



# Statement of Purpose



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[www.adoption-focus.org.uk](http://www.adoption-focus.org.uk)

Triangle Project is the registered Fostering Agency (for Early Permanence only) of Family Society, a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England & Wales  
Company No: 6869556 Registered Charity No: 1129095 OFSTED Reg No: 2731149



## TRIANGLE PROJECT

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Triangle Project is an Independent Fostering Agency, registered with Ofsted (2731149) to provide Early Permanence - Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency - placements with carers who are dual-approved as foster carers and adopters.

Triangle Project is operated by Family Society, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company number 06869556 which is also a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales under charity number 1129095. The Trustees of Family Society are responsible for the operation of the Triangle Project.

Family Society also provides the Voluntary Adoption Agency – Adoption Focus, which is registered with Ofsted (SC394569).

Dual-approval is achieved through a preparation and training process which enables people to gain the skills and knowledge required to undertake the different roles; and an assessment process which tests their capacity to do so.

Early Permanence Carers are dual-approved as foster carers by Triangle Project, and as adopters by Adoption Focus.

Early Permanence is the generic term used to describe placements of children with dual-approved carers before the completion of the processes required to enable placement under adoption regulations. In Fostering for Adoption placements, the expected outcome and Local Authority agreed plan for the child is adoption – but the court process to confirm this has not been concluded. In Concurrency placements, the Local Authority is assessing different plans which include return to birth family subject to parenting assessments, and if that is not possible, to confirm permanent placement with adopters. Placing with dual-approved carers under fostering regulations provides the child with Early Permanence and improved stability whilst the plans are confirmed through assessment and court process.

Triangle Project operates within current children, fostering and adoption legislation and regulations.

This Statement of Purpose covers the following areas:

- Values and aims of the Agency.
- Services provided by the Agency.
- Information about the Registered Provider.
- Name, qualifications and experience of the registered Manager of the service.
- Information about the organisation and staffing of the service.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the service.
- Procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving, training and supporting adopters.
- Intended outcomes for children
- Information about the Compliments and Complaints Procedure.
- Address and telephone number of OFSTED.

## Mission Statement

Triangle Project aims to enable children from care to form lifelong, supportive and loving relationships with adults at the earliest opportunity through the provision of Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements, and related services.

## Vision

Every child experiences safe, secure, loving care throughout their childhood. Birth families are properly supported to enable them to provide the care their child needs. In circumstances where they cannot do so, their child will be provided with secure stable family life with dual-approved carers, who will work with professionals and birth parents to enable full assessments and the completion of the court process. Dual-approved carers will feel valued for the contribution they make to ensure the best outcome for the child – either staying with them or returning to birth family. Children will avoid disruption and broken attachments and will know that every decision made to secure their welfare was done so with care and thoughtful consideration of their needs.

## Values and aims of Triangle Project

Triangle Project is Family Society's Registered Fostering Agency which provides Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency Placements only. Working in parallel with Family Society's Registered Voluntary Adoption Agency – Adoption Focus - it provides a comprehensive range of services to support all stages of the Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency process to children and adults – recruitment; assessment; dual-approval; matching; fostering status supervision; adoptive placement support – or support with return to birth family; and post adoption support services.

Triangle Project:

- provides a high-quality service to people regardless of ethnicity, religion, language, culture, marital status, social conditions, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.
- believes that the needs of the child are paramount and therefore, concern for the child's healthy development, welfare and safety is the focus of the Fostering for Adoption process.
- believes that a family provides the best environment in which children should be cared for and enables them to achieve a permanent sense of belonging, which supports identity development and builds self-esteem.
- provides a Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency service which reflects the diversity of the society in which we live.
- strives to respect and value this diversity in providing services judged to be in the best interests of the children referred.
- believes that we should seek to empower all to whom we provide a service to reach their full potential and will work in collaboration with them and others towards achieving this end. Triangle Project has respect for their rights, views and values.
- believes that all staff should be well informed of the Aims and Objectives of the Agency and should be provided with suitable opportunities for development of skills and responsibilities in keeping with those Aims and Objectives.

## Aims of the Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency Service

Triangle Project:

- places the child at the centre of the Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency service.
- aims to secure a family placement which effectively meets the child's assessed needs, within agreed timescales.
- aims to ensure that children avoid unnecessary disruption and delay in achieving a permanent and best solution to their care needs.
- aims to ensure that all parties involved in a Fostering for Adoption or Concurrency placement – the child; the birth parents; the carers – feel properly supported, fully involved, and heard during the process.

## Objectives of Triangle Project

The objects of Triangle Project are:

- to work in partnership with dual-approved carers, children, young people, and Local Authorities, and Regional Adoption Agencies to provide high quality family-based care.
- to recruit, assess, train and support people who want to provide Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements, enabling them (subject to the assessment outcome) to become dual-approved as foster carers and adopters.
- to offer a high-quality professional service to all our service users.
- to work with Local Authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies to provide a range of Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements that match the identified needs of children referred to the service, with the aim of securing permanent family life either through adoption by the dual-approved carers, or through the child's safe and planned return to birth family, depending on the outcome of assessments undertaken.

## Standards of Care

Children's welfare is of paramount importance in the provision of Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements by Triangle Project. All staff and carers aim to support the child's right to appropriate services and to assist and advocate on a child's behalf in achieving this.

Triangle Project complies with and supports Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Procedures; Fostering Network Safe Caring principles; Fostering Network good practice guidance in the UK; National Standards for Foster Care; National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services; National Minimum Standards for Adoption; Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations updated 2015.

All dual-approved carers are required to adhere to the Triangle Project 'Code of Conduct' for Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency Carers.

Triangle Project is committed to working in an anti-discriminatory way. It recognises that individual difference in respect of ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, or religious beliefs must be respected.

## Outcomes

In providing an Early Permanence service, Triangle Project aims to achieve the following outcomes for children and young people:

- they achieve permanency either through adoption by their dual-approved carers; or through their safe and planned return to their birth family, supported by their dual-approved carers.
- they develop a sense of stability, positive identity, emotional resilience, and an understanding of their background. They feel valued for who they are, as a full member of the Early Permanence family.
- they are supported in making their wishes and feelings known.
- they enjoy sound relationships with their Early Permanence family, interact positively with others and develop social skills appropriate to their age and assessed needs.
- they feel safe, learn how to protect themselves, and are protected from significant harm, including neglect, abuse and accident.
- they achieve stability in their lives.
- they have access to the services they need to meet their health needs.
- they are encouraged and supported to take part in leisure and other activities which promote their development.
- they are encouraged and supported in education and achievement, in order that they can reach their full potential.
- they are supported in contact arrangements with people who are significant to them in order that they can maintain meaningful and supportive relationships where appropriate.

## Services and Facilities Provided by Triangle Project

Triangle Project attracts potential carers through the recruitment activity undertaken by Adoption Focus. All those enquiring about adopting children, are also provided with information about Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency through Triangle Project. If they choose to proceed with an application to be dual-approved, they attend Family Society Preparation Groups for adopters through Adoption Focus, and additional training provided by Triangle Project. This combined training prepares them for the different roles and responsibilities arising from dual-approval as both a foster carer (to undertake Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements) and an adopter.

The assessment of suitability to be dual-approved is undertaken by a Family Society Social Worker, or by an Independent Social Worker who is suitably qualified to undertake this work.

The assessment is considered by the Family Society Permanence Panel which considers and makes recommendations in respect of both their suitability to be approved as adopter(s), and their approval as Early Permanence carer(s). If approved for both roles, they are dual-approved carers.

Triangle Project will respond to all people who are interested in becoming Early Permanence carers. They will be welcomed and responded to promptly and given clear information about the project's policy and procedures relating to recruitment, training, assessment, approval and support (this includes information about Adoption Focus). They will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the process.

### **Services Provided to dual -approved carers whilst the child is placed under Fostering Regulations**

When a child is assessed as being suitable for a fostering for adoption or concurrency placement and is placed with dual-approved carers, Triangle Project will provide the following services:

- An allocated Social Worker.
- Support with contact arrangements, record keeping and attendance at meetings.
- Regular support via formal supervision, visits, and regular telephone, email and digitally supported (Teams; Zoom) contact.
- Ongoing training to include TSDS (Training Support and Development Standards) requirements
- Out of hours telephone contact.
- Involvement in the on-going development of the Project.
- Social events for dual-approved carers and children.
- Carer mentors/Buddies
- Fostering Network Membership

In circumstances where a child is returned to their birth family, Triangle Project will continue to support the dual-approved carers as required.

### **Services Provided to dual-approved carers whilst the child is placed under Adoption Regulations**

At the point at which the adoption placement is confirmed under Adoption Regulations, Triangle Project will cease to support the dual-approved carers and responsibility will transfer to Adoption Focus.

The experience for dual-approved carers will be a seamless transition from their fostering role to their adopter role, retaining the same Social Worker throughout.

This support provided by Adoption Focus will continue post adoption order.

### **Services Provided to Local Authorities, Regional Adoption Agencies, children and young people**

Triangle Project is committed to working in partnership with Local Authorities, Regional Adoption Agencies and other agencies in identifying appropriate Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements for Looked after Children.

Specifically, Triangle Project:

- has a dedicated Linking & Matching Officer to assist with a rapid response to requests for placements.
- gives full consideration to the ability of dual-approved families to meet the child's cultural, ethnic, and religious needs.
- prepares dual-approved carers for placements and engages in carefully planned introductions where this is possible.
- supports the preparation of children for their placement with dual-approved carers.
- prepares dual-approved carers for placements which may happen with little notice and no opportunity for introductions (e.g. child placed directly from hospital).
- provides a high level of support to its carers.
- provides, subject to limitations on resources, a range of placements to meet the assessed needs of children referred.
- offers therapeutic and life story work and supports adults and children in making the progression from fostering placement to adoption placement.
- positively encourages commissioners of the service to be involved in the on-going development of the scheme.
- liaises with and provides training for schools in support of children's education.
- provides social events for Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placed families, children and young people.
- offers Local Authorities the ability to commission a range of services to include therapeutic work, supervised contact provision, reports for the court process.
- provides help and support to achieve a successful and lasting placement.

### **Name, Address and Contact Details of the Registered Provider**

Triangle Project  
TS3 Pinewood Business Park  
Coleshill Road  
Birmingham, B37 7HG  
Tel: 0121 779 0891  
E-mail: [info@triangleproject.org.uk](mailto:info@triangleproject.org.uk)

### **Name and Address of the Responsible Individual (Adoption Focus & Triangle Project)**

Benjamin James  
Trustee  
TS3 Pinewood Business Park  
Coleshill Road  
Birmingham, B37 7HG  
Tel: 0207 467 8721  
E-mail: [benjaminjames@adoption-focus.org.uk](mailto:benjaminjames@adoption-focus.org.uk)

### **Name and Address of the Registered Manager (Triangle Project)**

Howard Parker  
Director of Operations (Adoption Focus & Triangle Project)  
TS3 Pinewood Business Park,  
Coleshill Road,  
Marston Green,  
Birmingham B37 7HG  
Tel: 0121 779 0891  
E-mail: [howardparker@triangleproject.org.uk](mailto:howardparker@triangleproject.org.uk)

### **Registration**

Triangle Project is a Registered Fostering Agency. Ofsted Number 2731149.

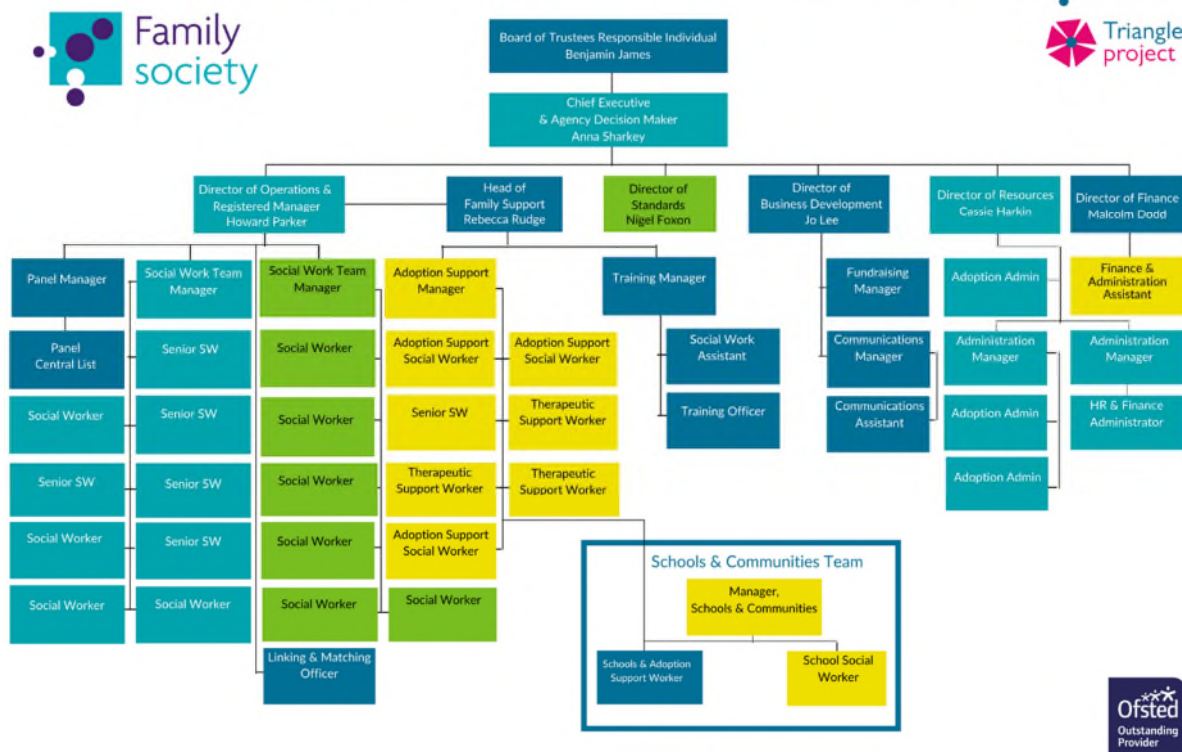
Triangle Project is operated by Family Society, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company number 06869556 which is also a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales under charity number 1129095.

### **Status and Constitution of the Triangle Project**

Triangle Project is a trading name of Family Society which is a company limited by guarantee which is also registered as a charity in England and Wales. Family Society is governed by its Articles of Association which are available from Companies House or on request.



## Family Society Organisational Structure Chart



### Relevant Qualifications and Experience of the Registered Manager

Howard Parker

C.Q.S.W.

Diploma in Social Work

OU Professional Certificate in Management

Howard Parker is the Director of Operations of Family Society (Adoption Focus and Triangle Project)

Howard Parker qualified as a social worker in 1989 and started his social work career in a Local Authority, working as a generic social worker in Hull. He worked in a specialised placement team in Warrington undertaking permanency placements and direct work with children (from 1989 – 1993); Senior Practitioner in CP/LAC team, Hull SSD (from 1993 - 1996), Senior Practitioner Children and Family Centre (from 1996 – 1999).

He then took up the post of Drug Action Team coordinator for Staffordshire (1999 – 2007); Senior Practitioner in Walsall LAC service (from 2007 – 2010); Senior Practitioner Walsall Adoption Service (from 2010 – 2013) which also included sitting as a Social Work representative on the Walsall Fostering panel (from 2012 – 2013). Howard was appointed as the Adoption Team Leader in Walsall in 2013 where he also acted as the Adoption Panel Adviser for several months, until he moved to Adoption Focus as the Head of Operations in 2015. He gained his Professional Certificate in Management in December 2016.

Howard has been the Registered Manager of Triangle Project since it became operational in 2017.

## Number, Relevant Qualifications and Experience of the Staff Working for the Purposes of the Agency.

Family Society employs the staff required to provide both the Adoption and Adoption Support Services through Adoption Focus, and the Early Permanence -Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency - service through Triangle Project.

Family Society employs 25 qualified social workers (including the Service Managers, and the Registered Manager) to provide the adoption and the fostering services. Their qualifications include the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, the Diploma in Social Work; BA Hons in Social Work; BSC in Psychology, BSC Hons in Counselling Psychology and Therapeutic Studies; MA Social Work.

In addition, the service employs 9 staff members with expertise in:

- training;
- therapeutic parenting support;
- counselling;
- linking and matching.

The staff group has a range of additional relevant qualifications including:

- counselling and adult learning;
- Theraplay levels 1 and 2;
- Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Levels 1 and 2;
- CBT Diploma;
- Diploma in Therapeutic Life Story Work;
- British Sign Language;
- Prevent Trainer;
- Attachment Style Interview accreditation;
- Management (NVQ 5; MA);
- student supervision accreditation.

The staff group has many combined years' experience of working with children and families, and in fostering and adoption services within Local Authority Social Services Departments, Independent Fostering Providers, and Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

This work experience encompasses:

- child-protection and safeguarding;
- assessment;
- court work;
- preventative work;
- inter-agency working;
- residential childcare.

Family Society can also commission assessment and placement work with qualified and experienced adoption and fostering specialist Social Workers, as the demand for service provision requires.

All Social Workers are qualified and registered with Social Work England. All Social Workers undertaking assessments of people seeking dual approval, either have a minimum of three post-

qualifying years of social work practice, which includes adoption work; or they are supervised by a Manager who has considerable experience of adoption and fostering.

Social Workers in the team, have previous relevant experience both as unqualified and qualified Social Workers, before joining Family Society (as qualified Social Workers).

Other staff members providing support and training to adopters and dual-approved carers have experience of working with children and young people, and a range of qualifications particularly in respect of therapeutically informed interventions including therapy; DDP; Therapeutic Life Story Work.

All those engaged in service provision are formally supervised by Managers with experience of and expertise in adoption and fostering work.

Their work is supported by a team of 9 Administrators (including 4 Panel Administrators) and a Senior Manager, as well as a Business Development Team which supports recruitment, fundraising and communication with our growing Early Permanence and Adopter community, and a finance team which manages invoices, payments, and accounts.

All staff members are provided with significant opportunities for further career development (through formal supervision – including clinical supervision for those providing therapeutic interventions; training; and continuing practice progression) which enhances service provision for adopters and their children.

## **Number and Experience of the Board of Trustees**

The Family Society Board of Trustees comprises eight members, who must be committed to children and the provision of family-based care (in Fostering for Adoption, Concurrency and Adoption placements) and have professional, ministerial and/or practical experience which will contribute to the effective management and operation of the Agency.

The Board of Trustees elects one member as Chair, and another as Vice Chair. It aims to meet at least six times/year. The Trustees keep in contact with the CEO and each other between meetings with email updates, informal telephone conversations and ensure they are responsive and available should additional contact be required.

The Board includes members with:

- personal experience of adoption;
- professional Social Work experience (at senior and managerial levels, in both Local Authority and the charity sectors);
- safeguarding children expertise;
- financial and accounting experience and expertise;
- fundraising experience and qualifications;
- charity law expertise;
- therapeutic counselling;
- marketing and business management expertise.

The Trustees engage with consultants where required and ensure that the management process of the Agency engages the expertise of the senior management team and the Trustees. The Trustees provide training for each other and the management team on their areas of expertise.

The Trustees operate within the guidance from the Charity Commission and the Charity Governance Code with appropriate amendments in respect of the regulated activities as appropriate.

### **Number and experience of Early Permanence Carers**

Triangle Project aims to recruit, train and support between 15 and 20 dual-approved families/year. They are provided with training specific to their dual-approval status (as foster carers and adoptive parents).

Dual-approved carers may already have experience of children either as birth parents; adoptive parents and/or foster carers, or through their employment. They may also be people who have not had direct experience of looking after children. The training provided through Triangle Project and Adoption Focus aims to equip all dual-approved carers with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to undertake all aspects of the role.

The purpose of dual-approval is to enable Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements where this is deemed appropriate for a child's particular circumstances. The placements provided by foster carers approved by the Triangle Project are limited to Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements. Alternatively, the carers can have a child placed directly under adoption regulations where a child is either relinquished or a Placement Order has been obtained. In these circumstances, their approval as foster carers is not required, and will be terminated.

Dual-approved carers may also achieve placements through their temporary approval by a specific child's Local Authority under Regulation 25a of the Care Planning Placement & Case Review Regulations 2010. In these circumstances dual-approved carers resign as foster carers approved by Triangle Project prior to their Regulation 25a approval but retain their approval as suitable to adopt. Triangle Project will support and assist dual-approved carers throughout the process.

### **Marital status**

Dual-approved carers can be married couples; unmarried couples; single people (unmarried; divorced; separated, widowed); couples in a civil partnership.

### **Ethnicity**

Triangle Project aims to recruit dual-approved carers of all ethnicities.

## Disabilities

Triangle Project supports people with disabilities to consider becoming parents through the dual-approval process. As with all assessments of suitability, the key consideration will be the applicant's ability to meet the needs of a child.

## Number of approvals, preparation groups, number deregistered etc

Triangle Project aims to approve between 15 and 20 dual-approved carers/year.

All prospective dual-approved carers attend Adoption Preparation Groups provided by Adoption Focus. 10 groups are ordinarily provided/year. They also attend Triangle Project training regarding the fostering component of the role (provided 6x/year, dependent on demand from prospective dual-approved carers) as well as additional training offered throughout the year.

The fostering approval status of dual-approved carers is formally reviewed on an annual basis. If a placement is made under the fostering regulations, the fostering approval will remain until the placement either becomes an adoption placement in which case the carers will resign as foster carers and continue the placement under their adoption approval; or the child returns to birth family members in which case their dual-approval status is reviewed with a decision made concerning continuation (or not) of their approval.

Dual-approved carers who achieve a placement under adoption regulations (without the use of their fostering registration) will be de-registered as foster carers unless there is a younger sibling who may need an Early Permanence placement. Dual-approved carers who are to be placed with a child under Regulation 25a will resign as Triangle Project carers prior to the child specific approval.

It is therefore anticipated that Triangle Project dual- approved carers will be de-registered within 18 months – 2 years of approval.

## Number of children and young people placed by Triangle Project

The Triangle Project has capacity to support the placement of 20 – 30 children/year under a Fostering for Adoption or Concurrency plan.

## Monitoring and Evaluating the Service

A variety of systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the services provided:

- Family Society has a Director of Collaborations Performance and Standards who as part of the Senior Management Team has responsibility for ensuring consistency of service delivery through the monitoring of staff supervision, appraisal process and observations of practice; audit of case records; resolution of complaints and monitoring of complaints register; and service response to recommendations made by service users and Panel Members.

- All Social Work qualified staff are registered with Social Work England.
- All staff have regular formal supervision, formal observation of their practice and an annual performance review.
- All staff, Panel Members, Trustees and Volunteers have Disclosure & Barring Service clearance; references are obtained and verified.
- All staff have access to relevant training opportunities to update and develop practice.
- Joint working opportunities exist throughout the adoption and Early Permanence work which enables peer and management monitoring of performance.
- All prospective adopters and dual-approved carers are encouraged to make a written contribution to their assessment report.
- All service users are invited to comment on the services provided, both informally and formally.
- Input and suggestions from adopters, dual-approved carers and their children regarding service development is encouraged, through surveys, feedback forms and questionnaires after the following:
  - Attendance at Information Events;
  - training – which informs adjustments to content and presentation;
  - panel attendance;
  - social events – including parties; stay and play; teen group etc
  - adoption support service.
- The adopter and dual-approved carers committee are supported to meet regularly to feedback on service provision and development.
- All staff are fully involved in the evaluation and ongoing development of the service.
- All staff are involved in the annual evaluation of service user feedback which enables the staff group to make adjustments to service provision as indicated.
- Children and young people are encouraged to contribute to the training of prospective adopters and dual-approved carers.
- Service users are advised of the Society's Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure.
- All prospective adopters and dual-approved carers are informed of the role of the Independent Review Mechanism.
- All approved prospective adoptive parents and dual-approved carers who do not have placements will have an annual review to identify their progress and plan additional training and support as indicated.
- The fostering status of dual-approved carers is formally reviewed on an annual basis – this happens whether or not they have a child placed.
- The Panel Central List includes people who have relevant experience and knowledge of adoption, fostering and other related matters, including education; health; disability; personal and professional experience of adoption and fostering.
- Members of the Panel Central List have an induction into their role and have continuing access to training which supports their role.
- Members of the Panel Central List are formally appraised on an annual basis.
- Panels are convened to include members representative of those attending for consideration of their application for approval.
- Panel Members complete feedback forms in respect of the quality of reports submitted to the Panel. These are collated by the Panel Advisor and Independent Panel Chair, who prepares a six-monthly report for presentation to the Agency. Any matters arising are discussed with the Operational Managers and Director of Operations for the purpose of

informing supervision and training decisions in respect of assessing Social Workers. The Board of Trustees is provided with copies of the Independent Panel Chair's reports.

- The Panel receives an annual report about its activity and performance.
- The Panel receives a report of placements made.
- The Trustees receive a report six times/year regarding the work of Triangle Project.
- The Trustees receive an annual report about the Adoption Focus and Triangle Project service activities and performance.
- The service is benchmarked through its involvement in several professional, practice-based groups including the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies; Coram BAAF; the Midlands Family Placement Group (MFPG); the Medical Advisors' regional group; the regional ASSA group; the regional Panel Advisor group; and the regional Adoption Leadership Group.
- Practice has been audited against the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and Guidance; Adoption Guidance – First Revision: February 2011; Statutory Adoption Guidance – chapter 3: July 2013; The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005; Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005; Suitability of Adopters Regulations 2005; The Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption & Fostering) Regulations 2009; The Adoption Agencies & Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011; The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013; Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2011; Care Planning Placement & Case Review Regulations 2010.
- All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.
- The service is inspected by OFSTED.

### **The Procedures for Recruiting, Preparing, Assessing, Approving and Supporting Prospective dual-approved families**

Triangle Project aims to provide stable secure adoptive families via Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements for children who are unable for whatever reason to remain with their family of origin. For those children where it is considered safe and appropriate for them to return to their birth family, dual-approved carers are prepared and supported to enable such a return.

Working in partnership with referring Local Authorities, and Regional Adoption Agencies, Triangle Project aims to prepare dual-approved families to meet the long-term needs of the children referred, regardless of the outcome of the care plan.

Triangle Project is committed to ensuring the provision of an informative, sympathetic and helpful service to all who enquire about dual-approval, whether or not they meet the criteria for acceptance for assessment.

### **Recruitment**

Family Society's Recruitment Strategy aims to inform and encourage potential adopters to consider both Early Permanence and Adoption as potential routes into starting or expanding their family life. The strategy is reviewed on an annual basis. A budget for recruitment activity is agreed by Trustees.

Triangle Project predominantly recruits Early Permanence families through the Adoption Focus website. The website aims to provide information and guidance for people considering adoption, and also directs them to the Triangle Project section which provides additional information about Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency. It invites them to contact the Agency. The website is linked to others including CVAA; New Family Social; First4Adoption; Coram BAAF; GOV.UK and it is significantly augmented through the use of social media.

Family Society holds weekly Information Events, providing opportunities to those seeking more information about adoption and Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency, to learn more about the process and the children we place. Additional monthly Information Events focussing specifically on Early Permanence are also held.

We also participate in national recruitment campaigns.

Triangle Project's recruitment activity reflects the placement needs of children referred, particularly those who are most likely to need a placement under Fostering for Adoption or Concurrency arrangements:

- Newborn babies who may have experienced pre-birth exposure to drugs and/or alcohol;
- Very young children with uncertain health and developmental needs;
- Children with disabilities and complex needs;
- Siblings including placements where one child requires an adoption placement, and the younger sibling will be placed under fostering regulations whilst the legal process is confirmed;
- Older children (aged 5 years +) who may have experienced placement breakdown;
- Children who have to move from their long-term fostering or kinship placement.

A member of the team, acting as the duty worker, is available (during office hours) to take enquiries from prospective Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency carers and to provide information about the training and assessment process and about the children the Agency places.

Written information is sent to enquirers, usually electronically, but, if requested, as hard copies. An opportunity to speak to dual-approved carers is available.

Further opportunities for information exchange between the prospective dual approved carers and the Agency are provided to enable them to make an informed decision about whether they should proceed with a Register of Interest.

All those who apply to be assessed in respect of their suitability to be dual-approved, will be given equal consideration regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, disability, marital status or sexual orientation provided that they can meet the needs of children who need Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements.



## Preparation and Assessment

If the prospective dual-approved carers want to proceed and meet the recruitment criteria they will be invited to submit a Register of Interest to Adoption Focus, to commence Stage One of the process.

On receipt of the Register of Interest, Adoption Focus will undertake an Initial Visit with prospective dual-approved carers, in order that a preliminary assessment of suitability may be undertaken. If, following the Initial Visit, the Agency decides that the application cannot proceed further, the prospective dual-approved carers will be informed of the reasons in writing.

If the application proceeds, the consents given in the Register of Interest enable Adoption Focus to undertake a range of standard checks (including DBS) and to contact referees.

Referees are given information about adoption and Early Permanence placements, and are required to provide a written reference and are interviewed. They may be contacted again during Stage Two. Verification that the written report of the referee interview accurately reflects the information given, is sought from the referee, who signs the report to confirm this.

Prospective dual-approved carers will arrange and have their medicals, and they will attend preliminary training.

Adoption Focus may seek additional legal and/or medical advice from its Legal and Medical Advisors concerning matters of relevance to the application, arising from information disclosed and/or references received.

All prospective dual-approved carers will participate in Adoption Focus pre-approval preparation groups facilitated by a social worker/trainer, and with input from experienced dual-approved carers and/or adoptive parents. In addition to the general adoption preparation training, they may also elect to attend training in respect of parenting sibling groups, and managing the support of existing children in the household – i.e. second time adopters, or families with birth children. Prospective dual-approved carers must also attend additional Triangle Project Early Permanence training concerning the demands of fostering placements. In cases where an interpreter, or signer is required, this will be provided.

The training aims to provide prospective dual-approved carers with opportunities to consider the placement needs of children and their ability to meet these needs. They will also consider their role as foster carers; making the transition to adoptive parenting; and the life-long implications of adoption.

If following training, the prospective dual-approved carer decides that they want to be assessed as adopters only, their assessment and recommendation concerning approval will be for adoption placements only. Deciding not to seek dual-approval will not affect their assessment in respect of adoption.

Training events are provided at regular intervals throughout the year to enable prospective dual-approved carers to engage easily in the approval and assessment process.

The specific training needs of prospective dual-approved carers who have either fostered or adopted previously, will be considered at the time of their enquiry.

Stage One should be completed in two months, at the end of which, the prospective dual-approved carers will be advised whether they may proceed to Stage Two.

The prospective dual-approved carers must advise Adoption Focus of their intention to proceed to Stage Two within six months of successfully completing Stage One. And, in consultation with their allocated Social Worker and following successful completion of the additional Early Permanence training, their decision to seek dual-approval. In these circumstances, a referral is made by the training co-ordinator to the allocated Social Worker confirming that the assessment should consider their suitability to be dual-approved.

Stage Two commences when Adoption Focus accepts the notification from the prospective dual-approved carers that they wish to proceed. The allocated Social Worker will undertake the assessment.

Social Workers (whether directly employed or independently commissioned and acting on behalf of the agency) who undertake Fostering for Adoption carers' assessments:

- Are registered with Social Work England or are on Social Work England approved training course AND
- Have at least 3 years' post-qualifying experience in childcare Social Work, including direct experience of adoption work OR
- Are supervised by a Social Worker who is employed by the Agency and who has the necessary experience as detailed above

Where an independent Social Worker writes the report the Agency will ensure that s/he has the necessary experience and is supervised by a Social Worker employed by the Agency who has the necessary experience.

Interpreters and signers will be used in cases which require it, and all interpreters will sign a confidentiality agreement.

An assessment will include a Health and Safety risk assessment and pet-owning applicants will complete a pet questionnaire and declaration.

The assessing Social Worker will prepare a draft dual-approval report, highlighting any issues of concern, and submit it to their Manager. Arrangements will be made for another Team Manager or Senior Social Worker to visit the prospective dual-approved carers in cases where issues of concern require further discussion or where clarification is needed. A visit by another Social Worker provides the opportunity for securing a second opinion on the prospective dual-approved carer and their assessment before the report to panel is finalised.

In cases where the assessing Social Worker does not satisfy the regulatory requirements (either because they are an independent Social Worker, or they do not have 3 years post qualifying experience), the supervising Social Worker will undertake a joint visit to the applicant(s) with the assessing Social Worker, part way through the assessment. They will also undertake a second opinion visit at the end of the assessment and submit a report to the Panel with the completed dual-approval assessment report.

Prospective dual-approved carers are encouraged to participate in the completion of their assessment report. This uses the Adopters Assessment Report format and includes full consideration of their capacity to undertake both the fostering and adoption roles demanded by

Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements. The assessing Social Worker makes recommendations in respect of both functions, and (if successful) they are dual-approved. Applicants agree the content of the report and sign it prior to its presentation to the Panel. They may also (if they wish) write their own comments for submission to the Panel.

Family Society operates a Permanence Panel which considers and makes recommendations in respect of adoption only applications and dual-approval applications. The completed assessment and (if applicable) the second opinion report, will be presented to the Family Society Permanence Panel and subsequently to the Agency Decision Maker within 4 months of the prospective dual-approved carers commencing Stage Two of the assessment and approval process, unless the particular needs of the assessment demand more time. In such circumstances the Panel are informed of the reasons.

The medical advisor advises the Panel on the outcome of the medical report. The legal advisor advises the Panel on the significance of any legal issues arising.

Prospective dual-approved carers are encouraged to exercise their right to attend the Panel. Attendance is enabled via Zoom or Teams - the Agency ensures that applicants can achieve this with ease and will make alternative arrangements if this is not possible.

Assessing Social Workers may, in some circumstances and in consultation with the Registered Manager, present a short report to the Panel detailing any concerns in relation to the assessment.

The Permanence Panel makes recommendations concerning both suitability to be approved as an adopter, and as a foster carer to the Agency Decision Maker. Approval as a foster carer is only in respect of Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements. It is not possible to be approved as a foster carer if not approved as suitable to adopt.

The Family Society Permanence Panel Decision Makers are the CEO of Family Society, who has considerable experience of adoption; and if she is unavailable, the Agency has two additional Agency Decision Makers: one is the Head of Family Support who has previously undertaken the Panel Advisor role and has considerable experience of adoption; the other is the Director of Operations who also has considerable experience of adoption. The Director of Operations and the Head of Family Support will not act as the Agency Decision Maker in any case where they have had prior direct involvement.

The Decision Maker is responsible for agreeing (or not) the Panel recommendation.

Where prospective dual-approved carers are not recommended for approval (on presentation of a full assessment or a short report); or approved Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency carers are assessed as not being suitable to remain as registered foster carers and/or approved adopters, and in either case the Decision Maker makes a qualifying determination, they will be given an opportunity to appeal. Early Permanence carers, and prospective Early Permanence carers will have the choice of making a representation to The Triangle Project and/or Adoption Focus; or applying to the Independent Review Mechanism to have an independent panel review their assessment. In these cases the Decision Maker writes to the prospective Early Permanence carers to advise of the reasons for the qualifying determination, and the process by which they may either appeal to the agencies or seek a review through the Independent Review Mechanism.

It should be noted that in circumstances where a child placed under fostering regulations becomes an adoption placement, the fostering approval ends without recourse to the Independent Review Mechanism. This is because the Triangle Project is only registered to provide Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements. Those who wish to continue as foster carers would need to apply to another fostering agency. Those who wish to undertake a further Early Permanence placement would need to seek re-approval which can be achieved through Family Society.

## Support

On approval, dual-approved families are available to accept placements of children on a Fostering for Adoption or Concurrency basis. These placements will be achieved via existing partnerships with Local Authorities, Regional Adoption Agencies and individual children's referrals.

Triangle Project carefully considers the placement needs of children referred by Local Authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies.

In all cases where a potential link is identified, the Linking and Matching Officer and the allocated Social Worker will obtain as much information as possible. It is noted that this may be very limited.

They will consider the demands of the placement and what the dual-approved carers will be required to do - including frequency of contact; attendance at medical appointments etc; the background factors which have led to the placement need - e.g. drug misuse; serious injury; mental ill-health of birth parent; placement breakdown etc.; the legal process - paternity and DNA testing; pending parental and other assessments; likely timescales; potential appeals etc.; and the delegation of parental responsibility.

Early Permanence carers will be informed of all available information, and their Social Worker will support them to prepare for placement. This includes assistance with the completion of the Risk Assessment and Safe Care Plan.

Regular visits including unannounced visits, and telephone contact by the family's Social Worker will support them through the placement, which includes attendance at Looked after Children reviews. Responsibility for the child remains with the child's Social Worker who will also visit the placement, and monitor and advise about contact arrangements, court process etc. This support will also ensure that the dual-approved carers are receiving the training and supervision required under fostering regulations; and that they are guided through the transition to adoption regulations or assisted in supporting the child's return to birth family.

Support group meetings; networking events with other dual-approved and Adoptive families; continuing training and newsletters further augments the Social Workers input.

In cases where the child remains in placement and is to be adopted by the Early Permanence carers, the Social Worker will contribute to the completion of the Adoption Placement reports required by the child's adoption agency.

A post adoption support service is operated by Adoption Focus.

In cases where the child returns to the care of his/her birth family, the Early Permanence carers will be supported to enable this. They will also be supported to consider whether they wish to remain as dual-approved carers. A review and recommendation will be presented to the Panel.

### **Intended outcomes**

Triangle Project aims to provide safe, nurturing, and permanent homes through the provision of Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency placements.

It aims to achieve this through the processes and support detailed above; through the development and supervision of professional, experienced and competent staff; and through the careful management of its resources.

In providing the service, Triangle Project intends to enable children to feel safe, secure, valued, and to achieve a sense of belonging, through the early achievement of a permanent placement.

Through placing children with dual-approved families, Triangle Project aims to enable them to achieve to their full potential (educationally; socially; developing interests and skills) and to enjoy opportunities to participate fully in all that positive family life can offer.

Triangle Project intends that by achieving early permanence (which will ordinarily result in adoption) for children, they will have much improved opportunities to build meaningful and lasting relationships which will prepare them for adult life.

Triangle Project aims to ensure that Early Permanence families feel supported and assisted in their dual role, thus securing the permanency intended.

Triangle Project aims to ensure that the service is run efficiently, effectively and ethically in order that it delivers a good quality service which meets the needs of children and other service users.

A belief in the value of family life informs the service delivery at every stage of the Fostering for Adoption and Concurrency process.

### **A Summary of the Complaints Procedure**

Service users are provided with a Comments, Compliments and Complaints Leaflet which provides guidance about informing the Agency about any comments or compliments or about making a complaint.

In brief, the complaints procedure has two stages – an informal and a formal stage.

It is anticipated that minor complaints will be dealt with at the informal stage by the Social Worker and/or Line Manager. The Registered Manager and the Director of Collaborations Performance and Standards is notified of all complaints.

It is hoped that the matter can be resolved quickly. If this is not possible through the informal stage, the matter can be moved to the formal stages of the complaints procedure. This will be

investigated by a Trustee who has been appointed to oversee the Complaints Process. A full response will be provided as detailed in the Agency's procedure.

### Contacting Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate Children's Social Care Services which includes Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Fostering Services.

Ofsted advises anyone who has a concern about a Children's Social Care Service, to contact the service first because it is usually the quickest option to address concerns directly and resolve the complaint either informally or formally (as noted above).

Ofsted should be contacted if the complainant:

- Is not satisfied with the response following the complaints procedure OR
- Feels unable to contact the provider about the particular concern.

Ofsted may be contacted via:

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Anna Sharkey  
CEO & Registered Manager  
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