

YORKSHIRE ADOPTION AGENCY LTD
(Referred to as YAA)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE updated June 2018

Yorkshire Adoption Agency is located at,

Loversall Court
Clayfields
Tickhill Road
Balby
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN4 8QG
Tel No. 01302 638337 (this is also the out of hours number)
E-mail: info@yorkshireadoptionagency.org.uk
WWW.yorkshireadoptionagency.org.uk

The Responsible Person for the Agency is Mr Stephen Russell Jackson, Chairperson of Yorkshire Adoption Agency Ltd. Mr Jackson is contactable via the above address.

The Registered Manager is Ms Ann Elizabeth Redmond, Agency Director. Ms Redmond is contactable at the above address.

The Work of YAA

The main objective of Yorkshire Adoption Agency is to provide a Domestic Adoption Service to potential Adopters in all areas of Yorkshire and further afield.

Domestic Adoption Services include : -

- Information, preparation and assessment of Potential Adopters who wish to adopt children from the UK.
- Adoptive families for children who are 'Looked After' by Local Authorities.
- Counselling and origins information to adults who were placed for adoption through YAA.
- Liaison with Adoption Support Agencies who provide Intermediary Services to Adopted Adults and their adult birth family members.
- Lifelong support for families who have adopted children through YAA.

The Agency will accept expressions of Interest for **Domestic Adoption** from the following areas:

- ❖ Calderdale
- ❖ Derby City
- ❖ Derbyshire
- ❖ East Riding of Yorkshire
- ❖ Kingston upon Hull and Humberside
- ❖ Kirklees
- ❖ Leicester City
- ❖ Leicestershire and Rutland
- ❖ Lincolnshire
- ❖ North East Lincolnshire
- ❖ North Lincolnshire
- ❖ North Yorkshire
- ❖ Nottingham City
- ❖ Nottinghamshire
- ❖ South Yorkshire
- ❖ West Yorkshire
- ❖ York City

YAA provides an **Inter Country Adoption** Service to the following Local Authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region: -

- ❖ Barnsley
- ❖ Bradford
- ❖ Calderdale
- ❖ Doncaster
- ❖ East Riding of Yorkshire
- ❖ Kingston upon Hull
- ❖ Kirklees
- ❖ Leeds
- ❖ North East Lincolnshire
- ❖ North Lincolnshire
- ❖ North Yorkshire
- ❖ Rotherham
- ❖ Sheffield
- ❖ Wakefield
- ❖ York City

An **Inter Country Adoption service** is also provided to residents living in the following Local Authorities who have individual Service Level Agreements with the Agency.

- ❖ Derby City
- ❖ Leicester City

- ❖ Leicestershire & Rutland
- ❖ Nottingham City
- ❖ Nottinghamshire

Where the Agency accepts a Registration of Interest from a Prospective Adopter who wishes to adopt a child from overseas, the Agency will agree a contract directly with the Service User.

From time to time YAA may provide specialist adoption services to Local Authorities. Any specialist work undertaken will be at the Agency Director's discretion.

Although, the Agency mainly works with adults who wish to adopt, Yorkshire Adoption Agency is committed to providing a child centred service. This is in recognition that children who are placed for adoption, either in the UK or from overseas are extremely vulnerable and will have experienced disadvantage, trauma, neglect or abuse in their earlier lives. We, therefore, have Policies and Procedures in the Agency to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children before and after adoption.

Organisation and Control of YAA

The Adoption Agency is registered as a Voluntary Adoption Agency under the Care Standards Act 2000.

YAA has charitable status and is registered with the Charities Commission. The Agency is a Private Limited Company and details of the company are registered with Companies House.

Overall responsibility for the Agency lies with the Trustees known as the Council of Management. A sub group of this body i.e. the Executive Sub Committee takes responsibility for the organisation's activities on a more operational level. The Agency Director takes day to day responsibility for the organisation and reports directly to these bodies.

The Executive Sub Committee comprises of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson and Honorary Treasurer.

The Executive Sub Committee meets with the Agency Director at least every eight weeks and receive written reports about the Agency's performance and the financial status of the organisation.

The Council of Management meets with the Agency Director every three months and similarly receives written reports. This ensures that the overall management of the

Agency is monitored, the Agency is effective and achieving good outcomes for Service Users, including children placed for adoption with Agency Approved Adopters. The Council of Management also satisfies itself that the Agency is complying with its conditions of Registration.

Should the Agency Director, Executive Sub Committee or Council of Management identify any issues of concern they ensure that remedial action is taken.

The Agency has a written Business Continuity Plan to ensure that it remains operational in the event of unforeseen circumstances. This is reviewed annually

The Agency Director provides supervision to the Adoption Manager and the Business Manager. He/she does not directly manage Social Work practice in the Agency as he/she is the Agency Decision Maker who is responsible for making the decision about a Prospective Adopter's suitability (or not) to adopt.

The Adoption Manager is responsible for the direct supervision/management of staff involved in delivering social work services.

The Business Manager holds line management responsibility for the Administration Team. He/she is responsible for all the operational administration within the organisation.

Monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the Agency's services.

As an Independent Voluntary Adoption Agency YAA is Regulated and regularly inspected at least once every three years by Ofsted. This ensures that the work and conduct of the Agency meets at the standards expected of a Voluntary Adoption Agency by Central Government.

Internal systems are in place to monitor the work undertaken by the Agency. These are:

- Compliance with existing policies and procedures
- Supervision and consultation with staff
- Reports to Management Groups
- Feedback from the Agency's Adoption Panels

Monitoring and evaluation of the services provided by YAA is welcomed from stakeholders and is achieved through:

- Feedback from Prospective Adopters at regular intervals both prior and after their approval as suitable to adopt.
- Partnership meetings and feedback from Local Authorities with whom the Agency has Service Level Agreements
- Comparison of YAA practice with other Adoption Agencies both in the region and nationally. This is achieved by the Agency's membership of the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA), the Yorkshire and Humber One Adoption Yorkshire and Humber Voluntary Adoption Alliance, Consortium and BAAF/Coram.
- Monitoring the number and nature of any complaints received by the Agency.
- Feedback from Local Authorities who place children with YAA adopters.
- Work is in progress to ensure that children placed with YAA adopters will have the opportunity to provide their views on the Agency.

These monitoring and evaluation systems enables the Agency to identify patterns and trends and to make changes to practice and procedures where necessary.

Staffing

The Council of Management (Trustees) are not paid employees of the Agency. The current paid employees and their relevant qualifications are summarised below.

Agency Director	MA/Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Social Studies Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) Batchelor of Arts Degree in Combined Studies
<u>Social Work Team</u>	
Adoption Manager	Batchelor of Arts Degree in Social Work CMI Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership
Part Time Senior Social Worker	Masters Degree in Social Work
Full time Senior Social Worker	Mater of Arts in Professional Practice with Children and their Families Batchelor of Arts Degree in Social Work
Full time Social Worker	Batchelor of Arts Degree in Social Work

Full time Social Worker	Honours Degree in Social Work
Full time Social Worker	Honours Degree in Social Work
Part time Social Worker	LLB Law Masters Degree in Social Work
Full time Social Worker	Batchelor of Arts (Hons) Degree in Social Work
Full time Social Worker	Degree in Social Work
Information and Support Assistant	GCE Passes Business Qualifications Customer Care Qualifications Personal and Professional experience in adoption.

The Agency also employs experienced Social Workers on a sessional basis to meet the needs of the service. They are suitably experienced and qualified in adoption work.

All members of the Social Work team have knowledge and experience of working with children and families. Those in supervisory positions have more than five years experience in Family Placement work.

All qualified Social Workers are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

Administrative Team

The Business Manager is an appropriately qualified Manager who has the skills and expertise to ensure that the Agency benefits from high quality Administrative support.

The two Administrative Assistants have qualifications relevant to the post and positively contribute to the effective administration of the Agency.

Staffing levels are regularly reviewed by the management of the Agency who are committed to ensuring that sufficient personnel are employed to meet the Agency's commitments.

Recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving supporting adopters

We accept enquiries directly from Potential Adopters, those referred to us by First 4 Adoption and other Agencies. We will advise a Potential Adopter of other Agencies which might better meet his/her needs, if we cannot provide a service.

Prospective Inter Country Adopters from Local Authority areas who have Service Level Agreements with YAA are also provided with an Adoption Service.

YAA markets its services and has a flexible and diverse approach to recruiting Prospective Adopters. Our recruitment policy reflects the needs of children who require adoptive families both in the region and nationally. All of the UK children for whom YAA recruits adoptive families are 'Looked After' by Local Authorities. The Agency does not place children directly for adoption.

YAA is committed to providing a quality service to both Domestic and Inter Country Adopters which is reflected in the Agency's policies and procedures.

As YAA aims to be an Equal Opportunities and diverse organisation it welcomes enquiries from prospective adopters whether single or in a partnership regardless of race, religion, age, culture, language, age, disability or sexuality. Anyone who uses the service provided by YAA will be treated fairly and with respect. YAA works within the legal framework for adoption whether applicants wish to adopt a child who was born in the UK or overseas. Criteria and information about adoption is found in Domestic and Inter Country Information Leaflets which are available upon request from the Agency's office or from the link on the Agency's Website at www.yorkshreadoptionagency.org.uk. A member of the Social Work Team will respond quickly to members of the public to answer queries or discuss any issues relating to adoption.

The Agency is committed to respecting the individual needs of Services Users and will make arrangements to address these. For example, Agency staff will undertake home visits to Services Users who cannot travel readily to the office as the result of a physical disability. We will use an interpreter and have documents translated where a Service user does not use English as her/his first language. In these circumstances, however, the Service User will need to fund the cost.

The Agency will respond to an adoption enquiry within one working day and will immediately provide information. Potential Adopters will be invited to come to an Information Meeting or Open Day when they make an adoption enquiry. Information Meetings are held twice per month at the Agency. If, however, any Service User is unable to attend the Agency's scheduled Information Sessions, we are happy to

arrange a more convenient time to meet, at the Agency or at the Potential Adopter's home. The dates of our Information Sessions and Open Days are on our Website at www.yorkshireadoptionagency.org.uk

Having attended an Information Meeting/Open Day we will meet with Potential Adopters and agree with them if we can invite them to register their Interest in Adoption. When we accept their Registration of Interest, we will complete a Stage I Pre Assessment Agreement with them. This outlines the action which the Agency and the Prospective Adopter needs to take before we can assess their suitability to adopt. This is planned to take 2 months but can be extended if the Prospective Adopter needs more time to complete the process or if there is an unavoidable delay for example a Disclosure & Barring Certificate has not been received.

After successfully completing Stage I, if Prospective Adopters progress to Stage II of the process, a Stage II Agreement will be written. This will identify the action which the Agency and Prospective Adopters will need to take to complete the assessment.

When the assessment is completed it will be considered by the Adoption Panel and a recommendation will be made to the Agency. The Agency Decision Maker will make a decision about the Prospective Adopter's suitability (or not) to adopt. The Agency Decision will be made within 4 months of the Prospective Adopter beginning Stage II of the process. This may be extended if the Prospective Adopter is unable to manage this timescale. A full description of the Adoption Process is contained in the Agency's Information Leaflet, available from our office or may be downloaded from our Website at www.yorkshireadoptionagency.org.uk

Adopters who have previously adopted children through YAA will have their second assessment completed more quickly, ie 4 months from accepting their Registration of Interest.

Suitable Prospective Adopters who wish to consider adopting 'Harder to Place' children, i.e. Sibling Groups, Children over the age of 5, Children of Black or Ethnic Minority origin and children who have a specific need or disability will also have the option of having their application 'Fast Tracked'!

The Agency aims to complete the 'Fast Track' process in 4 months from the Agency accepting the Prospective Adopters Registration of Interest. A prospective adopter who wishes to take advantage of our 'First Track' approach will therefore need to ensure that he/she is able to commit to working with the Agency within this short timescale.

When an applicant has been approved to adopt a child born in the UK, the Agency will act swiftly to identify a child/children whom the now approved adopter may be suitable to parent. The action we will take to Family Find will be written into a Matching Agreement with the Approved Adopter.

We send the profiles of our approved adopters to over 60 Local Authorities every month and consider information about children sent directly to the Agency from Local Authorities/Regional Adoption Agencies. We also send our Adopters details to the National Adoption Matching Register known as Adoption Match.

The Agency is a member of Link Maker, so all Adopters in Stage 2 of the assessment process or already approved as suitable to adopt can register with that organisation. This enables our Adopters to consider the profiles of the children who have been referred to Link Maker by Local Authorities/Regional Adoption Agencies. Some Local Authorities/Regional Adoption Agencies hold Matching Meetings where information about the needs of specific children are shared. The Agency attends these events. Activity Days are also held, attended by some children who need adoptive families. The Agency supports our Approved Adopters who choose to attend Activity Days.

Our approach to Family Finding has been very successful and ensures that Adopters are fully involved, as far as is possible in identifying children who they feel they may be able to parent. We know that we are achieving good outcomes for children and their adoptive families, because we have very few adoption placements which end unexpectedly. Feedback from our adopters confirms that they feel supported before and after their child is placed for adoption.

Adopters who are approved as suitable to adopt a child from overseas will need to follow the Recognised Procedures in both the UK and the overseas country from which they hope to adopt a child. The Agency will advise Inter Country Adopters of the action they will need to take as each country overseas has individual criteria and procedures for adoption.

Complaints

As YAA is committed to providing a quality service, the Agency will respond with complaints, swiftly and fairly. YAA will ensure that no Services User will be disadvantaged because he/she has made a complaint. The Agency will treat anyone who makes a complaint with respect during the investigation process. There will be no withdrawal of service whilst a complaint from a Service User is being investigated.

It is envisaged that the majority of complaints will be resolved by staff within the Agency. On occasion, however, this may not be possible and arrangements are in place for a Trustee of the Agency to independently address complaints.

Full details of the Agency's complaints procedures can be obtained from the link on our Website or is readily available from the YAA office. The complaints procedure is provided automatically to all Service Users who Register their Interest in Adoption with the Agency.

Useful contacts

Ofsted: Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone : 0300 123 1231

E-Mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.org.uk

First4Adoption First4Adoption
48 Mecklenburgh Square
London
WC1 2QA
Telephone 0300 222 0022

Email: helpdesk@first4adoption.org.uk

Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies

Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies
Caritas Care (CVAA)
218 Tulkeith Road
Aston on Ribble
Preston
PR2 1ES

Email: info@cva.org.uk

Adoption Support Agencies

Adoption UK

Adoption UK
Units 11 and 12
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Banbury
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