



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

[Reference: Regulation 3(i) of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 – England and Wales as amended by the Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Amendment Regulations 2005).]

Registered Provider: DFW Adoption
Agriculture House
Stonebridge
Durham
DH1 3RY

www.dfw.org.uk

Responsible Individual: The Venerable J S Bain
Chairperson of Trustees

Director: Jenny Parkin

Date approved by Trustees: **January 2017**

Trustees Review Date: January 2018



1) Introduction

DFW Adoption and its predecessors have operated in the Diocese of Durham since 1910 and for more than 60 years DFW Adoption has provided services in relation to the adoption of children.

DFW Adoption now offers a comprehensive range of adoption services in relation to current and past adoptions and is highly committed to providing a wide range of post adoption support services that include an accredited parenting programme and therapeutic services for children.

DFW Adoption is a Registered Charity (Registration no: 1067958) and a Company Limited by Guarantee. (Company no: 1649714)

2) Aims and Objectives

The agency is registered as a Voluntary Adoption Agency and is registered to provide Intermediary Services under Section 3 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The agency operates under the terms of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regs 2011.

The Aims and Objectives are as follows:

- In all our services to promote the best interests of the child as our paramount consideration, and to ensure wherever possible that children are consulted about plans for their future and have their views taken into account.
- Priority is given to safeguarding children and this is enshrined throughout all our practice
- Provide high quality permanent family placements for children through adoption.
- Promote an all inclusive policy to recruit a diversity of adoptive parents able to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption locally and nationally.
- Provide comprehensive adoption support at all stages of the process for adoptive parents and their children.
- Provide families with in house post-adoption support at any point in the future following the making of the adoption order.
- Work in partnership with adoptive parents and placing agencies and to operate within a multi agency context.
- Promote and enhance the identity and self-worth of adopted children, and to ensure wherever possible that the child has access to comprehensive information about their background, birth family and history, and opportunities for ongoing contact with significant people from their past.
- Provide high quality advice, information and support services to adopted adults who are requesting access to their birth records or

seeking knowledge about their original birth family and the circumstances of their adoption.

- Provide high quality advice, information and support services on request to birth relatives of adopted children and adults placed through the agency.
- Offer a responsive daily help and advice telephone service to all callers enquiring about adoption and support and information to adopted adults and birth relatives; and any other queries in relation to the work of the agency and adoption in general.
- Promote best practice in adoption within the agency incorporating theory, research and case law.
- Work within the requirements of current adoption legislation, regulations and guidance.

In addition to work with individual service users, we seek to work collaboratively with local authorities and other voluntary adoption agencies and other external organisations to promote adoption and to develop adoption practice.

Current examples of this are:

- We are commissioned by Darlington Borough Council to provide independent support for birth families in the Darlington area.
- We are commissioned by Darlington Borough Council to manage their Post Box Service between adoptive families and birth families
- We collaborate with several other agencies in the region to offer ongoing training and support to waiting adopters
- With colleagues in the Northern Consortium of Adoption Agencies we host a regular Post Adoption Forum for professionals to discuss practice issues and developments.
- With colleagues in the Northern Consortium of Adoption Agencies we host a regular 'Waiting Adopters Group' to support this process.
- We work in partnership with a BME social worker who assists with the recruitment of Black Minority Ethnic adoptive families for DFW Adoption. She also assists and offers advice regarding the adoption assessment of BME families and issues concerning culture and ethnicity. Our service to BME adoptive families is called 'DFW Adoption Khandan Service'.

We are members of the following organisations;

- Coram BAAF
- Adoption UK
- Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA)
- Northern Consortium of Adoption Agencies
- Diocesan Adoption Agencies Group
- Children England
- VONNE (Voluntary Organisation in North East England)
- NCVO
- BECON

- New Family Social
- Linkmaker

DFW Adoption is committed to practice based research and enjoys an ongoing partnership in collaborative working with Durham University. The organisation has facilitated the research work of Dr Chris Jones and others.

3) Management of the Agency

Ultimate responsibility for the agency lies with the Trustees of the Charity who are Company Directors. Responsibility for the growth and development, marketing and strategic direction of the agency is delegated to the Director of DFW Adoption.

The Director represents the agency at a local and national level and contributes to national debate and consultation processes that inform the development of professional practice and address government legislation.

The Director of the agency is Jenny Parkin. The Director has worked in the field of social care since 1975 and completed her professional qualification in 1977. Since that time she has worked for a local authority in child care social work in fostering and adoption latterly as a manager and began working for DFW Adoption in October 2015.

The Director has a chartered management institute diploma in management level 4 (2003)

4) Agency staff and training

The agency comprises a part time adoption team manager with responsibilities for the operational functioning of the agency. There is an integrated team of 4 qualified adoption social workers, one of whom is also a qualified play therapist and an independent social worker of long standing, who deliver adoption services in accordance with the aims and objectives of the agency and the legal framework that applies to adoption and safeguarding children.

Staff at DFW Adoption are highly skilled and experienced in areas of family finding, family placement support, post adoption support services and birth records counselling. Additionally DFW Adoption is contracted by the local authority in Darlington to provide independent support to birth relatives.

The integrated team at DFW Adoption are committed to the sharing of skills and knowledge, continued training and development and to on-going research that impact on professional practice and their ability to adopt new and innovative approaches to their work that will benefit children in adoptive placements.

The agency is highly committed to a programme of professional training and professional development for all staff and this is facilitated within team events and on an individual basis depending on each person's interests and professional development plan. Child protection training for all staff is seen as a priority.

It is envisaged that the adoption team manager will undergo a management training course in the foreseeable future.

4.1) Finance Consultant

DFW Adoption employs a part time finance consultant with specific responsibilities for the day to day finances of the agency, financial reporting to the board of trustees and financial management group and the completion of the year end accounts and submission to the Auditors for their scrutiny and thereafter to Companies House. We outsource the services of an accountant who meets with the finance consultant when required.

4.2) Business Administration

The business administration of the agency is managed by a full time Business Administration Manager who additionally has PA duties to the Director and a range of other duties that support the efficiency of the business systems and services.

The Business Administration Manager and one Business Administrator provide business support to the managers and practitioners of the agency and the administrative processes that support the adoption panel, family placement and other areas of work connected to all parties affected by adoption.

5) Organisational Structure This is attached as Appendix 1

6) Monitoring and Evaluation

DFW Adoption collects comprehensive statistical data in relation to all its services using appropriate computer software to analyse and evaluate and identify outcomes and themes. The statistics are also required by the Consortium of Adoption Agencies (CVAA) to collectively analyse and provide a national picture of the performance of the voluntary sector and in particular for government scrutiny. Yearly statistical data is also provided for Ofsted.

Monthly feedback about prospective adopters is provided by the adoption team manager, who is the panel adviser, for the members of the adoption panel with regards to adoption assessments and the placement of children. Additional updates are provided about agency issues, staffing turnover and training and practice issues. Information is also provided in a written form for the bi- monthly meeting of the board of trustees.

A six monthly report on the performance of the adoption panel, quality of reports and the business of the adoption panel is provided by the Chair of the adoption panel for the trustees of the agency and for circulation within the agency. This report is discussed during the business meetings of the adoption panel as part of the agenda and to allow for reflections on the performance of the adoption panel.

A formal review of the business of the adoption panel and family placement outcomes is analysed and presented in a written form to the Adoption Panel each year, enabling year on comparisons to be made. This formal review is presented first to the trustees for their scrutiny. An Annual Review of the entire business is compiled in a written form and presented to the AGM and its members.

Surveys are undertaken of service users for their views and feedback about specific areas of service. Responses are evaluated and used to review practice and procedure when necessary.

Feedback forms are provided for prospective adopters who have attended the adoption panel which are used to review the performance of the adoption panel. The main themes from the feedback provided is conveyed by the Chair of the adoption panel to members when they meet, at least once each year, to reflect on their performance and practice.

End of Assessment questionnaires are sent to prospective adopters following their approval and where required a visit would also be arranged. The views of the adopters are collated into a report and used to inform practice. Their questionnaire is retained on their adoption file.

Quality Assurance feedback forms are completed by the panel adviser with respect to the comments of the adoption panel on each PAR presented to them and used in supervision meetings with social workers.

All adoption panel members including the Chair of the panel undergo yearly reviews of their developing role on the adoption panel.

All social work staff, the business administrator, business administration manager and finance consultant are supervised by their line manager and formal supervision meetings take place at a minimum of monthly. All supervision notes are completed in a written form and signed by the employee and their line manager and a copy retained by the member of staff.

7) Procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters.

Detailed procedures are in Section 3 of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

8) Summary of Complaints Procedure

Details of the Complaints Procedure are in Section 3:7.6 and Section 12 of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

9) Adoption Support Services

DFW Adoption promotes on-going contact with prospective adopters, adoptive families, partner agencies and other supporters of the agency in an electronic newsletter. Family social events and training seminars for prospective adopters and approved adopters are regularly available.

We have a dedicated support group for single adopters and a general programme of family events and networking opportunities with other adopters. The single adopter's group intends to extend its membership to other single adopters from other agencies. We also promote networking and support opportunities for same sex adopters and a specific member of staff takes a lead in this.

We have developed an adoption support parenting programme based on the work of Webster Stratton 'Incredible Years' which is available free of charge as part of our core services to all our adopters with children in placement. The course is also available to other agencies to buy places for their own adopters. The programme, the 'DFW Adoption Skills Course is available twice yearly and runs over 12 weeks. It is facilitated by two of our social workers trained to deliver the Webster Stratton programme. The two workers receive supervision and peer support via Coram another VAA who use and provide training in this programme.

9.1 Services for Children: Therapeutic Services

We employ a qualified play therapist to provide play therapy for children in adoptive placements. The services are available to commission by the local authority responsible for placing the child and a full range of leaflets for the local authorities, for adoptive parents and for children and young people are available on request and on our website amongst the range of other leaflets about our services.

P.C.F.A.

This is a unique project called 'Preparing Children in the Family for Adoption'. It is an integral part of family placement work providing a service to any child born or adopted into the family when their parents apply to become adopters. The child is allocated their own adoption worker, separate to the main assessing worker, to help them prepare for the advent of a new child joining the family and to also enable them to discuss any worries or questions they

might have. The PCFA worker assesses the child's readiness for the changes that lie ahead and how the prospective adopters have prepared and supported their child. A report separate to the PAR is completed for the adoption panel and the PCFA worker also attends. The same PCFA worker is available to the child at any stage of the process including after the placement.

10) Working with Partner Agencies

DFW Adoption seeks to work in collaboration with external partner agencies, local authorities, VAAs and Universities to promote adoption and to develop adoption practice for the benefit of children.

Current examples of this are:

We are commissioned by Darlington Borough Council to provide an independent support service for birth relatives. We are also commissioned by DBC to manage a Post Box Service on their behalf between adoptive families and birth families.

We provide a training workshop on a yearly basis for the relevant social work and adoption teams in Darlington to raise awareness about the emerging themes from the work within the post box service and birth relative support service and together look at ways of further efficiencies and responses to the needs of these service user groups.

We collaborate with other local authorities in the northern region to offer ongoing support and training to a waiting adopters group.

We attend adoption exchange events with partner agencies in the northern region to identify potential adoptive families for children. We also attend other adoption open events including Adoption Register events in the region and nationally to achieve placement and avoid unnecessary delay for children.

With colleagues in the consortium of adoption agencies in the North East we host a regular Post Adoption Forum for professionals to discuss practice issues, research and developments.

11. Registration Authority

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Jenny Parkin Director January 2017