

AST – Allegation Support Team

Role Description

Post: AST Advisor - sessional/self-employed

About FosterTalk - FosterTalk is a not for profit, independent organisation which has been established for 22 years. FosterTalk is an exciting and inspiring organisation to work with. We focus solely on providing high quality professional support services to foster and kinship carers. FosterTalk is one of the fastest growing support organisations delivering services on a national level.

Safeguarding Statement

FosterTalk is committed to recruiting self-employed contractors who are suitable to work with children and prioritises the safety and welfare of children. We commit to safeguard and protect all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices and identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people.

This role is subject to a Criminal Records Check disclosure. FosterTalk will request the individual being offered the position to provide appropriate disclosure checks along with any other safer recruitment checks deemed appropriate.

This position is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, due to the nature of the role. Applicants will be required to complete a Self-Disclosure form to support their application.

Main purpose: To provide professional, independent advocacy, advice and support to foster carers in line with the specification set out between FosterTalk and the Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies with whom FosterTalk contracts. To make contact, meet with and provide advocacy, advice and support to foster carers who have had concerns, complaints or allegations made about them, in line with National Minimum standards in England, and best practice guidance in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Advisor must be independent of the Fostering Service; the Local Authority or Independent Fostering Agency that holds the foster carer's registration.

Accountable to: AST Practitioners

Key tasks:

1. To approach any work with foster and kinship carers as a partnership and be led by them where appropriate. To work toward establishing a positive working relationship with an understanding of the principles of accountability, confidentiality (unless safeguarding policy applies) and independence that underpin the advisor's role.
2. To visit a carer's home as needed to introduce the AST service and provide support, advice and advocacy as required to the referred foster carer/s and other members of the household.
3. To guide and inform the carer of the allegations process and revisit this throughout the period of time support is given, to ensure the foster carer fully understands and can engage in the process.
4. To continue to work with the carer/s and/or household members through the process of addressing/resolving the concern, complaint or allegation, through visits, video call, telephone call and email communication where appropriate and agreed with the carer.
5. To support, enable and empower the carer in expressing their views and wishes by attending meetings and fostering panel in person or by video link where agreed.

6. To provide information, explore courses of action, and advise the foster carer of the possible outcomes of any course of action taken. This may include Local Authority processes such as complaints and child protection procedures, as well as any action that the carers are considering taking.
7. To continue to meet with the carer, speak directly to individuals, support the carers to write letters/responses as appropriate and agreed, to help resolve the problem(s).
8. To adhere to GDPR regulations and principles, follow safeguarding policies and procedures and FosterTalk policy.
9. To liaise as required with AST Practitioner for case consultation.
10. To attend initial induction and practice development opportunities and other opportunities presented by AST throughout the year in order to understand and maintain the desired standards of the service and develop practice.
11. To keep accurate, timely and effective records of work using an electronic database independently, including tasks carried out, time spent, and expenses incurred using FosterTalk's standard documentation.

AST is a growing and responsive service that exists to respond to the needs of individuals, therefore many of the tasks and responsibilities may be unpredictable and varied. It is expected that AST Advisors will be flexible when required, undertaking tasks that have not specifically been named in the role description, but come under their general level of responsibility. FosterTalk is committed to offering a high level of oversight to our AST Advisors and will respond promptly to requests for guidance and advice on cases.

AST ADVISOR - Person Specification

Factors	Essential
Qualifications, experience & knowledge	<p>A qualified/experienced social care or advocacy practitioner or experienced foster carer.</p> <p>An understanding of the fostering task along with issues that foster carers face when looking after children and young people along with an ability to develop knowledge of related fostering legislation.</p> <p>An understanding of safeguarding, child protection and complaints procedures and an ability to develop a working knowledge of individual Local Authority systems and services.</p> <p>The knowledge of when something is a safeguarding concern and how to act and report this using local and FosterTalk policies and procedures.</p> <p>Experience of recording using electronic databases in social care or related disciplines, independently once trained, requiring minimal support day to day.</p> <p>Evidence of related experience/training, and continued willingness to participate actively in practice development opportunities for their role.</p> <p>Evidence of completing Safeguarding Training, Diversity and Inclusion Training and GDPR Training within a prescribed timeframe.</p>
Skills/Abilities	<p>A high standard of adaptable communication skills for work with foster carers, their household members, children and fostering service employees, both one to one and in meetings.</p> <p>Able to represent a carer's views and work on their behalf with clarity and accuracy.</p> <p>A non-judgemental attitude of acceptance and tolerance for others, including foster carers, whose values and attitudes may be different to their own.</p>

	<p>Able to give support to others and receive support and guidance where appropriate.</p> <p>Excellent time keeping and independent diary management skills.</p> <p>Ability to record efficiently and effectively appropriate to the information being recorded.</p> <p>Willingness to be flexible in meeting the needs of carers – evening and weekend availability is essential</p>
<p>Personal Qualities</p>	<p>A commitment to anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice</p> <p>A commitment to foster and kinship carer's rights and needs</p> <p>A warm, empathic and accessible approach</p> <p>Sensitivity to the needs and wishes of the carer</p> <p>Reliable, consistent, available and approachable</p> <p>Non-judgmental approach</p> <p>Ability to have a balanced, reasoned and measured approach</p>