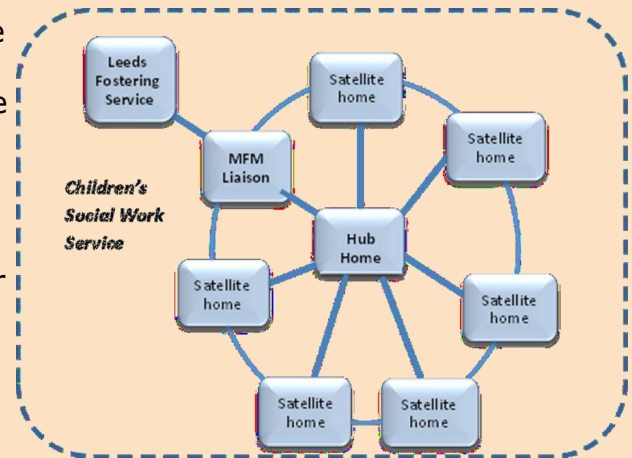


What is the Mockingbird Family Model?

The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) is an alternative way of providing foster care. It involves foster carers being part of a group with other foster carers who are described as satellite foster carers; they are supported by a central 'hub' home which provides resources and support to the satellite homes. The hub home and the satellite homes are supported by the fostering service, which provides a liaison worker to act as a link between the Mockingbird hub and the fostering service.

The aim of the model is to create a support network similar to that of an extended family, providing children and their carers with support, including sleepovers, tea visits and shared social activities. Support can be planned, or provided in an emergency if required.



How is the Hub home chosen?

The hub carer needs to be an experienced, skilled foster carer with the motivation and skills to build a community. Hub carers are trained by specially accredited Mockingbird trainers via [The Fostering Network](#). The hub home is required to have two beds available specifically for the children and young people in their hub; ideally this is two separate bedrooms, but two beds in a shared bedroom can be considered.

Satellite carers are invited to join a hub; referrals are completed jointly by fostering social workers and children's social workers, who first must discuss the concept of the model with carers who must be in full agreement. Satellite carers will usually live relatively near to their hub home and must be committed to actively engaging in the monthly coffee mornings and hub social activities.

What support is provided by the hub home?

The support provided through the hub home includes:

- Monthly social events for families, providing peer interaction and support for caregivers, children and young people as well as monthly hub meetings for satellite carers;
- Unlimited access to social support and mentoring for satellite carers;
- Planned and emergency care 24/7, including day care and overnight stays; and
- Help to navigate the children's social work system and access community resources.

The hub home can also provide a neutral environment for shared decision-making meetings, social worker visits, sibling and birth family visits, as well as critical support to social workers by problem solving; thereby increasing safety, well-being, and permanency. A key feature of the Mockingbird Family Model is that it helps to take good care of the people who take care of children and young people.

Why the Mockingbird Family Model?

The aims of the Mockingbird Family Model are to: increase placement stability for children who are looked after; prioritise sibling connections; promote active child protection; support permanency; reduce feelings of isolation for foster carers; and improve the support provided to foster carers, so that the local authority can retain foster carers.

The model was developed in Washington State, USA and is based on the concept of extended family. This fits with the think family approach recognised in the [Leeds Children and Young People's Plan](#). This means that we put families at the centre of finding solutions and solving problems using restorative approaches.

The model is [evidence-based](#), has been formally evaluated and shows improved outcomes for children, young people and foster carers.

What do we have in Leeds?

[The Fostering Network](#) secured funding from the Department for Education (DfE) in 2015 and set up a pilot scheme with eight local authorities across England. Leeds participated in the pilot and established four hub homes; two within mainstream fostering and two in kinship fostering.



Since the pilot, further funding has been secured from the innovation fund (DfE) which helped Leeds to establish a further six hub homes. We now have ten hub homes, which support a combination of mainstream foster families, kinship foster families, SGO ([Special Guardianship Order](#)) families and adoptive families.

The feedback from satellite families has been very positive to date and the model has been key to supporting long term placements and foster carer retention.

Key contacts and more information:

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You can find out more about the [Mockingbird Family Model](#) from the Mockingbird Society website.

