



**FOCI CENTRE
(FOR OUR CHILDREN'S INTERESTS)**

**STATEMENT
OF
PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**



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1. AIMS

FOCI Centre aims to provide a specialized, professional, effective, safe and caring environment for supervised contact with parents and or significant others. FOCI's assessments are used to advise Social Services and courts of possible ways forward to ensure that children's needs are met.

The centre provides a safe and nurturing environment within which adult members can be given the chance to show that they can care for their children and keep them safe.

2. CHILD PROTECTION

Safer care underpins the work of the Centre. We practise in accordance with internal procedures that aim to minimize risks and promote welfare and safety, and adhere to the All London Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

Internal line management ensures that communication is effective and that we work in partnership with children and families as well as professional agencies. There is a minimum of two staff on duty at any time for each family.

3. ETHOS & PHILOSOPHY OF THE CENTRE

The Centre operates on an equal opportunities basis with respect to its clients and workers.

- (a) We believe that children have a right to a family life that is safe, loving and adequate to their needs, and that families should be supported in their efforts to take the best possible care for their children.
- (b) The welfare and safety of children is paramount:
 - safer care is a core value
 - children and their families should be actively involved in the assessment
 - we value difference and challenge any behaviour that undermines it
 - children and their families have the right to expect services of the highest quality.



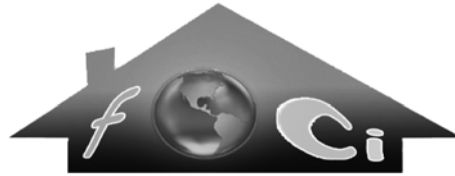
- (c) We acknowledge that many of the families referred face substantial problems related to the parents' and/or significant others' own difficulties. Often the adults have to deal with the effects of abuse and neglect in their own childhood, as well as more recent problems and disappointments. Families also face disadvantages related to disabilities, health problems, losses, poverty, social exclusion and discrimination.
- (d) We work to understand and lessen these pressures on families whenever possible, so that children can have the best possible family relationship.

4. CRITERIA

Families may be referred by Local Authority Social Workers, Children's Guardians, Children & Family Solicitors or the courts.

We accept referrals from any local authority wherever possible:

- (a) we work with families where there are serious concerns about parents' and/or significant others' ability to look after children and keep them safe
- (b) we work with families with children under the age of sixteen
- (c) we work with families who are expecting babies
- (d) we work with parents and/or significant others with learning, physical or sensory difficulties who may need ongoing services to assist their parenting
- (e) FOCI Centre is only appropriate when any acute mental health problems have been addressed and stabilized
- (f) we accept referrals where drug or alcohol abuse is a current concern. As we recognize that a lot of our service users may be experiencing difficulties with drugs and/or alcohol, we have mechanisms in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff. A parent and/or significant other may be asked to leave the Centre if members of staff are concerned about drug or alcohol use.



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- (g) we accept referrals that include family members who are known perpetrators of sexual abuse with great caution; full details will be required at referral stage
- (h) we also take particular care with referrals where there is an unresolved history of violence
- (i) as an assessment unit, parents have full responsibility for their children; however, staff at the Centre will ensure that children remain safe
- (j) we do not accept referrals of families where there is a history of arson
- (k) we do not accept emergency or crisis referrals as this puts children at risk; all referrals need to be planned
- (l) we work with parents from the age of sixteen
- (m) when considering a referral, please note that members of FOCI Centre staff are not permitted to administer medication for adults or children.

• WE ARE UNABLE TO COMMENCE WORK WITHOUT A SIGNED FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

5. ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Staff at the FOCI Centre includes a Managing Director, Social Workers and Family Support Workers. There are also administrative support staff and a maintenance person. We also use volunteer staff and have students on placements.

FOCI Centre has a multi-disciplinary high quality staff team who provide a high quality of service. Each member of staff is qualified in their own fields. These backgrounds include Social work, Teaching, Business, Psychology studies and Computer studies, Law, Human Resource Management, and English Literature.

6. REFERRALS

- (a) We welcome telephone enquiries about the unit and are happy to discuss queries. Pre-referral discussions help to clarify assessment need and the potential of the unit to contribute to the work before a written referral is completed.



- (b) Arrangements to involve the children in the referral process as a means of inclusion are part of the discussions at each stage.
- (c) Families are encouraged to visit the unit before supervised contact or a parenting assessment commences.

7. ASSESSMENT and CONTACT

- (a) FOCI Centre provides a high quality assessment within the framework of the Children Act 1989, the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, and the Family Caring Trust.
- (b) The methods of assessment are observations and assessments of parents and/or significant others caring for children in a safe and professional environment. We will assess parents' and/or significant others' awareness of the child's developmental needs.
- (c) We can offer an assessment to the family in their own environment, but we recognize that this is not always suitable. It will be dependant on the needs of the child and family.
- (d) We use a number of approaches according to each family's needs; for example we gain personal history from each parent. This enables individuals to make links between their own experiences, particularly during childhood, and their ability to care for their children.
- (e) We also use behavioural approaches, in which we look at specific behaviours and their impact, and try to support parents to find alternatives. The Family Support Workers may also use a variety of ways to work with parents, including role-plays.
- (f) We will provide support and strategies for parents and/or significant others about parenting.
- (g) We work closely with other professionals involved with the family, e.g. Children's Guardians, teachers and Health visitors.
- (h) FOCI does not offer a counselling service. Sessions are primarily used to gather information, but parents' responses and attitudes are explored as an assessment tool. Staff may offer practical advice and/or recommend that parents seek advice from other professionals about specific matters, e.g. the Health visitor.



Observations

- (a) Observations will take place at FOCI Centre in designated rooms. Moving out of the Centre will be considered depending on each family's circumstances; this will generally occur after consultation with the referrer and after review of progress.

Feedback

- (a) All the family sessions, work and observations are recorded in the family file.
- (b) Feedback is provided to parents and/or significant others after each observation and as part of the Family Support Worker's report. Parents may also be provided with feedback in the form of reviews. Feedback to professionals will usually occur at review stage and at the meeting that occurs before finalizing the report.

Reports & Recommendation

- (a) At the end of the assessment a comprehensive social work assessment report is completed, which includes family strengths, a risk assessment and recommendations for the future.
- (b) We provide detailed contact records following every contact within 48 hours.
- (c) We provide Court reports on both contact and parenting assessment.

8. CHILDREN

- (a) Children are involved in the assessment process as much as possible in order to assess their needs and to allow them to express their wishes. During the referral stages their views are taken into consideration, depending on their age.
- (b) Children will also have the opportunity to be debriefed after contact sessions, so that their ongoing views are recorded.
- (c) The children's views will be included in both the contact records and the final assessment report or court report.



9. CONFIDENTIALITY

- (a) Information regarding contact and assessment is shared with relevant professionals as agreed. As a Centre committed to protecting children, FOCI staff will have a duty to report any incidents or information of concern. If in the course of the assessment, information is shared with FOCI staff which indicates that someone has been placed at, or is at risk of, harm, this will be shared with the relevant professionals.
- (b) FOCI staff will not discuss information pertaining to families with other families.
- (c) Files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the main office and remain confidential. The files will be accessible to the Parent and/or significant others on application. FOCI will need to write to third parties for consent about disclosing information in accordance with our policies and procedures.

10. FACILITIES

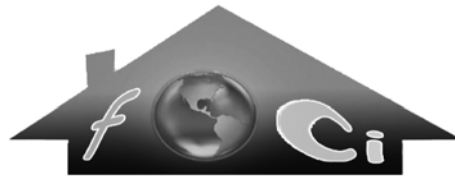
The facility at FOCI Centre is of the highest standard.

The house offers the following facilities:

Shower, bath, toilet, kitchen & utility room, dining room, waiting room, communal living room, conference room and contact rooms.

11. RESTRICTIONS/RULES

- (a) As a Centre committed to protecting children, some restrictions regarding families' movements are necessary in order to minimize risk and ensure that the assessment is carried out effectively. These are discussed prior to any supervised contact or parenting assessment commencing.



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- (b) For Health & Safety purposes parents and/or significant others are advised not to bring friends with them to the Centre unless they have a pre-agreed arrangement to attend.

Parents Responsibilities

Parents and/or significant others are responsible for their children at all times apart from times agreed with FOCI staff.

Health Care

Staff will support parents and/or significant others to report any illness, injury or incident involving a child.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any part of the Centre. Smoking can take place outside in the back garden provided it takes children's health and safety into consideration.

Alcohol

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted in the contact rooms or any other communal areas of the Centre. Children are considered to be at risk if a parent and/or significant other appears to be intoxicated to the point where their judgment is impaired and they are considered to be incapable of caring for their children. This will be viewed as a Child Protection incident and treated accordingly.

Prescribed Drugs

FOCI staffs are not permitted to administer prescription drugs to children or adults.



Illegal substances

The use or possession of illegal drugs and substances is not permitted at the FOCI Centre. This also includes cannabis in any form. Any breach of this rule may lead to termination of supervised contact or a parenting assessment.

Fire precautions

Fire alarms are regularly tested and maintained; fire drills take place in accordance with health and safety requirements.

Complaints

Complaints can be made to the Centre by any one using our services, professionals or service users. The Managing Director will deal with all complaints. We endeavour to provide feedback to these complaints within 3 days verbally and 10 days in writing following internal investigation. If necessary, independent advice will be sought regarding the complaint.

Respect

We have a clear policy about respect for others, including children's parents and/or significant others and staff. Discriminatory or offensive remarks or gestures are unacceptable and will be challenged. Depending on their nature, such incidents will be dealt with in the contact and assessment sessions.

12. OTHER SERVICES

FOCI Centre is able to offer the following facilities on request: Viability Assessment, Interpreting Services, and Psychiatrist and Psychologist assessment as part of parenting assessment and/or opinion in contested hearing.



13. FEEDBACK

- (a) FOCI Centre welcomes feedback from all, if you have any comments about the service please contact the Centre.

The contents of this document are summarized and are available to each family.

Costs are available on request.

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