



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

[Reference: Regulation 3(i) of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 – England and Wales as amended by the Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Amendment Regulations 2005).]

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

Responsible Individual: The Venerable J S Bain
Chairperson of Trustees

Director: Margaret Bell

Date approved by Trustees: March 2010

Trustees Review Date: March 2011



1. Introduction

DFW Adoption and its predecessors has operated in the Diocese of Durham since 1910, and for a significant part of that time has provided services in relation to the adoption of children.

The organisation now offers a comprehensive range of adoption services in relation to current and past adoptions.

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 may offer intermediary services under **Section 3** of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and operates under the terms of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005. The agency works exclusively in the field of adoption by providing a wide range of services in relation to current and past adoptions.

The aims and objectives of the agency 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.
- 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 twice weekly duty system giving support and advice regarding intermediary and reunion support to adopted adults and their birth relatives; and provide information about other organisations providing Intermediary Services.
- Promote best practice in adoption, 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 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
- We provide training seminars for all categories of adopters jointly with Durham County Council Adoption Service.
- With Durham County Adoption Team we also jointly run a support group for adopted teenagers – they have named the group the ‘Past of Today’. This is a group for adopted young people which meets monthly and provides the participants with an opportunity to meet other adopted young people to share their experiences of adoption. This has been a very successful venture with a core group of young people who have become very committed to the group.
- 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 have a partnership in working with IKL Social Care Ltd, an independent enterprise consisting of 2 black social workers and a white social worker, who assist with the recruitment of Black Minority Ethnic adoptive families for DFW Adoption. IKL also assist and advise regarding the adoption assessment of BME families and issues concerning culture and ethnicity.

We are members of the following organisations;

- British Association for Adoption and Fostering
- 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)
- Norcap
- NCVO
- BECON

Organisations for the Third Sector also include:

- EVOLUTION in Darlington
- VOICES Northumberland

DFW Adoption is committed to practice based research and enjoys a partnership in collaborative working with Durham University. The organisation has facilitated the research work of Dr Chris Jones over a 3 year period towards her PhD thesis, 'What makes adoptive family life work?' Further collaborative working with Dr Jones is underway and is embraced by the organisation as being beneficial and informative to current professional practice.

3. Management of the Agency

Ultimate responsibility for the agency lies with the Trustees of the charity, who are also Company Directors. The operational management of adoption services and additional responsibilities for the development of the organisation is delegated to the Director, Margaret Bell. Margaret's professional social work career began in 1972. She qualified as a social worker in 1991 since when she has worked in Children and Families and Fostering and Adoption. She has an Advanced Diploma in Practice Development and Education awarded in 2005. Margaret has additionally completed a Post Graduate Management Qualification at Durham Business School, Durham University. She is very familiar with the organisation having worked for DFW Adoption as an Adoption Social Worker for some years. She also has extensive experience of local authority child care social work.

4. Agency staff and Project work

The agency comprises of an integrated team of adoption social workers who deliver services in accordance with our aims and objectives. The

social work team is highly skilled and experienced in areas of family finding, family placement, post adoption support, direct work with children and adoption support and birth records counselling for adult adoptees and birth family members. The culture of an integrated team and a sharing of skills and knowledge, and a commitment to research and ongoing learning have contributed to the team's ability to adopt new and innovative approaches to their work.

The agency regularly provides training for local authority adoption social workers on Schedule 2 counselling, search and reunion, and have developed comprehensive training materials and workbooks.

4.1 Adoption Support Services

The agency offers ongoing contact with adoptive families by means of a newsletter twice yearly, family social events every year and training seminars for adoptive parents.

4.2 PCFA

This is a unique project called Preparing Children in the Family for Adoption. It is an integral part of the Family Placement Team providing a service to children already in the family when their parents apply to be approved as prospective adoptive parents. The child is allocated their own adoption worker both to help them prepare for the advent of a new child joining the family but also to enable them to discuss any worries or reservations they may have about their parents adopting. This work also assists with matching discussions, and the child's worker is available to support the child in the early days of placement and at any time thereafter.

4.3 Administration Team

The admin team provide administrative support to the managers and practitioners of the organisation and are responsible for all the administrative systems required of the organisation as an employer, a charity and a company limited by guarantee.

5. Organisational Structure

This is attached as Appendix 1

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The agency collects comprehensive statistical data in relation to all its services using appropriate computer software to analyse and evaluate the data to identify outcomes and patterns.

A formal review is conducted of the business presented to the Adoption Panel each year, enabling year on year comparisons to be made of Family Placement practice and outcomes. This review is presented to the Trustees.

Periodic surveys are undertaken of service users to obtain feedback on specific areas of service. Responses are evaluated and used to review practice where necessary.

All social work staff are supervised by their line manager and formal supervision meetings take place every 6 weeks. All staff have an annual appraisal.

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 is in Section 7.6 of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

9. **Registration Authority**

Ofsted

NBU 3rd Floor
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 404040
Fax: 08456 404049

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk