

YORKSHIRE ADOPTION AGENCY LTD
(Referred to as YAA)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE updated 7th April 2014

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 Mrs Collette Anne Ibbotson, Agency Director. Mrs Ibbotson 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 Service Users in Yorkshire and other surrounding regions.

Domestic Adoption Services will include : -

- Information, preparation and assessment of Service users who wish to adopt children from the UK.
- Adoptive families for children who are 'Looked After' by Local Authorities. Children placed for adoption with Agency approved adopters will generally be under the age of seven years.
- 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.
- Support for families who have adopted children through YAA.

The Agency will consider applications 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 also provides an **Inter Country Adoption** Service to the following 12 Local Authorities in the region: -

- ❖ Bradford
- ❖ Calderdale
- ❖ Derby City
- ❖ Doncaster
- ❖ East Riding of Yorkshire
- ❖ Leicester City
- ❖ Leicestershire & Rutland
- ❖ Nottingham City
- ❖ Nottinghamshire
- ❖ Rotherham
- ❖ Wakefield
- ❖ York City

- An **Inter Country Adoption service** is provided to residents in the above areas as their Local Authorities have Service Level Agreements with the Agency.
- Those enquiring about adoption will be given information and Counselling
- An Invitation to a YAA Information Day

Where a prospective Inter Country Adopter wishes for the Agency to complete a Home Study Assessment the Agency will provide this service through 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 as such details of the company are registered with Companies House.

Overall responsibility for the Agency lies with the governing body 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, who takes day to day responsibility for the organisation, 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 to receive written reports about the Agency's activities and the financial state 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 Social Work Team Manager and Senior Administrator. 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 Social Work Team Manager/Deputy Team Manger are responsible for the direct supervision/management of staff involved in delivering social work services. The Team Manager is the named person undertaking direct responsibility for the Adoption Assistant as this person is the only person in the Social Work Team who does not hold a professional Social Work qualification.

The Senior Administrator 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 a Voluntary Adoption Agency YAA is regularly inspected by Ofsted. This ensures that the work and conduct of the Agency meets at least the minimum 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) and the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF).
- Monitoring the number and nature of any complaints received by the Agency.
- These monitoring and evaluation systems enables the Agency to identify patterns and trends and to take remedial action where necessary.

Staffing

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

Agency Director -	BSc (Hons) Degree in Social Science Diploma in Social work (CQSW) Diploma in Management Studies (DMS)
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Social Work Team

Social Work Team Manager	Diploma in Social Work (CQSW) Diploma of Higher Education NVQ Level 4 in Management
Senior Practitioner / Deputy Team Manager	Masters Degree in Social Work Diploma in Social Work BA (Hons) History
Adoption Social Worker	Masters Degree in Social Work
Adoption Social Worker	Degree in Social Work
Adoption Social Worker	Degree in Social Work
Adoptions Assistant	GCE Passes Shorthand/Typing Qualifications Basic & Advanced Courses in Youth Work NVQ Level 2 in Customer Care

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

Administrative Team

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

The Administrative Assistant has qualifications relevant to the post and positively contributes to the effective administration of the Agency.

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.

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 Prospective Adopters and those referred to us by First 4 Adoption. We will advise any Prospective 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.

When necessary YAA advertises its services and undertakes a range of approaches to recruiting Prospective Adopters. This recruitment policy reflects the needs of younger children (generally under the age of seven years) who require adoptive families both in the region and nationally. All of the UK children for whom YAA seeks to recruit adoptive families are 'Looked After' by Local Authorities. The Agency does not directly place children for adoption.

YAA aims to provide 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, sexuality or political orientation. 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 Agency's Website. A member of the Social Work Team will be pleased to speak 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 or will use an interpreter and have documents translated where a Service user does not use English as her/his first language.

The Agency will endeavour to make an initial response to an adoption enquiry within one working day and will immediately provide written information. Services Users can be offered an interview promptly when they make their first enquiry about adoption to the Agency. If they, however, prefer to receive and consider the written information they can be offered an interview at any time.

The Agency will only accept formal applications from prospective adopters when they have received the level of counselling about adoption which the Agency feels they need. First time adopters with the Agency will be invited to attend an Agency Information Day. These are generally held six times per year, so the maximum waiting time for Services Users to attend an Information Day will be 2 months.

When prospective adopters make a formal application to adopt the Agency will aim to complete an assessment within 8 months of accepting the application and the overall process will be undertaken to comply with National Adoption Standards. Unfortunately, these targets cannot always be met where Service Users choose to delay part of the process due to their own personal circumstances or where YAA needs further information before completing an assessment e.g. where an applicant's health or personal history has raised concerns.

Adopters who have previously adopted children through YAA will have their second assessment completed more quickly.

Following the assessment of an applicant's suitability to become an adoptive parent, the assessment 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 an applicant's suitability (or not) to adopt.

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. We, therefore, send the profiles of our approved adopters to over 60 Local Authorities every two months, consider children's profiles circulated in Adoption Publications and those sent directly to the Agency from Local Authorities. We also, with the Adopters' consent, send their details to the National Adoption Register. The British Association for Adoption and Fostering and some Local Authorities hold Activity Meetings where information about the needs of specific children are provided. The Agency supports approved adopters to attend these, if they wish.

This approach to Family Finding has been very successful and it helps the Agency to confirm that we are achieving positive outcomes for children who need new families through adoption. We also know that we are achieving good outcomes for children and their adoptive families, because we have very few adoption placements which disrupt. This has been 0% for the past 3 years.

Complaints

As YAA is committed to providing a quality service, the Agency will aim to 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 representative of the Council of Management 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 YAA offices. The complaints procedure is provided automatically to all Service Users who have Home Study Assessments undertaken by YAA staff.

The work of Yorkshire Adoption Agency Ltd is regulated by Ofsted.

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The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed by the Agency's Council of Management in December 2014.