

Appendix 7(c): The Mockingbird Model

What is Mockingbird?

Mockingbird is a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK. It delivers sustainable foster care through an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.

Led by a hub home carer and liaison worker, the constellation community offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities, planned and emergency sleepovers and learning and development opportunities to strengthen relationships and permanence.



Mockingbird's impact

- A strong, robust and resilient structure able to support children, young people and fostering families through times of crisis and transition
- Improved placement stability – reduced placement breakdown
- A network of strong and authentic relationships able to replicate the support offered by an extended family
- Improved experience of peer support
- Improved sibling contact
- Improved process and experience of sleepovers (planned and emergency)
- Improved skills, confidence and role satisfaction for foster carers
- Improved levels of carer retention and recruitment
- Improved experience of birth family contact
- Costs saved and costs avoided

Mockingbird fidelity

Mockingbird is an evidence-based model supported by clear fidelity criteria. The Fostering Network provides a full breakdown of all of the fidelity requirements, but some of the key components are listed below:

- 6-10 satellite homes in a constellation.
- Each constellation provides care to 6-18 looked after children and young people.
- Constellations (both adults and young people) should be diverse – representative of the service's wider fostering population and encompassing age, gender, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, religion, experience and needs. Constellations should never become 'single-focused' (for example, just for teenagers, just for children and young people with a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum, just for new carers, just for adoption or just for the children and young people with the most complex placements etc.).
- Constellations are supported to build a micro community based on an extended family concept.
- Hub home is geographically close to the satellite homes.
- Hub home has two protected Mockingbird beds, only available for sleepovers by the constellation's children and young people.
- Hub home carer is available nearly 24/7.
- Hub home carer hosts monthly constellation meetings and provides planned and spontaneous opportunities for social events and interactions between the hub home and the satellite families.
- The 'Mockingbird liaison worker' role is a key support for hub home carer to prevent burnout.
- Collaborative working – the service must support the hub home carer and members of the constellation to problem solve.