

Statement of Purpose

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Introduction

Incorporated in July 2009, Anglia Fostering Agency Limited (or AFA as it's known) was founded by Social Workers with significant social work experience at practitioner and management level, incorporating child protection and fostering.

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. AFA was rated as 'Outstanding' in November 2024. Ofsted stated that "the dedicated and comprehensive support helps carers to provide outstanding care to children".

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.



Overseeing the day to day running of the agency is **Toni Adriano**, AFA's highly experienced Registered Manager. Toni has been in this role for over 10 years. She is supported by a dedicated, experienced and committed management team.

Toni is also supported by **Monica Hertz**, AFA's Responsible Individual, who has been a social worker since 2000, working in fostering for most of her career as a Supervising Social Worker, Manager, Registered Manager and Responsible Individual.

The initial motivation to create AFA was to provide a genuine alternative to existing independent fostering service provision. This vision continues, with the objective of providing a consistently high standard of care for children and young people who are looked after.

Our mission statement

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

All those employed by AFA have a commitment to uphold the core values of the agency, which are:

- Genuine **Quality** of care
- **Integrity** at every stage
- **Respect** for all those we work with



We asked our staff to explore what their aspirations for AFA are, and they shared the following:

- To be part of a team that helps children and young people become all they can be
- To support fostering households by being available, attentive and reflective
- To find opportunities to learn and grow, to continue to move forward
- To always be thinking of our children and young people
- To inspire the next generation by making a difference
- To support children and families to be happy and healthy
- To be inspirational
- To work well as a team and be collaborative

We asked our Children and Young People what they felt Quality, Integrity and Respect meant to them:

They help.

They are nice and kind,
everyone is kind

AFA gives a good service.

They are positive.



They are kind,
staff are kind.
Staff are nice.

They make sure they
are there for others.

They treat people the way
they want to be respected.

They are truthful

They are honest

AFA can be trusted.

They show determination and motivation



We asked our Foster Parents what they felt Quality, Integrity and Respect meant. They gave the following views:

Quality

We give our all. We give 110%.

The level of support from our FSW is quality and always has been.

Social work support has always been very good.

There is a high standard of Foster Parents due to recruitment being key in looking at quality and this travels down through the agency.

Integrity

They show integrity in fighting for the kids, for instance around children's education.

They remain child centred and advocate for foster parents.

AFA promote the views of the child and the support from FSWs means that Foster Parents feel able to do this.

Fostering Social Workers challenge when they need to, and support Foster Parents to get their messages across to other professionals.

Foster Parents stick at it as they know AFA will fight for them.

Respect

AFA see Foster Parents as professionals.

They show young people that they are a part of the family

Their commitment leads to them going over and above.

When difficulties arise, they are tenacious in getting the right support for children and Foster Parents.

We asked people we work with outside AFA what they thought.

We wanted to know if they thought we followed our mission statement and how they saw us. They said:

Quality: 97% stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that AFA offers a quality service. They also said:

“AFA offer a good service, the support they offer to the [Foster Parents] is good and ensures stable [homes]”

“The dynamic at panel between fostering social worker, [Foster Parents] and independent members demonstrates a very high level of emotional intelligence, inclusivity and collaborative working”

“I have only worked with one family and one social worker through your agency. Both of whom are fantastic!”

“The YP placed with AFA [Foster Parents] was supported by the carers to make massive progress”

“AFA have offered training for our school staff and have been supportive”

“AFA [Foster Parents] are supported and I feel that their FSW is present and involved in every aspect of the care planning for the child. They thrive to develop a relationship with the LA Social Worker and other professionals around the child”

Integrity: 100% stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that AFA showed integrity. They also said:

“I only have dealings with a social worker but she is the most supportive, knowledgeable and hard-working social worker that I have ever worked with (and I have worked in schools for nearly 30 years!)”

“Excellent communication with professionals”

“AFA have always been very professional in their approach”

“Appreciate the honesty and courage to speak out”

“Always child centered, never complacent, always curious, never assuming”

Respect: 100% stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that AFA respects those they work with. They also said:

“The YP placed with AFA [Foster Parents] feels he is respected and valued as an individual”

“AFA are always respectful”

“AFA is always child centred” and is “child focused”

“AFA is genuine and friendly” and “compassionate”



Principles and Values

Quality:

- Children and young people have safe, happy and stable homes, that enable them to flourish and thrive. At AFA we have high expectations of those who have the day-to-day care of children and young people. The support we offer ensures exceptional stability for all.
- They are provided with a range of opportunities to explore interests, talents and skills and to learn new things so that they can reach their full potential. Ofsted consider that we provide an outstanding service to Foster Parents and their children and that as a result, the children's experiences and progress are excellent.
- We work closely with their fostering families, offering tailored support with kindness and sensitivity.
- We provide the right guidance, training and support which means that Foster Parents develop enhanced skills and knowledge so they can offer high quality, sensitive and nurturing care.

Integrity:

- Collaborative working aims for the best outcomes for every child and young person.
- We carefully matches families who can meet the identified needs of children and young people.
- We promote an open and flexible approach to fostering, keeping everyone involved
- We focus on best practice. This is underpinned by an ongoing commitment to learning and development to ensure the safeguarding and progress of the children and young people in its care. We 'think outside the box' and are creative in our approach.

Respect:

- At AFA we commit to supporting our Foster Parents in a thoughtful, responsive way and to meet people where they are at.
- We work hard to recruit people who share our values.
- We consider the wellbeing of Foster Parents and their families alongside ensuring the wellbeing of all children and young people who are looked after.
- Our staff value relationships with Foster Parents, children, young people, colleagues and other professionals. The views of those who work with us are heard and valued. Ofsted stated that "the agency has lots of innovative ways of capturing children's voices"
- As an inclusive agency, we help children to feel that they are cared about and have someone who will support and advocate for them.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Both as an employer and as a service provider, AFA is fully committed to the promotion of equality and inclusion. We promote an environment that is free from discrimination in all its forms, and we value difference. Inclusion is an important part of our ethos, and this has been recognised by Inclusion UK who identified the culture of AFA as inclusive.

We strive to:

- Promote diversity and equal opportunities with managers taking responsibility to lead this across the agency
- Create an environment of inclusion, free from harassment and discrimination
- Confront and challenge discrimination in a timely way, 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 and learning opportunities
- Ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality, ensuring equality in recruitment
- Ensure that the experience of everyone is that they are valued, respected and encouraged



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.

We:

- Recognise the great work Foster Parents are doing when working with children and young people, including those with high and complex needs
- Keep children and young people at the centre of everything we do and act in their best interests at all times
- Commit to recruiting Foster Parents with a variety of skills and experiences and from different backgrounds, in order to offer a wide range of families and a genuine choice when matching
- Where possible, match children and young people with fostering families local to their community so that they can maintain links with significant people and places
- Provide stability in the lives of children and young people to enable them to feel safe and secure. 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. We support children and young people to develop an understanding of risk and how best to keep themselves and others safe
- Fully recognise, respect, promote, celebrate and value diversity, encouraging inclusion in everything that we do
- Commit to ongoing learning and training by providing a broad range of opportunities for Foster Parents, staff and others working alongside 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 has got right, which enables them to carry out their role more effectively
- Work as an inclusive partner that 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 that 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
- 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 to develop resilience
- Work together and support each other to do our best



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 that aims to include children and young people, both 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 alongside Foster Parents' own children.

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

Children's Guides are designed for different ages and abilities as well as different languages, where appropriate.

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

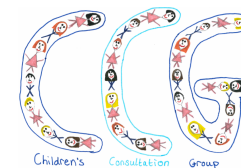
We have a newsletter for children that is produced with input and the support of our children

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. These include:

- 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
- Diversity Pledge



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, which are undertaken within a therapeutic approach. These include:

- Emergency
- Short term
- Long term
- Stayovers
- Pre-adoptive
- Intensive/Enhanced
- Parent and child
- Pre-birth support
- Bridging to permanence
- Unaccompanied young people
- Preparation for independence
- Children at risk of CSE or CCE
- '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 and experienced Social Workers.

AFA provides Foster Parents with allowances that 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 quality Foster Parents to offer Local Authorities the best possible match, in order to meet the needs of children and young people 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
- Pre and post approval training program and learning opportunities
- Monthly supervision and regular contact/support by an allocated Fostering Social Worker
- Additional support services for 'specialist' arrangements
- Tailored, responsive support to Foster Parents and children, accounting for need and circumstances
- A comprehensive training programme for Foster Parents and other key adults, focused on the needs of children in their care
- Access for Foster Parents to therapeutic support
- Support for Foster Parents at meetings regarding children, as required, including those related to education and health
- Regular support group meetings and Forums
- Social events for Foster Parents and their families (e.g. Activity Days, and Family Days)
- Organised social events for all children linked to AFA
- Generous fostering allowance
- FosterTalk membership

AFA has a comprehensive training and learning programme that incorporates core mandatory courses and specialist training. It is designed to enhance Foster Parents' specific skills, as identified in their Professional Development Plans. This is delivered through various flexible mediums.

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 reviews and monitors 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 maintained. The Management Team also closely monitors the progress of all children.

AFA is always looking at and reflecting on its own and others' practice to support continuous improvement. AFA's Audit Plan is regularly reviewed 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 Local Authorities whose children we care for 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 quality matches to ensure a low rate of disruption / breakdown and promote stability for those we care for and work with. Our Duty Worker and Fostering Social Workers, along with the Management Team, 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.

If information subsequently comes to light that changes our perception of a child or young person's needs, we work creatively to find ways to continue to meet their needs and to provide them with stability.

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.

The Charter has been developed by our Foster Parents, who have created a pledge that outlines what they want to achieve for the children in their care:



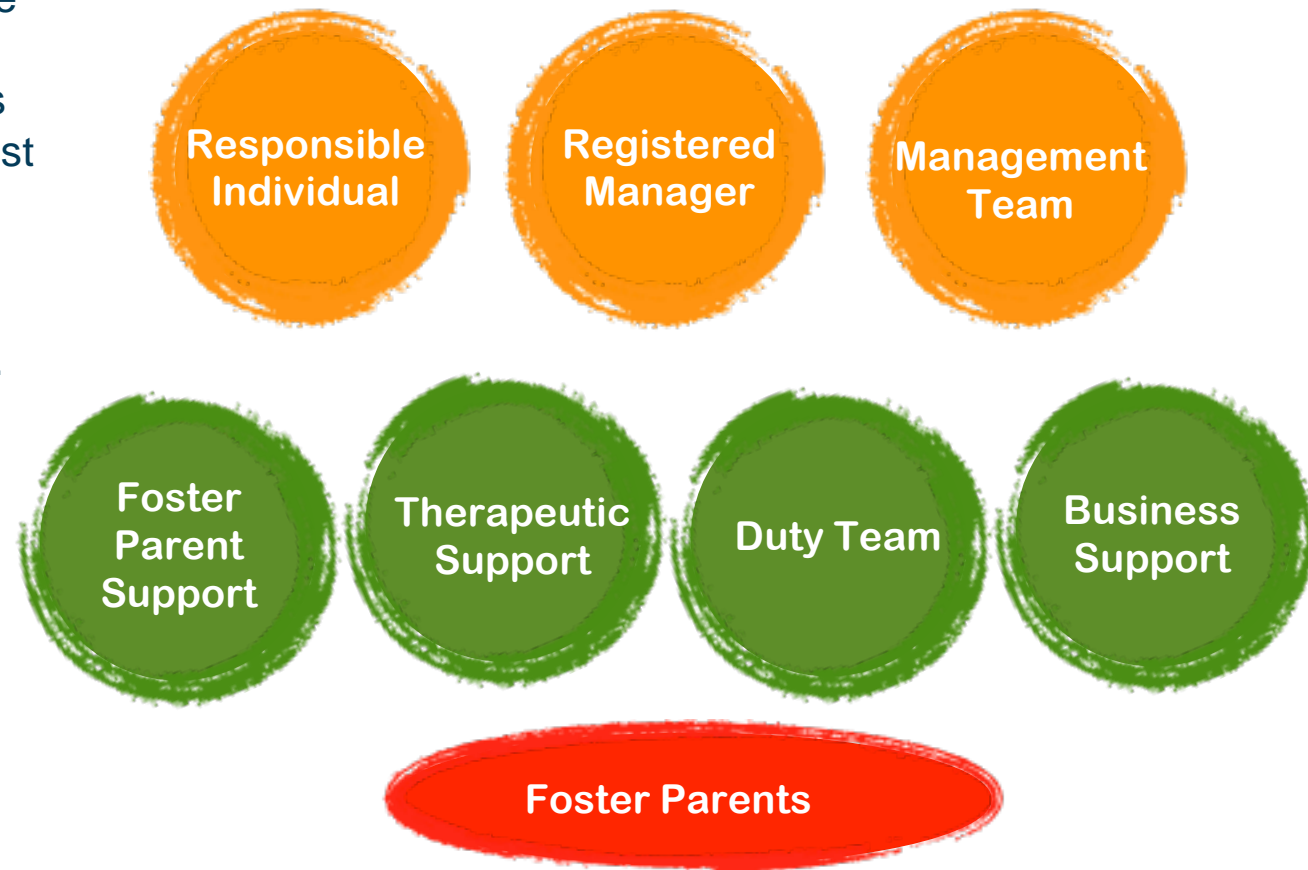
- C** **Children** are at the centre of our world. We will always place the child at the centre of the fostering process and aim to act in their best interests at all times.
- H** **Holistic approach.** We aim to take a holistic approach to caring for our children which includes taking account of their 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, experienced 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 roles and responsibilities.



Complaints and Compliments



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 an 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.

AFA strives to provide services that are of the highest standard at all times. 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.

The AFA complaints policy and procedure complies with statutory requirements (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 carers approved by the agency’.

As an agency, we also like to hear when things have gone well and so we collate and share compliments we receive with the team, to recognise and enhance good practice.

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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