

Statement of Purpose

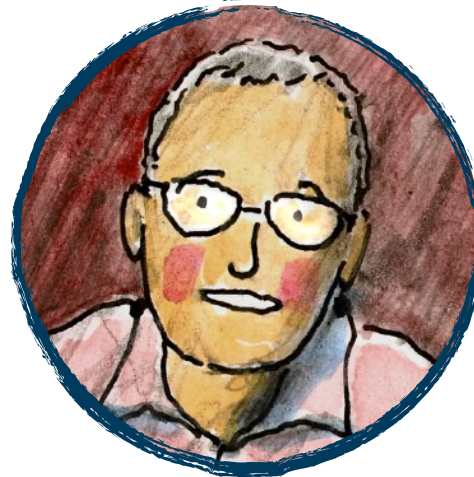
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Introduction

Incorporated in July 2009, Anglia Fostering Agency Limited (or AFA as it's known), opened its doors in March 2010 and since March 2013 has been jointly owned by its Directors, **Graeme Duncombe** and **Nigel Pickering**.

Between them they have over 75 years' social work experience at practitioner and management level, incorporating child protection and family placement.



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

The Directors' initial motivation to create AFA was to provide a genuine alternative to existing independent fostering service provision. This 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 via the Ofsted website which show that AFA was rated 'Good' in April 2021.

AFA exists to provide high quality families to Local Authorities seeking to find foster homes for children and young people. We recruit and train Foster Parents, fully supporting them to care for those living with them.

Our mission statement

“AFA Fostering 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.

| Value | Internally this means | Externally this means |
|-----------|--|--|
| Quality | High standards. Reliable. Strong ethics. | Our reputation. Trust. A good service. |
| Integrity | Professionalism. We are what we say we are. Honest. Child focused. | Truthful and transparent. Advocates for children and foster parents. Foster a climate of trust in all that we do. |
| Respect | High regard. Listeners. Non-judgmental. Accepting that we all have different views and opinions. | Mindful. Do not abuse power. Behave in a way that shows others respect. Professionalism towards others. |



Principles and Values

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

- Safe and stable homes
- 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 every child or young person
- Promote an open and flexible approach to fostering, keeping everyone involved
- Focus on best practice underpinned by an ongoing commitment to learning and development, for all those involved with AFA, to ensure the safeguarding and progress of the children and young people we look after

AFA respects all those involved in the lives of those in our care. We demonstrate this by:

- Our continuing commitment to supporting our Foster Parents in a thoughtful, responsive way
- Listening to the views of the children and young people we look after, as well as the birth children of Foster Parents, 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 we value 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, inclusion 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 Parents to Local Authorities within East Anglia and the Midlands. We recruit, train and support Foster Parents who can provide a home for children and young people suitable to meet their individual needs. We aim to provide opportunities for those in our care to achieve their full potential and live happy and fulfilling lives. Our Foster Parents highlight that their aim is to provide a quality of life and loving environment for those living 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, 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, ensuring children are safe and happy in a stable family. Our Foster Parents aim for those in their care 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 Foster Parents have identified that they aim to help those who need it, offering them life opportunities that they might not have otherwise 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 Parents.
- Commit to recruiting Foster Parents from diverse backgrounds with a variety of skills and experiences, in order to offer a wide range of families for children and young people, ensuring there is genuine choice supported by good matching.
- Commit to ongoing learning and training for Foster Parents, staff and others working for AFA through a comprehensive training programme. We work with external agencies to enhance learning outside AFA. Our Foster Parents identify the importance of training in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Ensure responsive 24-hour support to our Foster Parents who recognise the importance of us 'being there' to guide and support them. They 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 Parents, 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 requirements set out within the National Minimum Standards. Our Foster Parents identify that they aim to do the right things by children and young people, 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:



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 centred 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 and Fostering Friends Groups inform our practice, and create resources aimed at supporting those we care for together with Foster Parents' 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, the contents 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



Services we offer to Local Authorities

AFA's services are provided within the framework of fostering legislation, guidance and best practice. AFA can provide a wide range of care options and services for children and young people of all ages. These include:

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

AFA works 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 living with us.

This ensures that AFA can provide an enhanced service with highly trained and skilled Foster Parents and qualified professional Social Workers.

AFA provides Foster Parents with allowances which are closely monitored to ensure that they are used for the benefit of the children and young people living in our families.



Our Foster Parents

AFA believes that the recruitment and retention of dedicated and highly competent Foster Parents is fundamental to our success.

We recruit Foster Parents from a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, geographical locations and family compositions. This ensures that AFA has sufficient Foster Parents 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 Parents:



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

AFA has a comprehensive training programme which incorporates core mandatory courses and specialist training designed to enhance Foster Parents' specific skills, as identified in their Professional Development Plan.

Quality assurance and monitoring

As part of our commitment to quality assurance and monitoring, AFA has a dedicated Quality Assurance (QA) Team. Meeting on a monthly basis, it closely monitors all aspects of children's development and progress as well as reviewing and monitoring policies and other key agency functions.

Alongside the Management Team, the QA team evaluates and monitors all areas of the agency's practice to ensure that compliance and good practice is achieved. AFA is always looking at and reflecting on its own and others' practice to support continuous improvement. The AFA Audit Plan is in place to ensure standards remain high and that quality work is completed in a timely way.

In addition to this, the agency is subject to Local Authority monitoring. We engage with all placing Authorities to provide quarterly feedback. We are also subject to annual audits by a range of Local Authorities and three yearly inspections by Ofsted.

Matching

We focus on making good matches to ensure a low rate of disruption/ breakdown with increased stability for those we care for. Our Duty Workers and Fostering 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 decisions are based on the best information possible. Where a decision is made to move a child or young person, for whatever reason, we work with them, our Foster Parents and the other professionals involved to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.



We plan the move openly and transparently, taking time to fully consider the needs and wishes of the child or young person.

When appropriate, our Therapeutic Lead will continue to work with the child or young person and new Foster Parents after the move in order for us to do all we can to fully support the transition.

Foster Parent's Charter

We have produced a Foster Parent's Charter in consultation with our Foster Parents, based on the model provided by The Fostering Network.

The Charter states what Foster Parents can expect from AFA, and what AFA expects of them in return.

One aspect of the Charter has been developed by our Foster Parents pledging what they want to achieve for the children in their care:



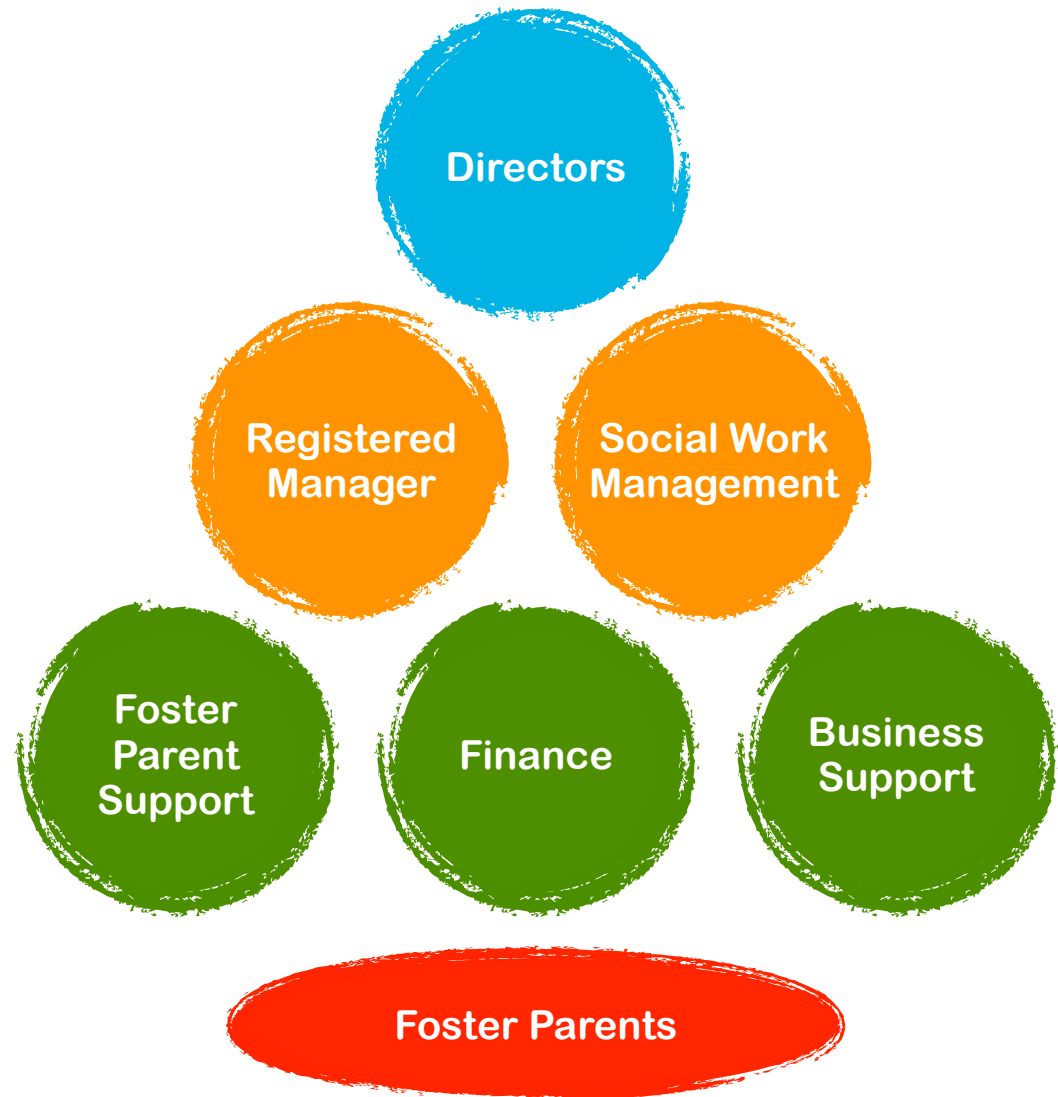
- C** **Children** are at the centre of our world. We will always place the child at the centre of the fostering process and aim to act in their best interests at all times.
- H** **Holistic approach.** We aim to take a holistic approach to caring for our children which includes taking account of their religious, linguistic and cultural needs. We support their heritage, health, interests and education.
- I** **Integrity.** We will always keep our focus on the child, doing everything we can to overcome challenges that could throw us off course.
- L** **Listening.** 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** **Development and Training.** We are committed to our own personal development as Foster Parents through training and reflection during our supervision. We are open to challenge to ensure that we improve our skills and practice as Foster Parents.
- R** **Respect.** We respect everyone who we come into contact with as Foster Parents, 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** **Education.** 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** **Nurture.** We will provide nurturing, consistent and child-centred care of the highest quality that we can.

The AFA Team

AFA recruits qualified and registered (Social Work England) Social Workers to support our Foster Parents.

AFA staff 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/>



**“AFA Fostering aims to
provide quality care with
integrity and respect.”**

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