



Credo Care Disability Fostering

## Statement of Purpose

2019–2020



## Contents

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Company Information – Status and Constitution .....	3
Organisation Details .....	3
Legislative Framework and Standards of Care .....	3
Relevant and Applicable Legislation, Regulation and Guidance .....	4
Aims and Objectives .....	5
Values and Principles.....	6
Every Child Matters and Better Outcomes for Children .....	7
Being Healthy .....	7
Staying Safe .....	8
Enjoying and Achieving .....	9
Making a Positive Contribution.....	10
Achieving Economic Wellbeing .....	10
Services Provided .....	11
Referrals and Placements.....	11
Child Progress Reports .....	11
Medical Needs .....	12
Palliative Foster Care.....	12
Autism.....	12
Promoting Contact .....	13
Respite .....	14
The Social Work Team .....	14
Support .....	15
The Process for Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers.....	15
Foster Carer Process of Application .....	16
Approval and Panel .....	17
Foster Carer Training and Development .....	18
Foster Carer Reviews.....	19
Complaints and Child Safeguarding Procedures.....	19
Safeguarding and Safe Care .....	20
Management Structure and the Staff Group.....	20
The Directors.....	20
Social Work .....	21
Operations and Human Resources.....	21
Finance.....	21
Other Staff.....	21
Professional Company Support.....	22
Finances.....	22
Awards and Accreditations.....	23

## Company Information – Status and Constitution

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Legal Status:	Credo Care Ltd is a not-for-profit limited by guarantee
Registration No:	4062744
Year of Registration:	2000
Directors:	The Rt Revd. Damien Mead DipTS, MInstD Roy Hipkiss CQSW
Registered Manager:	Richard Powell DipSW, 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 Fostering 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 an agency keen to achieve and maintain best practice it is our expressed goal to exceed them wherever possible.

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



## Relevant and Applicable 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
- Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies
- The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies
- Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health & Well-being of Looked After Children
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Family & Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
- 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

Richard Powell is the Registered Manager responsible for the management, compliance and monitoring of all standards. Roy Hipkiss, Responsible Individual, undertakes separate audits to ensure the requirements of the Standards are being met as well as monitoring the number of:

- Child protection allegations
- Children who go missing without authority
- Complaints and their outcome
- Incident reports

## Aims and Objectives

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The aim of Credo Care is to provide a multidisciplinary 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 need 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.

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 an appropriately matched, 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.
- That every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, receives the support they need to achieve the five outcomes to:

- **Be Healthy**
- **Stay Safe**
- **Enjoy and Achieve**
- **Make a Positive Contribution**
- **Achieve Economic Wellbeing**



## Values and Principles

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

However, it is also our aim that any person associated with each child placed, e.g. their responsible *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 and 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 that 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 and 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 that have been identified as important to their wellbeing and development. The five outcomes are:

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

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. These 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 then 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 ongoing programme of health training that has been developed to meet the needs of foster carers and the children in their care. This includes information on consent, confidentiality,

and 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 first aid training as part of their mandatory post-approval training.

Foster carers who offer care to children with high medical needs are offered specialist training to meet the needs of individual children prior to placement. This is regularly updated and signed off by the appropriate community nursing teams.

As part of the assessment process of prospective foster carers, a health assessment is undertaken by the carers' GP; this is considered by the medical advisor to the fostering panel. The medical advisor is available to advise on all meetings of the fostering panel and is able to comment to panel on the health information provided on applicants. All foster carers have a further health assessment every two years.

Foster carers are encouraged to provide a healthy environment, pay attention to a healthy diet and provide 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 and Barring Service (DBS) are completed on everyone aged 18 and over 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 foster carers' ex-partners.

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 in Credo Care should feel and be safe. Key areas include:

- Safe care plans in all carer households.
- Risk assessments for every child that are updated on an ongoing 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 ongoing 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 and 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 to 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 particular 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 a number of 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 sessional support workers who can help them gradually develop more interests and hobbies and grow in their confidence. Credo Care promotes positive behaviour and resilience.

## Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Carers receive specific training, guidance and support on assisting young people to achieve economic wellbeing 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, as per section 25B (2) Children Act 1989.

All children and young people are 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 schemes with the young person so that they can understand the changes that inevitably happen as young people move into adulthood.

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 is identified and worked towards.

Young people who have left school are encouraged and helped to attend further education, a training scheme 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 sessional support workers for young people to work on 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 foster placements for disabled children since 2003. This remarkable achievement is through the comprehensive matching process that ensures each young person's needs can be comprehensively met by Credo Care foster carers. This can be a lengthy and time-consuming process (on average, over 30 hours) but is one that is essential to providing a high-quality fully matched foster placement.

When an authority requests a placement, we obtain comprehensive information from the social worker and other carers. This is collated by Credo Care's matching team. All information is shared with the proposed carers and visits are arranged before the child is placed. We do not usually undertake emergency placements as we prefer to plan comprehensively.

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 and Drinking; Sleep and Rest; Communicating with Me; Toileting; Helping my Development; Lifting and Handling; Health and Medication; and Family and Contact.

These details are important to us: it may be essential for a child to take his/her toy to bed or 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 wellbeing and quality of life of the child.

Once the information is collected, it is copied and distributed to all caregivers 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 regular child progress reports. These seek to gather information from carers, staff, schools and other service providers.

The young person's school plays an important part in this process, often as the instigator of such work using an 'Individual Educational Plan'. We see our role as supporting the child's carers to put improvement goals into 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 provide this very sensitive role, which requires very dedicated carers who are sensitive to the wishes and feelings of the child's birth family while meeting the needs of the child in their care.

With our support, the carers are able to 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 (who provide practical help including sitting to give the carers a break). This is in addition to the specialist care advice, services and increased amount of community-based support through the use of multidisciplinary 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, 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 within their fostering career.

## Autism

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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 caregivers have previous experience as foster carers, nurses or of working in the provision of social care or education. Carers receive, in addition to their statutory training, autism-specific training, including bespoke training, e.g. Makaton two-day workshop, epilepsy management, PECs training and behavioural management. They also will attend courses specific

to the needs of their foster child. This is underpinned by pro-SCIPr behaviour management and Intensive Interaction support to encourage communication.

Our autism-specific work identifies core needs and strategies that 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 so that 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 proactive in accessing the community and a wide variety of social activities for the child including swimming, riding, Brownies and other youth clubs.

Carers are monitored with regard to the effectiveness of their autism management in monthly supervision.

## Promoting Contact

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Credo Care is committed to the promotion of contact with family members (or connected persons) of the child, believing that it is essential for their emotional and physical wellbeing, 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 and process recordings. We also have 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

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Respite care is an important part of retaining Credo Care's foster carers and is available to all carers 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. Occasionally, the support worker moves into the family home to care for the young person as this maintains routines 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. We are 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:

- Monthly support and supervision visits from their own experienced social worker. Additional contact and support are made available as and when required. These additional visits are essential during the early stages of the placement and may also be required at other stages in the placement. Our social workers either have children and family work experience or specialise in the provision of social work services to disabled children.
- Support workers work directly with children providing a range of activities (both in and outside the foster home) including escorting children to contact and supervising as needed and providing daytime breaks for carers.
- Our out-of-hours telephone support helpline is available 24/7, including on bank holidays.
- Annual leave/respite: while carers are expected to have their own network of support, they are entitled to 21 days' paid annual leave/respite per year. Daytime sessional support care may also be provided where there is an identified need. Credo Care is committed to the assessment and approval of friends and family as respite carers.
- Support groups and regular meetings with other foster carers in the organisation.
- Holiday activity days out for carers and families.
- Additional specialist services are available by negotiation.



## The Process for Recruiting and 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 a number of strategies to recruit foster carers. Due to the particular 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 special needs. We also look to recruit families who have previously looked after a birth child who has disabilities, as they have already learned to meet their own child's needs and these skills could now be utilised to care for foster children.

## Foster Carer Application Process

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- Following an enquiry or response to an advertisement, a member of the recruitment team will contact the prospective applicant(s). Staff will complete an initial enquiry form obtaining basic information and will 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 home visit arranged.
- An initial visit report is compiled and then recommendations are presented to the registration of interest panel (ROIP).
- If the registration of interest panel decides not to proceed any further, the registration of interest is passed back to the recruitment team to close.
- If the ROIP decide to proceed, an application pack is sent out that details information about the provider, its services, the assessment process, fees and allowances.
- Should the applicants wish to proceed further (with a completed application form), they can progress to stage one of the assessment, which includes the 'Skills to Foster' preparation training program. The course is led by social workers and experienced foster carers.



- Health and safety assessments together with statutory checks and references are sought (including an employment reference). The applicant(s) will also be asked to undergo a medical with their GP and the completed assessment form will be forwarded to the provider's medical advisor for assessment and recommendations.
- At the end of stage one of the assessment, a decision will be taken as to whether to proceed to stage two of the assessment.
- The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) will write to those carers who will not be proceeding.
- After successful completion of the first stage, stage two is commenced. This assessment is always undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced social worker. This information is recorded on the CoramBAAF Form F and sets out the 'evidence' of their ability and suitability to foster.
- Once completed, the Form F assessment is presented to the fostering panel to consider; the applicants are invited to attend Credo Care's panel.
- The Credo Care fostering panel decides whether to recommend approval and, if so, the approval criteria (i.e. the age and number of children to be fostered) for the foster carers.

- This recommendation is 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 ongoing development. They are expected to complete the Training Support and Development Standards workbook. They are encouraged to take up further certified training in Caring for Children and Young People.
- From a prospective carer's application being accepted to actually being registered as foster carers (where applicable) with Credo Care will take fewer than eight months.

## Approval and Panel

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

Approval recommendations and advisory terms reflect the suitability of the household to foster (approval) and the best match for the household (matching recommendations). The role of three local approval panels, drawn from a 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, and terminations of approval. 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. Panel members also receive regular training and annual appraisals.

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 working with young people approaching independence and leaving care and family placement
- Qualified nurses
- Qualified doctors

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 directly to Credo Care or directly to the Independent Review Mechanism.

## Foster Carer Training and 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 that encourages continuous professional development and meets both individual 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 that have been identified through their individual personal development plan. These will be reviewed through ongoing professional supervision and at annual reviews (where personal development plans will be considered).

Credo Care facilitate a wide range of courses using internal and external trainers, all of whom are experienced child or healthcare 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 programme of carer support groups include specialist sessions on autism, epilepsy, Makaton, caring for children with severe medical needs, and 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 will be provided using formalised training events, small workshops and, at times, individual sessions. We will also utilise a diverse range of delivery methods including the potential (where appropriate) for home study using the internet.

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

In year one, following approval, carers will undertake induction training that will include 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 a foster carer's first review (within one year of approval), they are able to attend the year two intermediate courses and, in year three onwards, advanced courses with the aim of completing the Level 3 Diploma in Advanced Skills in Foster Care.

At times, carers may identify an area of learning that would be of benefit but falls outside of their recommended programme based on 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 is not to be restrictive but to ensure that all carers complete the required core training and that all training is individualised to their own personal development.

All courses in years two, three and beyond are based upon our experience, advice from course facilitators 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 consulting with the foster carer(s), enquiries are made with local authorities, 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 a suitably qualified independent social worker (ISW). At the conclusion of the review, the ISW provides 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 and subsequently every third year after that; possibly more frequently depending upon changes in the fostering household) 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. All statutory checks are renewed on a two-yearly basis.

## Complaints and Child Safeguarding Procedures

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Credo Care has adopted the KSCB (Kent Safeguarding Children Board) Child Protection guidelines and operates within the guidance of the local authority where 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's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and notifies Ofsted. In addition, we have adopted KSCB's Safer Recruitment and Employment guidelines for the recruitment and selection of staff.

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

The provider has appointed an Independent Complaints Officer, who 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 that is regularly reviewed and updated, with clear actions on how to minimise any risks posed by or to a child. Health and safety checks on the home take place regularly and are reviewed at least annually. Regular unannounced visits to carers are undertaken by the provider (at least two per year).

## Management Structure and 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 childcare who can be called upon to give the benefit of their learning and experience when and where required.



### The Directors

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**The Right Reverend Damien Mead** (DipTS, MInstD, MoID) is **Director of the Company** and fulfils the role of **Chair of the Board of Directors** and has experience in the caring profession. Damien has experience of working in residential care for 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 20<sup>th</sup> September 2008 as Bishop within the Anglican Catholic Church. He established Credo Care with Roy Hipkiss in 2000.

**Roy Hipkiss** (CQSW) is the founder, **Agency Decision Maker, Responsible Individual** and, as **Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning Director**, oversees business development for the company. He is a qualified Social Worker and Practice Teacher and has over 25 years' experience in social work and fostering. He has been qualified as a social worker since 1992, has worked in fostering in both local government and independent agencies from 1993, including as a Senior Practitioner from 1995; he qualified as a Practice Teacher at the University of Sussex in 1996. Roy established Credo Care with Damien Mead in 2000.

**Richard Powell** (DipSW, North London; BA (Hons) Family Childcare Studies, Kingston; MBA (Open); Commissioning and Procurement 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, Bath) is the **Managing Director** and **Registered Manager**. Richard joined Credo Care in January 2019 following 23 years' practice in local authority children's services including head of children's safeguarding services, county disability lead and head of fostering and adoption and placement services. Having served as independent chair of Credo Care's fostering panel, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role of Registered Manager.

## Social Work

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**Vicky Smith** is the **Deputy Fostering and Social Care Manager** and supports the Registered Manager.

**Social Work Team – South** is led by 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 Deputy Fostering Manager **Vicky Smith**, who oversees practice supervision of social workers in the area.

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

The **Placements and Referrals** function is led by **Placements and Referrals Manager Paul Allum**, who supervises the **Family Finding Coordinator**, **Placements Coordinator** and independent social workers undertaking assessments for new applicants.

## Operations and Human Resources

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**Karen Walker** (Assoc CIPD; employed full-time) is the **HR and Office Manager**. Karen works closely with the Directors and management team to support them in achieving business goals while adhering to company policies and procedures. She is supported by a designated administrator in her HR duties.

## Finance

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**Justine Laws** (AAT qualified; employed full-time) joined as **Finance Manager** in February 2019. She is fully AAT qualified with over 30 years' experience including 20 years as the Finance Manager of an independent school. Previous roles involved liaising with local authorities working in finance for a care company. Justine is responsible for the overall running of the accounts function of the company and ensuring smooth liaison on the financial side between local authorities, carers and support staff, as well as with the company's finance providers.

## Other Staff

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In addition to those listed, Credo Care employs a further 17 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 Placements and Referrals Manager and Registered Manager.

## Professional Company Support

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Company Secretary:	Justine Laws (Finance Manager)
The Company Accountant:	Stuart Datlen, Moore Stephens The French Quarter, 114 High Street, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 2AA
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 Advisor:	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 (number: 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 (company number: 4062744). Regular reporting and statements from the Finance Manager, 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 and Accreditations

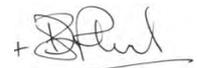
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Credo Care was rated by Ofsted as Outstanding in 2007, Good in 2011 and 2014, and Outstanding again in August 2017. Our most recent inspection in 2019 rated Credo Care as Good. This is an overview of what the inspector found during the most recent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

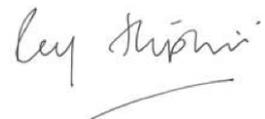
- Children are treated with dignity and respect. They are children first. They experience care which is responsive to their individual identity, helps them to form a positive view of themselves, and enhances their ability to form attachments and build resilience.
- Children are making excellent progress 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 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.

Credo Care is a Disability Confident Committed Employer.



The Rt Revd Damien Mead DipTS, MInstD  
Chair of the Board of Directors



Roy Hipkiss  
Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning Director, Responsible Individual



Richard Powell  
Managing Director, Registered Manager



## **Credo Care Disability Fostering**

Credo Care was established in 2000 as the UK's first independent fostering agency specialising in the care of children with disabilities, complex medical needs and learning difficulties.

### **Head office**

12 High Street, Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9AJ

0330 123 5530

[www.credocare.co.uk](http://www.credocare.co.uk)

[enquiries@credocare.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@credocare.co.uk)

