



Diagrama  
Fostering

# Statement of purpose



Diagrama Fostering is part of the Diagrama Foundation.  
Our head office is based at 5th Floor, Anchorage House, 47-67 High Street,  
Chatham, Kent, ME4 4EE. Tel: 01634 545000.  
Registered charity number 1128532. Charity limited by guarantee no 6396577.

[www.diagramafoundation.org.uk](http://www.diagramafoundation.org.uk)

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# Introduction

## ‘A child-centred service with nurturing placements’

This Statement of Purpose sets out our vision and objectives, and describes the services provided by Diagrama Fostering.

In doing so it details how the service meets the requirement of the standards and regulations relevant to the placement of children in foster care as set out in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 which form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Our fostering service is part of a range of services provided by the Diagrama Foundation, which seek to promote the upbringing of children in accordance with, and within the spirit and provision of, the Children Acts 1989, 2004 and Volumes 1 to 5, Fostering Services (England) regulations 2011 and the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011.

The service undertakes to find fostering homes in which a child is given the opportunity of a secure and stable environment, taking into account the child’s specific needs and circumstances.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually by Diagrama’s senior management and Board of Trustees and is updated as necessary.

It is available to:

- Staff
- Foster carers
- Children and young people
- Other professionals
- General public

It is also available via our website at [www.diagramafostering.org.uk](http://www.diagramafostering.org.uk)

The Statement of Purpose can be made available, upon request, in a range of other formats.

Arrangements will also be made for those who are unable to understand the document to have it read, translated or explained to them.

# Our aims

The overarching aim of Diagrama Fostering is to provide a range of high quality, appropriate foster placements that meet and exceed the national minimum standards (NMS) and ensure the best possible outcomes for all children placed with Diagrama's foster carers.

The fostering service is also committed to continuous improvement and to maximising achievements in the areas that make the most difference to children, young people and families.

We aim to:

- Ensure the provision of secure, safe and consistent care to all children placed within the service.
- Provide a positive experience of family life and a rich, enjoyable childhood to all children placed and where appropriate provide permanence in line with the child's care plan and the child's wishes.
- Improve the lives and outcomes for all children placed with our carers by meeting all of their health, education and social development needs, and equip them with skills to achieve in their development as well as any child living in their birth home.
- Always listen to and respect the child's wishes and feelings.

- Recruit a range of foster carers in an efficient, effective and timely manner in line with statutory guidance to meet the diverse needs of children looked after.
- Work together with the child's social worker and the foster carer to develop and embed an understanding of the child's needs.
- Recruit and maintain a team of qualified and highly trained supervising social workers to provide a high level of supervision and support to foster carers.

**'Diagrama leaders, managers and staff advocate well for children and young people within the network of professionals.'**

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## Our mission statement

Diagrama Foundation aims to improve the lives of vulnerable children by giving them roots and wings, supporting them to achieve self-worth and fulfil their potential.

# Our values

Promoting the wellbeing of vulnerable children and keeping them safe is at the centre of all our work.

We believe in the value and uniqueness of human life and seek to excel in our practice through listening to children, foster carers and 'looked after children' by actively seeking feedback throughout the fostering process to further develop our services.

As an agency we seek to employ experienced, skilled and knowledgeable social workers who undertake assessments which ensure foster carers are well prepared for the challenge of the role and that children will be kept safe.

Diagrama Fostering will:

- Place high value on matching, taking into account a child's age, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexuality, language, disability, special needs, presenting needs/challenges in behaviour, education, health, contact arrangements with family, safety needs and any other relevant characteristics when placing the child.
- Be respectful in how and who we share information with and always listen to people's wishes and feelings.
- Ensure that whenever children and families come into contact with our service they interact with experienced,

skilled members of staff and panel members who are capable of understanding their needs, providing support and advocating on their behalf.

Foster carers and staff are valued, fully supported and provided with effective training to enable them to provide safe and effective care.

Foster carers will be provided with therapeutic support for placements based on identified need.

The fostering service is monitored against a range of performance indicators and quality assurance standards to ensure consistent and sustained improvement; including feedback from foster carers and service users.

## Our principles

Foster carers will be recruited only where we are certain they can provide a high standard of care and a high quality, loving environment for the child.

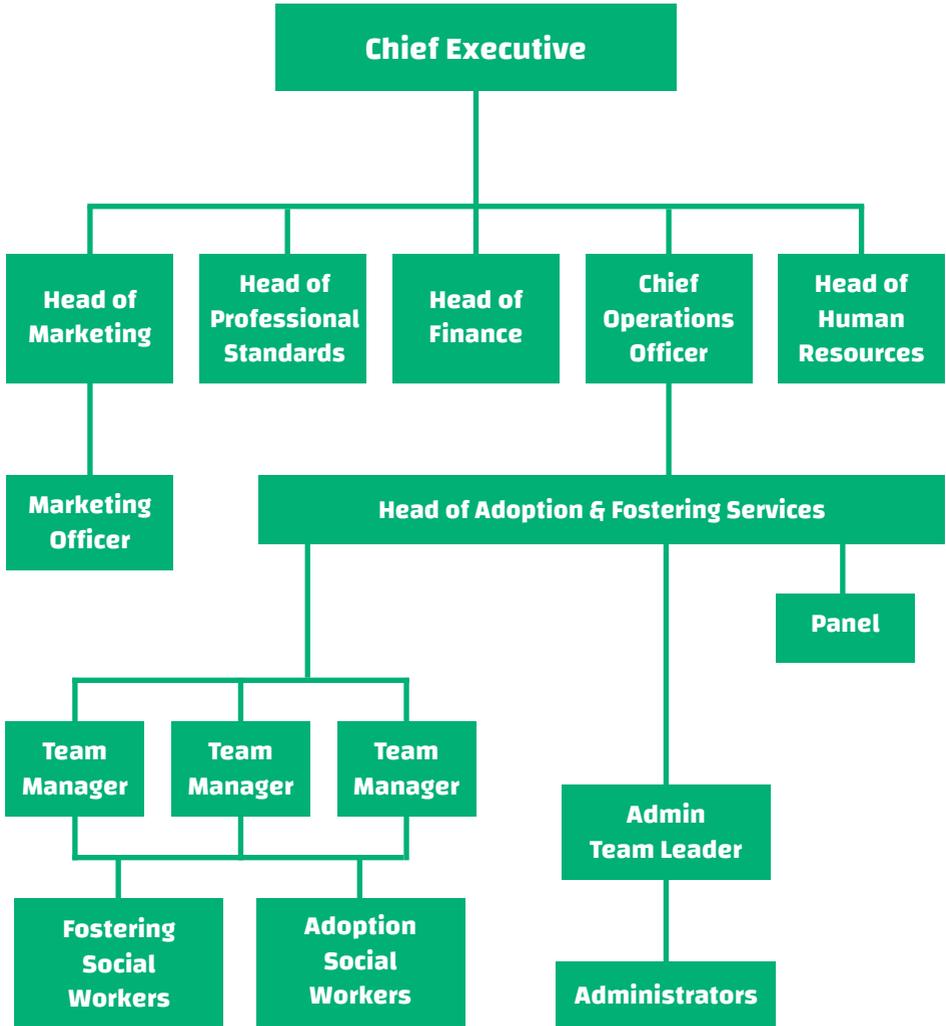
The service will proactively seek to reduce barriers to the best prospective carers becoming foster carers.

# Objectives

- To carefully match the identified needs of children and young people with the skills of our foster carers.
- To ensure all foster carers have access to quality training that is regular and relevant to their role and development.
- To provide foster carers with a high level of support and guidance, including out of hours support.
- To ensure the voice of the child/ young person is actively listened to and that participation is promoted in service development.
- To ensure that diversity, identity, culture, disability, ethnic and religious needs of children are met, respected and promoted.
- To recruit, prepare, train and assess foster carers from a wide range of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who demonstrate the skills and abilities necessary to meet the needs of children.
- To recruit and train foster carers in a timely manner in line with the statutory guidance to ensure we are better able to meet the needs of looked after children. All expressions of interest will be responded to fully and enquirers will be treated with respect.
- To train, develop and support staff to maintain high standards of practice and support to our foster carers.
- To provide a positive experience of family life and a rich, enjoyable childhood to all children who are placed with Diagrama foster carers. We do this by offering ongoing support to foster carers through the provision of services accessible to them such as regular training (online and face to face), support groups, weekly phone calls and social events.
- To consult with foster carer representatives with regards to policies, procedures, training and recruitment of staff.
- To respond to feedback from foster carers and looked after children to evaluate and monitor effectiveness and quality of the service.
- To ensure our practice is at the forefront of innovation and staff are trained and well placed to support those who use our services.
- In addition, to provide services appropriate to families with specific needs, Parent and Child training, remand fostering training - in addition to therapeutic/counselling support.



# Organisational structure



# Management and qualifications

The Trustees appoint, support and monitor the Chief Executive and delegate to the Chief Executive day-to-day management of the charity. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all the operational matters and reports directly to the Trustees regularly.

The **Chief Executive** is David McGuire who is also the **Responsible Individual**.

The Chief Executive is assisted by a Senior Management Team comprising:

**Chief Operations Officer** - Derek Milliken  
**Head of Business Developments and Standards** - Helen Dean  
**Head of Human Resources** - Richard Dunn  
**Head of Marketing** - Julie Firth  
**Head of Adoption & Fostering Services** - Natalie Lohneis

## **Diagrama Fostering Registered Office:**

Diagrama Fostering,  
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Email: [fostering@diagrama.org](mailto:fostering@diagrama.org)

## **Chief Executive**

David McGuire graduated in 1998 as a teacher, and continued his training, obtaining a degree and qualifying as a Social Educator, after which he specialised in Social and Juvenile Justice Mediation. At the beginning of 2002 he joined Fundación Diagrama Intervención Psicosocial (Spain),

## **The Board of Trustees**

The work of the charity is overseen by a Board of Trustees, who are also directors of the company. Trustees do not receive remuneration for their duties and they meet quarterly to oversee operations and agree the strategic goals for the charity. The Board also reviews its own operation, effectiveness and governance annually.

where he was in charge of different functions at a secure/custodial centre for young people who have offended.

In 2006, David directed an integration programme financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), a programme that helped more than 1,600 young people with judicial measures, in which he achieved the integration of 80% of these.

Later on, in 2008, David moved to England and began his work for Diagrama Foundation (UK) as Project Co-ordinator, and in 2009 he became Diagrama's Chief Executive Officer. and in 2009 he became Diagrama's Chief Executive Officer.

# Management and qualifications

## Chief Operations Officer

Derek Milliken is responsible for the efficient and effective management of Diagrama Foundation's services including fostering, adoption and residential care. He has over 26 years' experience including as a senior executive in a variety of sectors and has previously achieved external accreditation from Investors in People and the British Safety Council 5 Star Award, International Award, Sword of Honour. He supports all Diagrama's services to focus on those who use and deliver our services, and to meet, and exceed, national minimum standards.

## Head of Adoption & Fostering

Natalie joined Diagrama in 2020 with over 23 years of pre and post qualification experience in work with children and families. This ranges from family support, safeguarding services and adoption and fostering. Natalie brings a rounded experience through her work with local authorities, charities and private organisations. The last 11 years of her career have been focused in family placement services, at a managerial / consultancy level and in improvement work.

In addition to Natalie's professional background in adoption and fostering services, she has personal experience of welcoming in a sibling through adoption.

At Diagrama, Natalie is responsible for all areas that fall within the adoption and fostering remit.

## Social work team

All social work staff within the fostering team hold professional social work qualifications and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Where possible, on appointment, social work staff are required to have extensive post qualifying experience within a children and families setting. All staff members are supported with professional development and have a twice-yearly appraisal of their performance against agreed objectives. Regular supervision and staff meetings are undertaken.

## All staff

Diagrama employees and sessional workers are subject to a rigorous checking and selection process, prior to commencing their appointed positions. All staff employed in permanent appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

# Status and constitution



Diagrama Foundation is a registered charity (regulated by the Charity Commission in England and Wales; charity registration number 1128532). It is also:

- A registered independent fostering agency (registered as Diagrama Fostering with Ofsted, service number SC484575).
- A registered voluntary adoption agency (registered as Diagrama Adoption with Ofsted, service number SC484605).
- A residential care provider for adults with learning disabilities (Diagrama Residential in Orpington, Kent, is registered with the Care Quality Commission).
- A provider of semi-independent living accommodation for young people aged 16-24 (this provision is not required to be registered with Ofsted).
- A residential care provider for elderly and dementia patients (Edensor Care Centre in Clacton-on-Sea, is registered with the Care Quality Commission).

# Our services

Diagrama Fostering Service offers the very best in stability and care by recruiting, assessing, training and approving skilled foster carers who can provide emergency, short breaks and short and long term placements to those children and young people that require them.

## Recruiting, assessing, training and approving foster carers

Diagrama uses a variety of methods to recruit a wide range of foster carers who can meet the differing needs of 'looked after' children. Diagrama has a Marketing Manager who works closely with the Fostering Service to ensure there is an active and relevant recruitment programme. The service also has a recruitment strategy.

## Enquiries

Diagrama welcomes enquiries from:

- People of all racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- People of any or no religious faith.
- Married couples, civil partners, unmarried couples (whether heterosexual or same-sex) who can evidence that their relationship is "lasting, constant and enduring".
- Single people.
- People with or without children.

- People over 21 years. We have no upper age limit but the foster carer's age will be relevant when considering the age and needs of a child to be placed and their health in undertaking the fostering task.
- People who are normally domiciled in the UK.

Enquirers and prospective foster carers should be aware of the following organisational policies:

- The agency will not undertake assessments of applicants who will only consider pre-school children.

The following areas are explored and clarified at an early stage with enquirers:

- Criminal offences or cautions: As part of the assessment process, criminal records references are requested from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It is a legal requirement that no adult in the home over the age of 18 should have convictions or cautions for offences against children or have a history of violent behaviour. Diagrama Fostering will not take up an application in these circumstances. In respect of other criminal convictions, matters disclosed or included within by DBS checks, these will be discussed with the Fostering and Adoption Manager. A report will be presented to the Fostering Panel for consideration. This will

include details and circumstances of the offence(s), attitude of the applicant to these events and the social worker's view and assessment.

- Smoking: If an applicant smokes, Diagrama Fostering will only recommend approval for a child aged over 5 years old. For children with respiratory difficulties and other health issues, it would be inappropriate to place them in a household where people smoke. We are mindful that each local authority has its own policy on smoking and the age of children they are willing to place with smokers. Diagrama offers advice to applicants who smoke on resources to support them in giving up smoking. This also includes the smoking of e-cigarettes.

Enquirers receive an information pack detailing Diagrama's Fostering Service, the process of assessment for applicants, Fostering Panel and support services for approved carers.

All prospective foster carers are required to attend a 'Skills to Foster' course.

The material and methods used are designed to provide applicants with information about the fostering task, the process, the children for whom fostering is sought, and the range of issues involved in parenting fostered children.

Once a formal application is received an

assessing social worker will undertake their assessment using the competency based process (CoramBAAF's prospective foster carer's report).

Diagrama Fostering will prioritise applications that are likely to meet the needs of children for whom fostering is sought. If the service deems an application is unlikely to succeed, this is acknowledged to the applicants at an early stage and the reasons for this explained.

The decision whether or not to proceed with an application will be based on:

- The legal framework and criteria for fostering.
- The service's priority areas for recruitment.

Upon acceptance of the application, stage 1 of the assessment process will commence. This Stage is where all the checks and references are undertaken. A range of checks and references will be undertaken including; DBS, Medical, Local Authority and personal references (including a family member) in line with Regulation and Standards.

If an applicant has been previously married or in a significant relationship, we will seek the views of the ex-partner. If an applicant has parented a child(ren) we will endeavour to seek the views of the child(ren).

# Our services



Once they have satisfactorily met Stage 1, applicants will progress to Stage 2. Stage 2 is a narrative assessment considering the applicant's background and attitudes, competencies and experience in order to meet the needs of looked after children. Applicants are considered in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way that meets their health and developmental needs – physical, emotional, intellectual and social.

Prospective foster carers are assisted through the course and the assessment process to consider and identify competencies and strengths they have and those they will need to develop as foster carers. Diagrama Fostering will always be seeking to evidence good child care experience and seek supporting statements where possible.

Prospective foster carers are kept informed of the progress of the assessment. Applicants may seek extra time to reflect on the process and in some circumstances may need to demonstrate a capacity to change. When the service decides not to proceed with an application, applicants will be informed in writing and advised of the options open to them.

Following successful progress through to Stage 2 all applicants will have an opportunity to be presented to Panel for approval consideration.

# Fostering panel

The Fostering Service (England) Regulations (2011) and Assessment and approval of foster carers: amendment to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4 Fostering Services (July 2013); require that a panel is made up of a group of people with appropriate experience, knowledge and skills relevant to fostering. Diagrama's joint Fostering and Adoption panel reflects this, is made up of foster carers from other agencies, people who work with children in a variety of settings, an adoptive parent, and two employees of Diagrama. The panel also has an independent chair, experienced in all aspects of foster care.

Applicants are invited to attend Panel to contribute to the discussion.

The recommendation of the Panel is conveyed to the applicants on the day of Panel, where possible.

Panel's recommendation is included in the formal minutes undertaken by the Panel Administrator, following agreement by the Independent panel chair and other panel members sitting on said panel. The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) considers the minutes and supporting information regarding the recommendation in order to make the final decision. The Agency Decision Maker will make the decision in writing back to Diagrama within seven days following receipt of the agreed minutes from Panel. Diagrama will verbally share the decision with

prospective foster carers within two days; and will confirm the decision in writing, within five days.

Should the outcome be unfavourable the prospective foster carers have 28 days in which to appeal back to the ADM via the Head of Adoption & Fostering or via the IRM (Independent Reviewing Mechanism) in writing.

The Head of Adoption & Fostering can be contacted by email at [fostering@diagrama.org](mailto:fostering@diagrama.org) or in writing to Fostering and Adoption Manager, Diagrama Foundation, 3rd Floor, Anchorage House, 47 - 67 High Street, Chatham, ME4 4EE.

The IRM's contact details are as follows: Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Wortley, Leeds LS12 6AJ

**'Leaders and managers ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of children and young people.'**

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# Training and support

All approved foster carers receive a comprehensive foster carer's handbook and sign a Foster Care Agreement.

There is an expectation that all foster carers will attend the training offered. Training is tailored to the development needs of our foster carers. Training workshops include de-escalation skills (NMS 3.8), safeguarding and safer caring (NMS 4.6), managing behaviour (NMS 3.8) and attachment, amongst other topics.

All foster carers are required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) (NMS 20.3), within the first 12 months following approval as foster carers. These standards form part of a national strategy to raise the profile of foster carers and to improve and standardise service provision for looked after children.

## Therapeutic support and child participation

Foster carers receive a high level of support from Diagrama including monthly supervision visits (fortnightly where appropriate) from their allocated Supervising Social Worker.

Regular support groups and professional training are available to all foster carers. We provide foster carers with membership to the Fostering Network where additional resources and support can be found. Diagrama also provides an Out of Hours service to all foster carers which is

managed by the social workers of the service. Where there is an identified need, foster carers are provided with therapeutic support for placements.

Alongside their formal support, foster carers are encouraged to take part in Diagrama's social events offering informal support. We also run a number of activities for looked after children and children who are part of a fostering family.

We seek foster carers' views to assist the senior management team with development of services, procedures and staff appointments.

## Allowances

Foster carers receive a weekly allowance for each child they foster. Diagrama does not have a tiered pay arrangement according to the age of the child. Allowances are structured to include all anticipated expenses and where a child's needs are extraordinary we will tailor the financial package accordingly.

Allowances are paid directly into carers' bank accounts. All foster carers are offered two weeks' paid respite each year. Diagrama makes financial payments for children's birthdays, annual holiday and festive celebrations too.

# Approval and types of service

## General foster care

**Short Term Placements** – Diagrama has a range of foster carers approved to care for children in short term arrangements. Whether this means that they are waiting to be matched long term, or whilst work with their birth family is undertaken so that they can return home. These foster carers are prepared to work with local authorities to ensure that the best interests of the children are prioritised.

**Long Term Placements and Permanence** – Diagrama has a number of foster carers who have been identified to care for children permanently through to 18 years and beyond. These foster carers understand the importance of permanence and are aware that there is further matching which is required for this process to be formalised.

**Short Break Care** – Diagrama has foster carers who are specifically approved to provide respite care for children within and from outside the agency.

**Emergency Placements** – Diagrama has a number of foster carers who are suitably skilled to take children and young people where there might be little known or placements required at very short notice.

## Specialised skills

**Sibling Groups** – Diagrama has the flexibility within its foster carer base to take placements of sibling groups. Diagrama has strong ethics around keeping siblings together and will ensure therapeutic support is provided to foster carers to manage the complexities and challenges that some sibling placements have.

**Parent and Child Arrangements** – Diagrama is expanding its service to include foster carers who have the skills and experience to meet the diverse needs of this group. With specific training and understanding of the requirements needed to take on this task, Diagrama foster carers are experienced in fostering prior to having this included in their approval status.

**Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children** – Diagrama has a range of foster carers from diverse backgrounds ready to support children who are unaccompanied children. There is an awareness that children in this category often come to the attention of local authorities with little background knowledge. Diagrama foster carers approved for this work are experienced and have the flexibility to manage the unknown.

**Remand Foster Carers** – Diagrama is building its base to develop foster carers who are confident in managing children who need to be remanded into local

# Approval and types of service

authority care. We understand that this work is specialised and foster carers must be experienced in caring for troubled adolescents, to be approved for this.

**Therapeutic Foster Care** – Diagrama understands that all children coming into care require therapeutic foster carers; however for some children this can mean

significantly more. This would include children who are significant self-harmers, persistent absconders, children subject to child sexual exploitation, children with significant mental health concerns etc. Diagrama is working to build a base of carers who have the skills to hold these children and work with them therapeutically in a foster family.

## Matching

Matching is crucial and we work closely with our foster carers regarding potential placements. The social worker will consider the specific needs of children identified in the referral, completing a risk assessment and matching considerations form prior to the placement being made.

Diagrama endeavours to obtain comprehensive written information in respect of the child(ren) from the relevant local authority, before the child is placed.

Where information is complex or requires specialist knowledge to evaluate the implications of it, Diagrama will ensure that the prospective foster carers have access to people who can help them clarify and explore the implications of the information and make an informed decision for themselves as to whether to proceed.

Diagrama will also consider what else can be put in place to support the pairing prior to the point of placement.



# Monitoring quality

The quality of Diagrama's Fostering Service is monitored (and inspected) by a number of qualified professionals:

- Foster carers receive at least one unannounced visit a year to their home by a representative of Diagrama, and a minimum monthly supervisory visit.
- The Registered Manager (our Head of Adoption & Fostering) is responsible for day-to-day management and monitors matters identified in the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (Regulation 35(1)) to ensure standards are adhered to and the service develops to meet the needs of a range of children.

## Complaints and outcomes

The Fostering Service is inspected by Ofsted in accordance with fostering regulations. Complaints and allegations received by Diagrama Fostering are reviewed and considered individually at the time of receiving them. All complaints and allegations are taken seriously and reflection is made in regards to learning opportunities from this. Diagrama will ensure that it follows Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance (2018) in managing complaints and allegations. In addition, complaints are reviewed on an annual basis; this also includes any allegations made about staff/foster carers.

The fostering service works within a performance management and quality assurance culture. Statistical information, file audits, schedule 6 and 7 responsibilities and reviews of all work are embedded within the service.

This includes the views of social workers; children and young people looked after and foster carers and their birth children where applicable. Quarterly reports are completed in a timely fashion and sent to the Chief Executive and Trustees of Diagrama; but are also made available to Ofsted and local authorities. Foster carers are also encouraged to be involved in the development of the service.

As an organisation, Diagrama uses a variety of ways to monitor and evaluate the quality of its services. These are:

- Reviewing and reporting mechanisms operating within the meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, HR Committee, Senior Management Team and Management.
- Formally requesting feedback from users of services.
- Regular supervision and appraisal of staff and panel members.
- Case-file audits by senior staff.
- Regular monthly, quarterly and annual management/progress reviews/reports.

# Contacts

## **We are registered with OFSTED under 'Diagrama Fostering'**

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
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Telephone: 0300 123 1231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Other useful contact details:**

Contract Manager  
Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)  
Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park  
Royds Hall Road  
Wortley  
Leeds  
LS12 6AJ

Telephone: 0870 450 3956  
Fax: 0870 450 3957  
Email: [irm@irm.org.uk](mailto:irm@irm.org.uk)

Website:  
[www.independentreviewmechanism.org.uk](http://www.independentreviewmechanism.org.uk)

Children's Commissioner for England  
Anne Longfield – Commissioner  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 020 7783 8330  
Email: [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

**NEXT REVIEW OF THIS  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:  
SEPTEMBER 2021**

Diagrama has a comprehensive complaints procedure that is available to service users and purchasers.

The Head of Adoption & Fostering and the Chief Executive of the Agency monitor all complaints received in respect of any aspect of the work undertaken by the Fostering Service.

## Contact us:

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Airport House,  
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T: 0800 802 1910

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W: [diagramafostering.org.uk](http://diagramafostering.org.uk)

## Like to know more?

If you would like to know more about Diagrama's other services please get in touch.

Diagrama Foundation,  
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