Statement of Purpose

Contents

Introduction 2
Our Mission Statement 3
Principles and Values 4
Equal Opportunities 5
Aims and Objectives 6
Achieving for Children 7
Other Support for Children 8
Services we offer for Local Authorities 9
Our Foster Carers 10
Quality Assurance and Monitoring 11
Matching 11
Foster Carer Charter 12
The AFA Team 13
Complaints 14
Company Information 15
Anglia Fostering Agency Limited was incorporated in July 2009 and opened in March 2010. Since March 2013 Anglia Fostering Agency Ltd has been jointly owned by its Directors, Graeme Duncombe and Nigel Pickering. Between them they have over 75 years of social work experience at practitioner and management level, incorporating child protection and family placement.

Overseeing the day to day running of the company, there is a highly experienced Registered Manager, Toni Adriano.

The Directors’ initial motivation to create AFA was to provide a genuine alternative to existing independent fostering service providers. The vision continues, with the objective of offering a consistently high standard of care for children and young people who are Looked After.

AFA is registered and inspected by OFSTED as required under the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. Current reports can be viewed using the Unique Reference Number (URN SC406969). AFA provides placements to children and young people in East Anglia and the Midlands and was rated ‘Good’ with outstanding features by OFSTED in March 2018.

Anglia Fostering Agency Limited, which operates as AFA Fostering, exists to provide high quality foster placements to Local Authorities who are looking to place children in foster homes. We recruit and train Foster Carers, supporting them when children are placed in their homes.
Our Mission Statement

“Anglia Fostering Agency (AFA) aims to provide quality care with integrity and respect.”

The Directors, and all those employed by AFA, have a commitment to uphold the core values of the service, which are:

• Genuine **Quality** of care

• **Integrity** at every stage

• **Respect** for all those we work with

We asked our staff to explore what these values mean to them in terms of the culture and values of the organisation, both internally and externally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Internally this means</th>
<th>Externally this means</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Professionalism. We are what we say we are. Honest. Child focused.</td>
<td>Truthful and Transparent. Advocates for children and carers. Foster a climate of trust in all that we do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>High Regard. Listeners. Non-Judgmental. Accepting that we all have different views and opinions.</td>
<td>Mindful. Do not abuse power. Behave in a way that show others respect. Professionalism towards others.</td>
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Principles and Values

We work to achieve the highest quality of care to children and young people in order to provide:

- Safe and stable placements.
- Opportunities to explore interests, talents and skills.
- Matched families who can meet identified needs.

The relationships we have with those we work with will always be underpinned by integrity. To ensure this we:

- Work in partnership, aiming for the best outcomes for the child or young person placed.
- Promote an open and flexible approach to fostering keeping everyone involved.
- Best practice underpinned by our ongoing commitment to learning and development, of all involved with AFA, to ensure the safeguarding and progress of the children and young people we look after.

AFA respect all involved in the lives of the young people in our care. We demonstrate this by:

- Our continuing commitment to support our Foster Carers in a thoughtful and responsive way.
- Listening to the views of the young people we look after, and the children of Foster Carers, in order to develop AFA as a child focused agency.
- Having high expectations of those who have the day to day care of children and young people we look after.
Equal Opportunities

Both as an employer and as a provider of services, AFA is fully committed to the promotion of equal opportunities. We aim to promote an environment that is free from discrimination in all its forms, and values difference.

We strive to:

• Promote diversity and equal opportunities.
• Create an environment of inclusion, free from harassment and discrimination.
• Confront and challenge discrimination wherever and whenever it arises.
• Provide opportunities to highlight issues through our agency newsletter and website.
• Promote awareness of equality and diversity through regular training.
• Ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality.
• Ensure equality in recruitment.
Aims and Objectives

AFA aims to provide committed, empathetic and knowledgeable Foster Carers to Local Authorities within East Anglia and the Midlands. AFA seeks to recruit, train and support carers who can provide a home for children and young people suitable to meet their individual needs. We aim to provide opportunities for children and young people looked after to achieve their full potential and live happy and fulfilling lives. Our Foster Carers highlight that their aim is to provide a quality of life and loving environment for children placed with them.

- Place children and young people at the centre of everything we do and act in their best interest at all times.
- Where possible, to match children and young people with foster families local to their community so that they can maintain contact with family and friends and continue to attend their current educational provision.
- Provide stability in the lives of children and young people to enable them to feel safe and secure. AFA recognises the importance of promoting security and ensuring children are safe and happy in a stable family. Our Foster Carers aim for children to feel valued and a part of their family.
- Recognise that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and that the welfare of children and young people in our care is paramount. It is our duty to protect and educate them, and to ensure everyone is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. We support children and young people to develop an understanding of risk and how best to keep themselves safe.
- Provide a positive and enabling environment for children and young people. Our carers have identified that they aim to help those children who need it, offering them life opportunities that they might not have had, helping them through their problems and giving them skills to allow them to help themselves.
- Fully recognise, respect, promote and value diversity, taking this into account when matching children with Foster Carers.
- Provide a commitment to recruit Foster Carers from diverse backgrounds with a variety of skills and experiences, in order to offer a wide range of placements for children and young people, ensuring there is genuine choice supported by good matching.
- Commit to ongoing learning and training for Foster Carers, staff and others working for AFA through a comprehensive training programme. We also work with external agencies to enhance the learning outside AFA. Our Foster Carers identify the importance of training in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Ensure 24-hour support to Foster Carers. AFA Foster Carers recognise the importance of us ‘being there’ to guide and support them. Foster Carers have spoken of the balance between support and monitoring/supervision as being something AFA have got right, which enables them to carry out their role more effectively.
- Work as an inclusive partnership, which embraces children and young people, their families, Foster Carers, the Local Authority and other agency colleagues, such as those in health and education, to provide a ‘team around the child’.
- Provide a quality service which consistently exceeds national minimum standards. Our Foster Carers identified that they aim to do the right things by the children they look after, to make sure that they get the best care possible.
Achieving for Children

Children are at the centre of everything we do. All actions taken are for the purpose of obtaining the best outcomes for children so that they can reach their full potential. Here are some of the areas we support:

- Advocacy
- Voice of the child
- Physical and emotional health
- Identity
- Education
- Participation
- Having fun
- Talents and interests
- Support for transitions
- Independence
- Contact
- Staying safe
Other support for children

We believe that children and young people should play an integral part in the development of the services we provide.

We are a child centered service which aims to include children and young people, those we look after and those who are part of the fostering family.

Our Children’s Consultation Groups and Fostering Friends groups have informed our practice, and created resources aimed at supporting the children we care for and Foster Carers’ own children.

We facilitate access to therapeutic support when appropriate to meet a child’s needs.

Children’s guides are designed to be suitable for individual needs.

We organise a range of activity days throughout the year appropriate for all children and young people.

We offer independence preparation, including work regarding health, finance, legal matters, employment and housing.

We provide Welcome boxes containing key information to help children settle in, all of which have been designed by our children:

- Children’s guides.
- ‘Your Life your Control!’ leaflet (about risk)
- CSE Triple T guide.
- Anti-bullying leaflet.
- How to access files leaflet.
- Complaints leaflet.
- Advocacy information and resources
AFA services are provided within the framework of fostering legislation, guidance and best practice. AFA can provide a wide range of placement options and services for children and young people of all ages. These include:

- Emergency
- Short term
- Long term
- Respite
- Therapeutic
- Pre-adoptive
- Intensive
- Parents and children
- Pre-birth support
- Bridging to permanence
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Preparation for independence
- Children at risk of CSE
- ‘Step down’ from residential settings.

AFA work closely with Local Authorities to provide a fee structure that is clear and cost effective without compromising the service provided to the children and young people who are placed with us. This ensures that AFA can provide an enhanced service with highly trained and skilled Foster Carers and qualified professional Social Workers.

AFA provide Foster Carers with allowances. The allowances paid to carers are closely monitored to ensure that they are used for the benefit of the children and young people placed.
Our Foster Carers

AFA believes that the recruitment and retention of dedicated and highly competent carers is fundamental to our success. We recruit Foster Carers from a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, geographical locations and family compositions. This ensures that AFA has sufficient carers to offer Local Authorities the best possible match, in order to meet the needs of any child or young person referred.

AFA provides the following to all our Foster Carers:

- Dedicated support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.
- FosterTalk membership, including legal support.
- Monthly visits (minimum) from an allocated Placement Manager.
- Willful damage Insurance.
- Regular support group meetings.
- Additional support services for specialist placements.
- Generous fostering allowance when a child is in placement.
- Support of Placement Managers at professional meetings and court hearings.
- Support of Placement Managers at professional meetings and court hearings.
- Support in meeting the child’s educational and health needs.
- Access for Intensive and Therapeutic carers to qualified therapeutic support.
- Tailored, responsive training and support to carers and children looked after.
- Social events for carers and their family (e.g. Pamper days and Summer Ball).
- Regular support by phone/contact (minimum weekly) from a Placement Manager.
- Organised social events for children, both looked after & carers’ own.

AFA has a comprehensive training programme which incorporates core mandatory courses and specialist training designed to enhance carers’ specific skills, as identified in their Professional Development Plan.
Quality Assurance and Monitoring

As part of our commitment to quality assurance and monitoring, AFA employs a Practice Standards Officer who reports to the Directors and Senior Management. Their role is to work alongside the Registered Manager to evaluate and monitor all areas of the agency’s practice to ensure compliance and good practice is achieved. They also reflect on our and others’ practice to look how we can continuously improve. AFA has an Audit Plan which includes all of our staff, to ensure standards remain high. The aim of this is to ensure that quality work is completed in a timely way.

The Practice Standards Officer is part of a QA team which meets on a monthly basis and closely monitors all aspects of children’s development and progress. The team also reviews policies, monitors key agency functions and audits the work completed by the agency’s Social Workers.

In addition to this, the agency is subject to Local Authority monitoring. We also engage with all placing Authorities to provide quarterly feedback. We are subject to annual audits and inspection by OFSTED.

Matching

We focus on making good matches to ensure a low rate of placement disruption/breakdown with increased stability for the young people that we care for. Our Duty Workers and Placement Managers (Supervising Social Workers) work together to consider which referrals may be right for which families. We have become adept at seeking additional details where needed to ensure that we are making decisions on the best information possible.

Where a decision is made to move a child, for whatever reason, we work with the young person, our carers and the other professionals involved to ensure this goes as smoothly as it can. We plan the move openly and transparently, taking time to fully consider the needs and the wishes of the young person. When appropriate our Therapeutic Lead will continue to work with the young person and new carers after the move in order for us to do all we can to fully support the transition.
Foster Carer Charter

We have produced a Foster Carer Charter in consultation with our carers, based on the model provided by the Fostering Network.

The charter states what carers can expect from AFA, and what AFA expects of carers in return.

One part of the charter has been written by our Foster Carers pledging what they want to achieve for the children in their care:

The Foster Carer’s Pledge

Having reflected on the Charter, AFA Foster Carers have drawn up the following pledge to summarise what they want to achieve for the children in their care:

- **C**hildren are at the centre of our world. We will always place the child at the centre of the fostering process and aim to act in their best interests at all times.

- **H**olistic approach. We aim to take a holistic approach to caring for our children which includes taking account of their religious, linguistic and cultural needs. We support their heritage, health, interests and education.

- **I**ntegrity. We will always keep our focus on the child, doing everything we can to overcome challenges that could throw us off course.

- **L**istening. We aim to listen with all of our senses. We understand that children cannot always articulate how they are feeling, so we need to help them get across their feelings and opinions. We aim to support our children to feel they can contribute to the discussions and decision making that affects their lives.

- **D**evelopment and Training. We are committed to our own personal development as Foster Carers through training and reflection during our supervision. We are open to challenge to ensure that we improve our skills and practice as Foster Carers.

- **R**espect. We respect everyone who we come into contact with as Foster Carers, including children, birth families and professionals. We keep an open mind and welcome advice and support which enhances the care that we give to our children. We respect ourselves and our own health and well-being and are aware of when we need to ask for support in order to help us to care for our children.

- **E**ducation. We will encourage and support our children to reach their full potential. We will help them to develop independence skills to make life easier for them as they grow older.

- **N**urture. We will provide nurturing, consistent and child-centred care of the highest quality that we can.
The AFA Team

AFA recruit and appoint qualified and registered (Social Work England) Social Workers to support our Foster Carers.

AFA employees have knowledge and experience of fostering and safeguarding, and are actively encouraged to develop their skills and expertise through supervision and post qualification training.

All Senior Managers hold qualifications relevant to their areas of expertise.
Complaints

We define a complaint as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the service provided by AFA, or the actions of an individual providing that service’, for example a Director or employee of AFA.

Complaints will be dealt with as speedily as possible, but the timescale will be such as to allow a thorough examination of any issues raised. We will try to resolve issues informally and, where possible, directly between the complainant and the subject of the complaint. Where a formal process is instigated, we aim to resolve issues in a thorough and timely manner. AFA strives to provide services that are of the highest standard at all times.

The AFA complaints policy and procedure complies with the statutory requirements as outlined in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Regulation 18, which states that all independent fostering agencies must have ‘a written procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children placed by the agency, and by foster parents approved by the agency’.

Our Complaints and Compliments Policy is available online: https://policies.afafostering.com/fostering-service/
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AFA Fostering is the trading name of Anglia Fostering Agency Limited
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