Children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm. Foster carers actively safeguard and promote the welfare of foster children.

Foster carers make positive relationships with children, generate a culture of openness and trust and are aware of and alert to any signs or symptoms that might indicate a child is at risk of harm.

Foster carers encourage children to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up. Children are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when outside of the household or when using the internet or social media.

The service implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment

Foster carers are trained in appropriate safer-care practice, including skills to care for children who have been abused and includes training specifically on issues affecting disabled children.

Credo Care works effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection, e.g. the responsible authority, schools, hospitals, general practitioners, etc.

## Management Structure & the Staff Group

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Credo Care employs a highly qualified staff group who possess the necessary, relevant academic qualifications to provide the support, social work input and administration required for the proper regulation and advancement of children in our care. Additionally, Credo Care has ready access to many experts in specific areas of child care who can be called upon to give the benefit of their learning and experience as needed.

### The Directors

**The Right Reverend Damien Mead** is founder and Director of the Company and fulfils the role of Chairman of the Board of Directors – DipTh, FVCM(Th) & MoID. Damien has experience of working in residential care of people with learning disabilities, and in particular the support of Independent Living Schemes in the Community. He has also worked as an Assistant Manager in the London Headquarters of an International Missionary Society. In addition to his work for Credo Care, Damien, who was ordained a Priest in February 1990, was consecrated on 20th September 2008 as Bishop within the Anglican Catholic Church. He established Credo Care with Roy Hipkiss in 2000.

**Roy Hipkiss** is the founder and Director of QA and Business Development. He also acts as Agency Decision Maker and Responsible Individual who oversees business development for the Company – he is a qualified Social Worker (CQSW) and Practice Teacher. Roy has over 32 years' experience in social work and fostering in both Local Government and independent agencies from 1993, as a Senior Practitioner from 1995 and qualified as a Practice Teacher at the University of Sussex in 1996.

**Richard Powell** is Managing Director and joined Credo Care in January 2019 following 23 years' practice in Local Authority children's services including, head of service to children's safeguarding services, county disability lead and head of fostering and adoption and placement services. Having been an independent chair of panel, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role of Registered Manager. Relevant Training: Dip Social Work (North London), BA (HONS) Family Childcare studies, (Kingston), Master of Business Administration, (MBA, Open), Commissioning and Procurement 3rd sector (Bath). Richard oversees the operation of all the agency functions including Social Work, Finance and Referrals teams.

## Social Work Department

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**Social Work Team - South** is led by a Senior Practitioner **Lisa Watson-Howland** who oversees practice supervision of Social Workers in the area, supported by the Registered Manager.

**Social Work Team - Midlands** is led by the Deputy Fostering Manager **Vicky Smith** who oversees practice supervision of social workers in the area, supported by the Registered Manager. Amongst her other duties she oversees foster care assessments and supervises our Independent Social Workers.

**Social Work Team – East** is led by two Senior Practitioners; **Michelle Dean** and **Nikki Phillips**, who oversee practice supervision of Social Workers in the area, supported by the Registered manager.

**Placements & Referrals** – Are overseen by Richard Powell, Managing Director (whilst we recruit to the vacant managers post for this area)

## Operations and Human Resources

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**Karen Walker** is the HR and Office Manager - Assoc CIPD. Karen works closely with the Directors and Management team to support them in achieving business goals and HR practice.

## Finance Department

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**Justine Laws** is the Finance Manager and fully qualified AAT with 30 years' experience. Previous roles include Finance Manager of an independent school and working in finance for a care company. She is responsible for the overall running of the accounts function of the company and ensuring smooth liaison on the financial side between the Local Authorities, carers and support staff.

## Other staff

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In addition to those listed, Credo Care employs other permanent staff to support their processes.

Several independent workers and professionals also work for the provider on a contractual basis on a variety of projects overseen by the Director of QA and Business Development and Registered Manager.

## Professional Company Support

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Company Secretary:	Justine Laws (Finance Manager)
The Company Accountant:	Stuart Datlen, Moore (South) LLP The Quay 30 Channel Way Ocean Village Southampton SO14 3TG
The Company Solicitor:	Carl Vincent, Girlings Solicitors Stourside Place, Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PP
Company Insurance Manager:	Stewart Archdale, DE Ford Poppleton Grange, Low Poppleton Lane, York YO26 6GZ
The Company Medical Adviser:	Dr Georgina Siggers Old Cottage, Common Road, Ightham, Nr Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 9EB

The company is registered under the Data Protection Act 1989 with the Information Commissioners Office (No: Z6597094).

## Finances

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Credo Care has been established since 31st August 2000 and is a not-for-profit company without share capital, registered in England (No: 4062744). Regular reporting and statements from the Finance Manager and Accountants, together with longer-term forecasting and robust internal control systems, ensure that the company's day to day operations are solvent and that senior management can consider opportunities and long-term goals for growth and improvement.

## Awards & Accreditations

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Credo Care was rated as Outstanding in 2007 and Good in 2011 & 2014 and Outstanding again in August 2017 by Ofsted. Our most recent inspection in 2019 rated Credo Care as Good. This is an overview of what the inspector found during the most recent inspection:

- Children are treated with dignity and respect. They are children first. They experience care, which is responsive to their individual identity, helps them to form a positive view of themselves, and enhances their ability to form attachments and build resilience.
- Children are making excellent progress in their placements. They are given a wide range of positive experiences, including memorable firsts which have enriched their lives.
- Children who do not communicate verbally are actively supported to express their views and wishes. The agency goes to great lengths to ensure that the children's voices and wishes. The agency goes to great lengths to ensure that the children's voices remain at the centre of all aspects of planning and service development.
- Staff receive meaningful supervision that provides time to reflect on their practice and development. Staff feel valued and hold the agency in high regard. Training is sufficient and proactive. Staff are provided opportunities to develop their practice through the identification of and response to individualised training needs.
- Carers are prepared well for their role and they access necessary training through the assessment process.
- Managers and staff work closely with other professionals and family members as appropriate, to ensure that there is an agreed robust response to any identified areas of risk.

In July 2004, Credo Care was awarded the 'Investor in People' standard this was renewed in October 2007, September 2010, July 2014 and June 2018.