



Statement of Purpose

Anglia Fostering Agency Limited was incorporated in July 2009 and opened in March 2010. From 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. Their 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 placement 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.

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

AFA wants the best for the children and young people we care for, and to achieve this we work in partnership with local authorities, professionals from statutory and voluntary organisations, regulatory bodies and, most importantly, foster carers.

AFA uses the National Minimum Standards 2011 as a benchmark for good practice whilst aiming to consistently exceed these in the service offered. AFA has developed their own Foster Carer's Charter, which can be downloaded from our website (www.afafostering.com). The Statement of Purpose has been written in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, Part 2, 3 (1) and is regularly reviewed to reflect national and local developments.

AFA Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement is:

"Anglia Fostering Agency aims to provide quality care with integrity and respect."

This statement clearly states AFA objectives and values and informs our practice at all times.

Principles and Values

AFA will work to achieve the highest **quality** of service to children and young people in order to provide:

- Safe and stable placements
- Opportunities to explore interests, talents and skills
- Placements that meet identified needs

AFA believe that the relationships we have with those we work with should be underpinned by a commitment to practice with **integrity**. To achieve this we will:

- Work in partnership, aiming for the best outcome for the child or young person placed
- Promote an open and constructive approach to the fostering task by our social workers and foster carers
- Support those who work and foster for AFA to learn and develop in order to best meet the needs of the children and young people in placement

AFA will **respect** the children and young people placed with us, their families and our professional colleagues. We will:

- Actively demonstrate AFA's commitment to our foster carers through training, mentoring and support groups
- Listen to the young people in our care, and the children of foster carers, in order to develop a service that is responsive to their needs
- Have high expectations of those who have the day to day care of looked after children and young people

AFA is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and has a zero-tolerance policy in respect of discriminatory acts, statements or practices. Services offered by AFA to children and young people are provided in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

AFA will 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. AFA aim to provide foster carers with allowances that are equal to, or above, those provided by other independent agencies and local authorities. These payments ensure that AFA can provide an enhanced service with highly trained and skilled foster carers and qualified professional social workers. The allowance paid to carers is closely monitored to ensure that it is used for the benefit of the children and young people placed.

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 placements for children and young people suitable to meet their individual needs. We aim to provide opportunities for looked after children and young people 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.

Our objectives, with input and the views of our carers, are to:

- Place children and young people at the centre of the fostering process and act in their best interest at all times, ensuring that the process is timely and avoids delay.
- Where possible to place 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 existing educational provision.
- Provide stability in the lives of children and young people to enable them to feel safe and secure. AFA foster carers identify the importance of promoting stability and of ensuring children are safe and happy in a stable family. They aim for children to be a part of their family.
- 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 would not have had, helping them through their problems and giving them skills to allow them to help themselves.
- Fully recognise, respect, promote and value the racial, cultural, faith and linguistic background, gender and sexuality of fostered children and young people and take these into account when making placement matches.
- 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 and ensure there is genuine choice and opportunity for good matching.
- Provide a commitment to ongoing learning and training for foster carers and staff through a comprehensive training programme, presented by experienced social workers within AFA and trainers with specialist knowledge external to the service. AFA foster carers identify the importance of training in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Provide 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 the support and monitoring/supervision being something that AFA have got right and enables them to carry out their role.
- Work as an inclusive partnership, which embraces children and young people, their families, foster carers, the local authority and other agency colleagues, such as 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

AFA recognises that we work with some of the most vulnerable members of society, and therefore our priority must be the safe keeping of the children and young people placed with us; ensuring their physical, emotional and educational needs are met and, in all decision making, placing the child first.

Services Offered

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

AFA is able to offer placements tailored to the specific needs of each child, including those with additional needs or significant safeguarding issues. Comprehensive assessments, working independently or with a local authority, can be provided for all placement choices.

AFA provides Intensive and Therapeutic Fostering services which have been developed to meet the needs of the most challenging young people, for whom living in a family may not be considered a viable option. These services enable children and young people, who need intensive support, the opportunity to experience a safe and nurturing family setting whilst addressing the trauma of their past. They aim to help children and young people re-engage with education, helping them develop their social and independence skills and build resilience.

Our Intensive Service can also provide placements aimed at safeguarding vulnerable children and young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation or trafficking. AFA has a comprehensive strategy, and a range of safeguarding policies, relating to CSE and a dedicated group of foster carers, and all AFA social workers, have completed training to enable them to recognise and address risk factors.

AFA provides Parent and Child Placements for one or both parents and their child or children. AFA has recruited and trained foster carers who can provide parent and child placements, which are available pre-birth to final Care Plan. Carers will build relationships with young parents or adults to help them develop the insight and skills to provide safe and positive care for their child. During the placement the following can be provided:

- Parenting support - the foster carer and AFA Placement Manager (Supervising Social Worker) contribute to the local authority's assessment.
- Pre and post-birth parenting support - Supporting the parent before and immediately after birth.

Matching

AFA have a professional duty and referral system which works closely with local authorities to provide the best match for every child and young person who needs a family based placement. We provide profiles for the foster carers put forward, alongside in depth background information from their allocated Placement Managers (supervising social worker). Our foster carers are given a high level of supervision and support with access to a range of professionals for those who provide our Intensive and Therapeutic Fostering services. All placements, regardless of their focus, will be supported to enable children and young people to feel safe, valued and heard.

Participation

We are a child centred service which aims to include children and young people, both those looked after and those who are part of the fostering family, in as many aspects of AFA as practical. We believe that children and young people should play an integral part in the development of the services we provide and the AFA Children's' Consultation Group and Fostering Friends group have created resources aimed at supporting the children we care for, and foster carer's own children.

In 2015 AFA was awarded a 'Certificate of Attainment' by 'Leading Improvements for Looked After Children' (LILAC) for achieving all 7 Standards. AFA are proud to have received recognition for our '...commitment to listening and involving children and young people in care.' The award was made following interviews with the children our carers look after by LILAC's team of young people who have personal experience of being fostered.

AFA continues to look for ways to include our Young People in our services and engage them in helping us to evaluate what we do and guide us in how best to support them.

Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of 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. Potential applicants will not be discriminated against on grounds of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith, age or economic status. However, prospective Foster Carers must evidence their capacity to meet the holistic needs of any child placed.

AFA provides the following to all our foster carers:

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

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

AFA carries out rigorous assessments of prospective foster carers using the BAAF Form F as a framework for assessing suitability to be a foster carer. The assessment process consists of a series of in depth interviews which cover the candidate's childhood and background, educational and life experiences, values and attitudes. Enquiries include a DBS (police) and local authority check as well as interviews with personal and professional referees (e.g. employers).

All completed assessments are presented to the AFA Fostering Panel, which plays a significant role in the agency's Quality Assurance process. Annual reviews are carried out for all approved foster carers in line with statutory requirements. The placing authority of any child looked after by the foster carer in the previous year are contacted for feedback, as are the children and young people in placement.

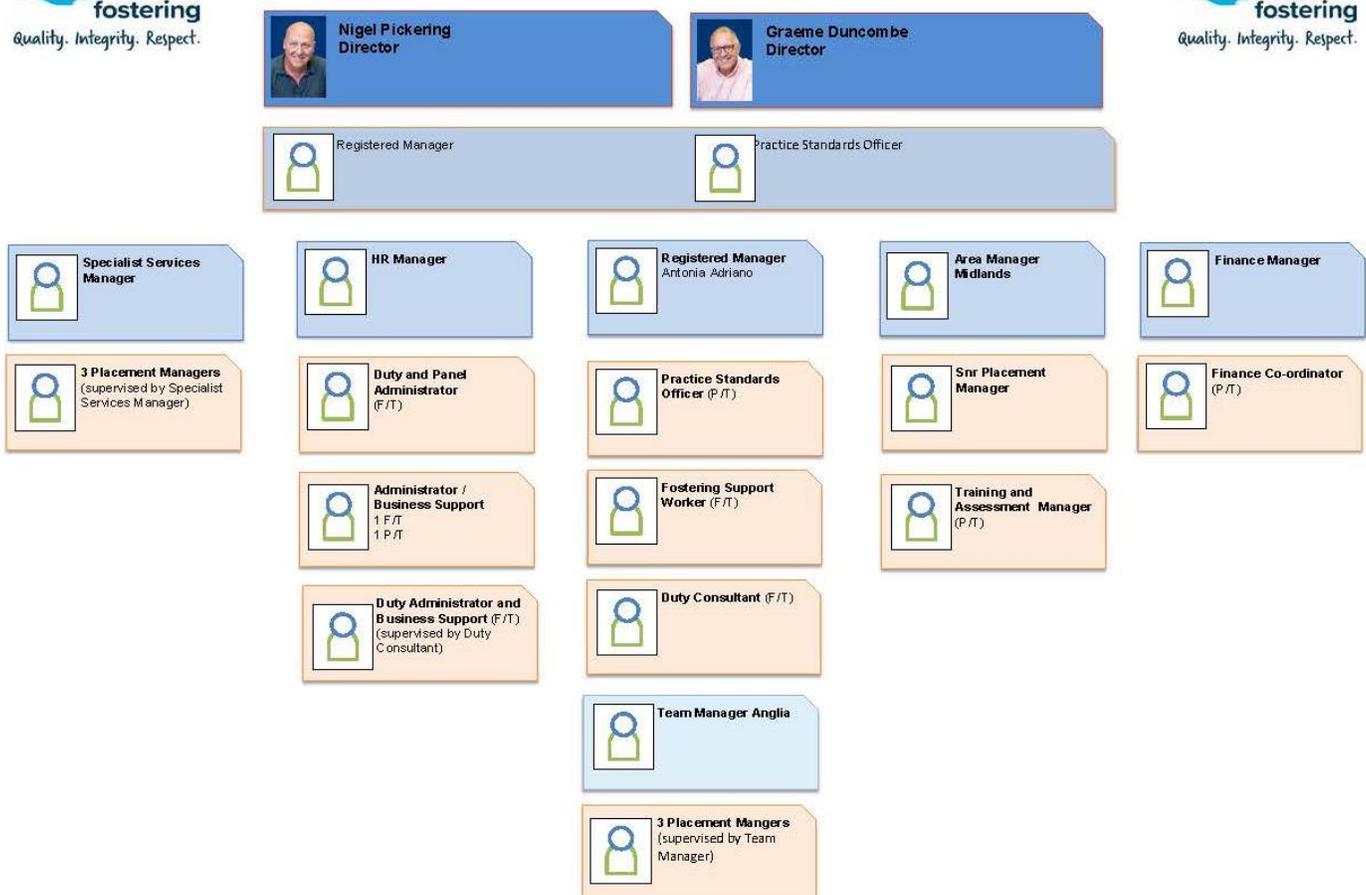
AFA staff

AFA recruit and appoint qualified and registered (Health Care Professionals Council) Social Workers to support our foster carers. AFA employees have a particular interest, knowledge or experience of fostering and/or safeguarding, and are actively encouraged to develop their skills and expertise through supervision and post qualification training.

Nigel Pickering and Graeme Duncombe are the Directors of AFA, and between them they have over 70 years of social work experience at practitioner and management level. AFA holds a Gold Award for 'Investors in People' 2015-2018.



AFA Departmental Organisation Structure 2018



Quality Assurance and Monitoring

AFA aim to provide services that exceed National Minimum Standards. To ensure children are provided with the high level of care we expect, AFA have rigorous Quality Assurance systems in place. Our database assists senior management to track and monitor the progress of each child throughout their placement with an AFA foster carers. In addition, monthly management meetings ensure the high standard of care provided is paramount. AFA also has a Practice Standards Officer who reports to the Management Team on staff compliance with policies and procedures, as well as identifying areas for development. All staff are regularly supervised and subject to an annual appraisal.

Complaints and Representation

AFA has a complaints and representation policy in place and details are available upon request.

AFA will respond promptly to all complaints and representations. 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.

Anglia Fostering Agency
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