

Credo Care Fostering Service

Supporting children with additional needs or a Disability

Statement of Purpose

2024-2025

Company information – status & constitution

Legal Status:

Credo Care Fostering is a Limited Company.

Registration No: 4062744

Year of Registration: 2000

Company Directors: The Rt Rev. Dr. Damien Mead DipTh, Hon.DD.,
FVCM(Th), MIOd
Roy Hipkiss CQSW

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

Responsible Individual: Roy Hipkiss CQSW

Organisation details

Kent (Head) Office: 12 High Street, Lydd, Romney Marsh, Kent, TN29 9AJ

Main Telephone 0330 123 5530

Email: enquiries@credocare.co.uk

Website: www.credocare.co.uk

Legislative Framework and Standards of Care

Credo Care 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

- 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
- 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
- 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

The aim of Credo Care is to provide foster care for children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disability often who have complex needs or complex medical needs. We specialise primarily in providing planned and emergency placements and short breaks. 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 placed.
- Each child is provided with a thoroughly and appropriately matched, well-experienced, skilled and trained carer/s, who are committed to meeting the needs of the children placed in their families.
- Each child is provided with opportunities to achieve personal integration into their communities
- Most importantly, that each child 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 their full potential.

Values & Principles

Credo Care is run with an over-riding principle, for the primary benefit of the children that we provide a foster home to and the carers that meet their needs. It is also our aim that any person associated with each child placed;

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
- 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 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.

Better Outcomes for Children

Crede Care is committed to helping children in care to achieve the following outcomes which have been identified as being important to their well-being and development. Children Looked After achieve these outcomes if the whole service is committed to working with foster carers to help them to promote these objectives.

Healthy Care

Crede 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. 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 quarterly basis in the regulation 35 reports 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 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. Foster Carers are encouraged to provide a healthy environment and pay attention to a healthy diet and providing opportunities for physical exercise and activities.

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.

Keeping Safe and Safe Care

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 child 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 to enable risk reduction.

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

- Individualised 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 reduction. 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 and the risks of exploitation.

The Safeguarding lead for the agency is the Registered Manager, Richard Powell. Tel: 03301235530 r.powell@credocare.co.uk

Allegations against Foster Carers are investigated using an established procedure and in conjunction with the Local Authorities involved. Local Authority LADOs chair the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process and liaison by the Registered Manager continues with support from the team managers throughout. Credo Care undertakes two unannounced visits per year and provides detailed recommendations on areas that require improvement.

Engaging & Participating

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 Local Authorities to ensure appropriate school provision for children placed in our area.

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. 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.

Being part of the Community

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.

Developing Self Care and Independence

We seek to enable well-being and independence thinking and planning through meeting children's 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.

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.

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

Referrals and Placements

Credo Care has maintained a very good success rate in terms of disabled children foster placements. This 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 where appropriate and possible.

Prior to placement, information is comprehensively gathered in respect of the child's needs. This is completed by our staff and others responsible for the care of the child using our matching and 'About Me' documents. This collates information from all the child'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.

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

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 and 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), Makaton or other interventions.

Medical Needs

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 and we actively use MAR charts. This ensures that Paediatric Consultants are advised of the proposed move, services are established in the area and that the medical history is transferred.

Palliative Foster Care

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). Where appropriate 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.

Autism and Behaviour Support

We employ a full time behaviour coordinator and provide an intensive foster care option for children and young people with complex needs and children on the autistic spectrum.

Many of our care givers have previous experience in a medial capacity 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.

Promoting Contact

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.

Respite Care

Respite Care is seen as an important part of retaining Credo Care's Foster Carers and is available on a regular and planned basis of 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. Whenever possible and appropriate, family members of Foster Carers are assessed and approved as specific back up 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

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

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.
- 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

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

- Following an enquiry or response to an advertisement, a member of the fostering social work 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 an initial visit is arranged
- An initial visit report is compiled and then recommendations are considered by the Fostering Team 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 reviews applicants proceeding between 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 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

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.) Panels are 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 and North 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 chairs carry significant experience of working with children and young people in the statutory sector and independent capacities.

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

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. 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. By 12 months following approval, carers will have completed their 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 undertake the Diploma Advanced Skills in Foster Care.

Foster Carer Reviews

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, 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.

Complaints & Child Safeguarding Procedures

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). In addition, we have adopted KSCB "Safer Recruitment & Employment" for the recruitment and selection of staff.

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

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

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 as needed.

The Directors

The Right Rev. Dr. Damien Mead, co-founder and Director of the Company, serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors – DipTh, Hon.DD., FVCM(Th) and has been a Member of the Institute of Directors for 20 years. 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, and was consecrated in September 2008 as a Bishop, travels both nationally and internationally on Church and related Charity work. In October 2020 Damien received a Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) from Johann Heirich Pestalozzi University, in Miami, Florida, USA, in recognition of his work. He established Credo Care with Roy Hipkiss in 2000.”

Roy Hipkiss is the founder and Director of QA and Business Development is the 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 for children’s safeguarding, county lead for Disability, 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 safeguarding.

Social Work Department

Social Work Team - South is led by **Alan Clark** Fostering Team Manager who oversees practice and supervision of 5 Social Workers, support workers and ISWs in the area, supported by the Registered Manager.

Social Work Team - Midlands is led by the Fostering Team Manager **Rob Thomson** who oversees practice supervision of 5 social workers, support workers and ISWs in the area, supported by the Registered Manager.

Social Work Team – East is led by the Fostering Team Manager **Jenny Braddock** who oversees practice supervision of 4 Social Workers, support workers and ISWs in the area, supported by the Registered manager.

Placements & Referrals – Are overseen by the Team manager south with support from the Registered manager and the Placement and referral staff

Operations and Human Resources

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 and administrators.

Finance Department

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 and supervision of the finance staff.

Other staff

In addition to those listed, Credo Care employs other permanent staff to support their processes including, Learning and Development coordinator, Darroch Masson-Wickens, Behaviour work through Jan Harris and marketing and recruitment and children's engagement through Suzy Parnham.

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

Professional Company Support

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

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

Finances

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.