



fostering
therapeutically
SINCE 1987

SPECIALIST SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

Discover the wrap-around support available
to foster parents and young people in our care

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ABOUT ISP

The UK's first therapeutic fostering agency

Established in 1987, we were the UK's first independent fostering agency and the founders of therapeutic foster care.

We use our experience to surround the young people in our care with specialist therapeutic expertise, services and support, creating a nurturing environment where they feel safe and cared for, to support children with complex needs and able to embark on their trauma-healing journey.

We also recognise the pivotal role of education in a young person's development and provide an extensive range of support services aimed at enabling every child in our care to unlock their full educational potential.

While our journey has seen us grow and evolve over the past 35 years, our commitment to achieving life-changing transformations for young people remains just as strong.

Working together, we
provide safe, nurturing and
healing care to **over 350**
children and young people

Our mission

Our mission is to enable children and young people to get to know who they are so that they can grow to reach their emotional, social and educational potential, and live in harmony with themselves and others.

To achieve this, we provide a therapeutic approach to fostering specifically designed to improve the psychological and emotional resilience and wellbeing of the young people in our care.

ISP'S THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

At ISP, we specialise in supporting young people in care with trauma and complex needs.

Through early and often frightening experiences, many of the young people in our care have learned that it's not safe to trust the important adults in their lives to keep them safe. They may also have previously experienced therapies and support which proved counterproductive because it was not tailored sufficiently to support them with complex needs.

Surrounded by a specialist team, our therapeutic approach is designed to create an environment where children and young people can regain a sense of safety, forge meaningful relationships with the adults around them, access services designed around their needs, and begin to process their trauma — ultimately, helping them embark on a path towards a fulfilling and joyful life.

Key principles of our therapeutic approach

1) Collaborative team around the child

At ISP, our young people are at the centre of an experienced and multi-disciplinary team of in-house professionals including:

- Therapeutic foster parents
- Accredited therapists – including Speech and Language
- Advisory teachers
- Fostering advisors – generally, individuals who have fostered previously or are still fostering, so truly understand the role and challenges experienced.
- Social work practitioners
- Family time supervisors
- Administrators
- Management team

Through our close and collaborative approach, we enhance our understanding of the child's progress across all aspects of their life. This helps us to proactively anticipate any additional support they may need.

2) Therapeutically trained foster parents

Our therapeutic foster parents receive an exceptionally high level of training and support to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to not only care for a child on a physical level but meet their emotional needs too.

This includes our industry-leading and **City & Guilds Assured Therapeutic Pathway**, which provides our foster parents with a greater understanding of the psychological effects of trauma, abuse and neglect, and the myriad of strategies that children may adopt to survive difficult early experiences.

Our foster parents come away from the training with a variety of therapeutic skills and strategies that are specifically designed to support young people living with trauma.

3) Understanding behaviour as a form of communication

Our entire team are trained to nurture a sense of curiosity about the internal world of our young people, seeking to understand what a young person might be trying to communicate through their behaviour, rather than viewing it as something to be 'managed.'

Through this approach, we provide more effective and immediate support to our young people. Over time, this fosters trust and allows our young people to feel secure in the knowledge that we're here to protect and care for them.

4) Individualised therapeutic care plans

A 'one-size-fits-all' approach doesn't work for children and young people living with trauma and complex needs. Instead, we take time to develop a deep understanding of our young people and create a unique therapeutic care plan tailored to their individual needs and preferences.

For example, we may introduce them to outdoor or animal-assisted therapies, or work with foster parents to provide an alternative therapeutic intervention, such as filial play, for a child who doesn't wish to engage with therapy.

5) Reflective practice to maintain emotional availability

Reflective practice empowers foster parents to understand, acknowledge, and effectively manage the impact of supporting young people with trauma.

We offer regular opportunities for reflective practice through various channels, including training, support groups, and supervision sessions. This not only helps to build a strong peer community, but also enables foster parents to maintain the level of wellbeing necessary to provide the dedication, energy, and emotional availability that our young people require and deserve.

By embracing reflective practice, we can be truly present and emotionally available in our relationships with children.



THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Each young person placed with ISP receives personalised therapeutic support, tailored to meet their individual needs, preferences and interests.

We have a wide range of therapeutic options available including:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Solutions Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)
- Arts Therapy
- Play and Filial Therapies
- Drama and Music Therapy
- Psychodynamic Therapies
- Talking Therapies
- Outdoor and Animal Assisted Therapies
- Emotional Freedom Technique Therapies
- Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour Risk Assessment and Management
- Psychoeducational Interventions
- Emotional literacy and regulation interventions

Collaborative initial assessment and report

An in-house therapist will conduct a comprehensive assessment before a young person starts therapy with us, working in close collaboration with the other adults involved in a child's care.

This assessment culminates in a detailed report and initial therapeutic plan, which is regularly reviewed with the child and their network throughout the course of their therapy.

Regular consultation with foster parents

Our therapists provide ongoing therapeutic consultations to foster parents to enhance their understanding of the young person's progress and evolving needs. They may also complete one-to-one work with foster parents to support with any specific challenges they face.

Biannual therapy reports

These reports are a valuable source of insight and support meaningful discussions during the young person's LAC review. They assess and evaluate:

- The child's progress so far
- Their engagement levels
- The effectiveness of interventions implemented
- Identification of any emerging needs

Where suitable, young people may contribute to the report to share their thoughts on the therapeutic path that best aligns with their preferences.

Support for foster parents to provide alternative therapeutic intervention

If a young person is reluctant to participate in therapy, our therapists can provide one-to-one training with their foster parent or another trusted adult in their network.

This individualised approach enables young people to benefit from a therapeutic intervention that meets them where they are on an emotional and relational level. For example, filial play therapy or additional therapeutic support may be offered to help strengthen the relationship they have with their child.

Therapists are a vital part of our support network

Therapists play an integral role within our team, actively participating in meetings and discussions about our young people, reflective practice sessions, staff and foster parent training, and the development and implementation of innovative therapeutic interventions.

Their expertise and insights are seamlessly woven into every aspect of our work.



CITY & GUILDS ASSURED THERAPEUTIC PATHWAY TRAINING

Our City & Guilds Assured Therapeutic Pathway is a 4-5 year training programme designed to enhance our foster parents' expertise in the latest therapeutic principles.

Curated by our Head of Therapy, Dr. Suzannah Hill, in close consultation with foster parents, staff, and young people, the course uses the latest evidence-based therapeutic parenting approaches and has earned the esteemed recognition of assurance from City & Guilds.

Stage 1

Introduces essential therapeutic skills, knowledge and strategies that are required by foster parents and underpin their practice.

- **Therapeutic relationships**

Focuses on self-awareness, relationship building through effective communication, and the power of reflective practice.

- **Foster parent toolkit**

Introduces key concepts around trauma, attachment, child development, the brain, and ways to promote resilience.

It then moves on to consider ways to respond therapeutically to particular thoughts, feelings and sensations that may be experienced by our young people, such as anger, disassociation, self-harm, sexualised behaviour, control, and more.

Stage 2

Introduces foster parents to therapeutic play techniques so they can apply their refined skills and knowledge to further support their young people.

The focus is on supporting our young people in their journey to heal from trauma, develop meaningful relationships, and foster a positive sense of identity and self-efficacy.

Assured by City & Guilds

Our Therapeutic Pathway has been assured by City & Guilds, meaning it meets the global standards for training and learning excellence set by City & Guilds and ILM.

Maintaining emotional availability through reflective practice

As an integral part of our Therapeutic Pathway, we provide regular sessions where foster parents are encouraged to:

- Identify what they have learned and how they might apply it
- Evaluate and gain feedback from others around the impact of approaches they've tried
- Use these reflections to inform their next steps and identify additional learning

As well as reflecting on their experiences and receiving other perspectives from the group, reflective practice is a valuable tool that can help them to remain emotionally available for the young people in their care.

Through expert facilitation, these groups foster trust, support and mutual understanding, benefiting the long-term wellbeing of our fostering community.

Preventing re-traumatisation through empathy-led care

A therapeutic approach is required when caring for children living with trauma and complex needs. This can be very different to the familiar parenting strategies used with our own children or from our own experiences as children.

Our training helps foster parents understand these differences, which includes a deliberate shift away from methods which can trigger shame, towards empathetic responses such as co-regulation, empathic commentary, reflection, psychoeducation, providing choices, and evaluations.



EDUCATION SUPPORT

At ISP, our goal is to ensure that every child in our care not only receives a positive and inspiring educational experience but also attains valuable qualifications.

To support foster parents, we promote a collaborative approach, where professionals within the child's network work closely with schools, virtual schools and local authorities to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Comprehensive PEPs for every child

We recognise the pivotal role of education in a child's growth and development, and track key areas, such as attendance, progress and any challenging behaviours in school for every young person in our care.

All young people have regular Statutory Personal Education Planning meetings. These plans are the result of collaborative efforts among teachers, therapists, social workers, foster parents, and young people, forging a clear path to success.

The advisory teacher attends these meetings to ensure that successes are celebrated and any barriers to progress are recognised and addressed.

Advisory teachers at every centre

Advisory teachers play a vital role in supporting the educational needs of our young people. They also offer crucial support to foster parents, helping them understand and cater to the unique learning requirements of the children in their care.

All advisory teachers have completed our Therapeutic Pathway Training and use this to help schools understand the child's behaviour from a therapeutic perspective.

Some of the support services offered by our advisory teachers include:

- Coordinating the request for an EHCP assessment
- Monitoring the effective implementation of the child's PEP and EHCP
- Ensuring optimal utilisation of the Pupil Premium
- Using local knowledge to advise the LA on the most suitable school, college or apprenticeship, and supporting the application
- Supporting and advising foster parents when a young person is learning at home
- Participating in key meetings, including PEPs, network meetings and EHCP Annual Reviews
- Working with the school and virtual school to ensure the child receives the necessary support for any known Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Use local knowledge to identify funding streams that may support the child's progress
- Signposting to locally available services such as Speech and Language teams, Occupational Therapy, Educational Psychologists, Higher Needs Funding Officers, In Year Access to Education Officers, and more
- Ensuring cohesion amongst the entire education network

A woman with short brown hair and a young girl with braided hair are looking at a laptop screen. The woman is smiling and looking at the screen, while the girl is looking at the screen with a focused expression. They are in a library or study area with bookshelves in the background. There are decorative colored squares (red and orange) on the left side of the image.

Dedicated support for speech, learning and communication difficulties

At ISP, we have a dedicated Speech and Language Therapy and Educational Facilitation Team for assessment and ongoing work with speech, learning and communication difficulties.

Out of education allowance

We provide foster parents with an additional allowance when their young person is out of education to provide educational opportunities that are tailored to their needs and interests.

Harnessing the expertise from our specialist education provision

We leverage the wealth of expertise and resources at our disposal through our specialist provision, ISP Schools, which primarily work with children with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs (SEMH).

WHAT'S INCLUDED WITHIN OUR FEE?

SERVICES AND SUPPORT	INCLUDED WITHIN FEE	SERVICES THAT CAN BE PROVIDED FOR ADDITIONAL COST
All services will be provided as per Core as Cost Specification agreed in Contract		
Therapeutic foster care ISP is a therapeutic provider who will ensure that children and young people receive individualised assessment at the beginning and throughout their journey with an ISP foster parent. The ISP Therapeutic Model includes the following: Therapeutic thinking and practice is entwined within the work of all professionals working in ISP. This includes our City & Guilds Assured Therapeutic Pathway training programme that enhances our team's knowledge of trauma informed practice, promote deeper understanding of the impact of past experiences, and enables foster parents to approach challenging situations with recognition that behaviours are often a form of expression. Within the weekly fee therapy is available, where appropriate, to children who require it. This may include Psychotherapy, CBT, Animal Assisted, Integrative, Art, Drama, Speech and Language, Counselling, Systemic, Play, Family and Filial. This includes regular foster parent consultations with the young person's therapist, offering further understanding and strategies to support the child. Additionally, foster parents have direct access to therapists for reflective support and advice to support the sustainability of the care and to help minimise breakdowns. ISP also hold Reflective Practice Groups to offer space to discuss and share experiences with a view to greater understanding of recent events and adult responses/ practices.		
Multi-Disciplinary Admissions Panel (MAP) This Panel includes all ISP Registrations – Registered Managers, Education Advisors, Education Director, Head of Referrals, Head of Therapy, Therapist and staff members who attend who have previously fostered and are able to provide insight from that perspective. Between them they have years of experience in therapeutic fostering all contributing with their skills, expertise and experience of therapeutic fostering in order to achieve good outcomes for each of our children.		

SERVICES AND SUPPORT	INCLUDED WITHIN FEE	SERVICES THAT CAN BE PROVIDED FOR ADDITIONAL COST
Fostering Advisors Dedicated fostering advisors who have a range of fostering experience and may have fostered themselves they provide the foster family and child with bespoke therapeutic support and advice alongside supporting the families to book and manage respite and offering direct work when needed.	✓	
Advisory Teachers Advisory teachers who support children and young people with their educational needs and supporting foster parents with meetings and understanding the work set for a child. They also support the LA in identifying and the process of obtaining a school / college placement.	✓	Additional Tuition/ educational support can be sourced if required in discussion and agreement with the LA.
Out of School Allowance When a child is out of education, foster parents are supported to provide educational opportunities via an out of school allowance.	✓	
Staying Put Arrangements ISP have their own tiered Staying Put arrangements based on the needs of a young person wishing to remaining with their fostering family. Our policy is available upon request.	✓	Additional Therapy can be provided to the young person at an additional cost to the LA.
Out of Hours Support We have a dedicated OOH service provided by therapeutically informed ISP staff and managers.	✓	
Mentoring Where children and young people need 1:1 support, we can consider if a mentor would be appropriate and this may be offered instead of or alongside therapy.	✓	If offered alongside therapy there would be a rechargeable cost for the LA.
New Placement / Start-Up Clothing Allowance	✓	
New Uniform Allowance Allowance for new uniform for children moving to secondary school.	✓	

SERVICES AND SUPPORT	INCLUDED WITHIN FEE	SERVICES THAT CAN BE PROVIDED FOR ADDITIONAL COST
Summer Allowance Paid to each foster family to support with the costs of treats when out and about in the school summer holidays.	✓	
Holiday Allowance Paid for each child to support with the cost of a family holiday with the fostering household.	✓	Additional payment support for holidays without the family e.g. with school or clubs may be requested from the LA.
ISP Fun Day An annual event for all ISP children, families, friends of families, LA social workers and staff. It is an opportunity for fostering families and children and young people within the different ISP registrations to meet up and have a day of fun.	✓	
Family time A supervised family time session (contact) once per week for 2 hours. All supervised sessions will be recorded by the trained supervisor and shared with the SSW and LASW and retained on record.	✓	Where additional supervised family time (contact) is required by the LA this may be subject to additional charges.
Psychological assessment	✗	This can be provided by ISP but will need to be purchased in addition by the LA.
Respite Our foster families are entitled to 22 nights of respite allowance in order to support and maintain the sustainability of the fostering arrangement.	✓	



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