



adoption
services

Adoption Services

Statement of Purpose

2011-2012



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1. INTRODUCTION

Hampshire County Council acts as an Adoption Agency to provide adoption services as required under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act 2000).

The Agency aims to fulfil its range of duties and responsibilities under the above legislation and the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 in meeting the needs of those children who have or may be adopted, their birth parents and guardians and those people who are or may be adoptive parents.


2. PRINCIPLES OF THE SERVICE

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a stable and loving family, which can meet their needs through childhood and beyond.
- The child's welfare and safety will be the paramount consideration.
- All children will have the same opportunities irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, disability, culture, religion, language and sexual orientation.
- Achieving permanence for a child will be a key consideration in working with children in need and their families and in working with any child who is looked after by Hampshire.
- Permanence can be achieved by remaining with or returning to birth parents, legal permanence with extended family, adoption or permanent placement with other than extended family through legal means.
- Delay in the adoption process can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of children and must be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the child's best interests.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved. Children and young people who have been adopted, adoptive families and birth families all have access to a range of services and supports to meet their assessed needs.
- Children have the right to be listened to, express their wishes and feelings and participate in decisions about their future. They will be encouraged and enabled to do this in a way appropriate to their age and understanding.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE


The main aims of the Hampshire County Council Adoption Service are to:-

- Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need permanent placement.
- Meet and comply with the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services.

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- Adhere to permanency planning timescales as set out in adoption legislation, in order to avoid delay and maximise each child's opportunity to experience a stable and secure family life.
 - Provide appropriate choice of adoption placement for children within Hampshire County Council, and beyond where appropriate, for example through the Consortium or the National Adoption Register, whose needs have been assessed and found to be best met by adoption.
 - Ensure that children are well prepared both practically and emotionally for a move to a new permanent family.
 - Link children for whom adoption is the plan with families who can meet their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic needs whilst recognising that no child should wait indefinitely for the 'ideal' match.
 - Recruit, prepare and support sufficient adopters from diverse backgrounds to provide permanent family care for Hampshire's children where their individual needs and history will be understood, valued and respected.
 - Provide a comprehensive support package, including financial support where appropriate to achieve stable and successful placements
 - Provide effective and efficient adoption panels to enable prospective adopters' assessments and children's plans to be progressed without delay
 - Ensure all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and trained to fulfil their agency functions
 - Ensure that wherever possible and appropriate, siblings will be placed together.
 - Ensure that issues for contact with the birth family are carefully considered and meet the individual child's needs.
 - Provide independent time limited advice and support to birth parents at the point that adoption becomes the plan for the child.
 - Provide an efficient and responsive assessment and counselling service for children, adopters, birth relatives and adopted adults in respect of adoption support services in conjunction with other agencies.
 - To maintain effective partnership with other adoption agencies.
 - To ensure that cost effective services are provided and commissioned which maximise available resources.
 - To ensure that accurate and up to date records and management information is kept in relation to individual children, adoptive parents and services and to maintain confidentiality and security of adoption records.
 - Ensure service users are fully involved and consulted on service delivery and service development
 - Treat all service users with respect and without prejudice or discrimination

4. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE ADOPTION SERVICE

By April 2011 the adoption service will have been restructured. This restructure incorporates a move from three geographic areas into two. The two area adoption teams – East and West, will



comprise child care social workers and the adoption recruitment social workers will be re-located into an Integrated Recruitment Team and an Integrated Assessment Team, which will be responsible for the recruitment, assessment and training of all adoptive parents and foster carers for the County. Each area adoption team has a team manager and will have an assistant team manager. The Adoption Support Team will remain a County resource, but will be line managed by the Adoption West Team Manager.

(a) CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The service recognises that children for whom adoption is the plan and adopted children may have specific education, health and emotional needs. Every effort is made to find families who reflect the child's religious, cultural and ethnic needs.

Supporting educational attainment of vulnerable children is a priority for Hampshire and appropriate support will be identified as a matter of priority.

A team of clinical psychologists is available to offer a consultation service and therapeutic counselling for children and adoptive parents. Nurses for Looked After Children are available to address the health needs of children throughout the adoption process.

A children's guide is available for children for whom adoption is the plan.

Hampshire has a pool of informal volunteer advocates from the Hampshire Children's Advocacy Service who offer support to young people to all the meetings.

(b) RECRUITMENT, APPROVAL, TRAINING AND SUPPORT OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

The service responds within stated timeframes to initial enquiries and assessment of prospective adoptive parents. The service recruits, prepares, assesses, trains, supports and links adoptive families with children for whom adoption is the plan.

The Adoption service is open and inclusive. Prospective adopters are welcomed and are given training and help to see the situation from the child's point of view. Hampshire welcomes prospective adopters irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, religion and disability.

Adopters are provided with a range of information following approval to support them in the adoption task. Support is also provided through training opportunities, access to regular consultations run by a clinical psychologist, post-approval workshops, support groups, social events, and individual support from members of the adoption service. Hampshire has an agreement with the Post Adoption Centre to provide regular support groups for adopters (in partnership with adoption service staff) and to provide approved adopter training events.

(c) FAMILY FINDING ROLE

The Area Adoption Team Manager allocates a social worker to all cases where adoption may be an option being considered in childcare planning. There is a regular Family Finding Meeting where all children who are deemed 'hard to place' are discussed and plans for seeking permanent adoptive placements formulated, monitored and reviewed.



(d) SUPPORT TO BIRTH PARENTS AND RELATIVES

Birth parents and relatives have access to independent support and counselling. This will be provided by Barnardos, via a contractual arrangement with Hampshire commencing from the 1st April 2011. Information is given to birth parents about this service at an early point in the permanency planning process.

(e) ADOPTION SUPPORT TEAM: ADULT WORK

Currently Hampshire County Council commission additional services to assist with the provision of Schedule 2 counselling, access to records, intermediary and support services.

Schedule 2 counselling: In conjunction with a commissioned voluntary organisation, the Adoption Support Team offers a counselling service to adopted adults who are seeking access to records about their adoption and family of origin.

Section 98 counselling and intermediary work: The Adoption Support Team offers counselling to birth relatives seeking to make contact with a relative who has been adopted. This may be commissioned from other agencies as appropriate.

The team provides an intermediary service to both adopted adults and birth relatives who are seeking to find a family member. However, this service only extends to individuals living in the Hampshire boundaries.

Adoption Support Services

The adoption support team provides a range of adoption support services required under the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 and a range of workshops and support groups are provided for adoptive families, children and birth parents/family:

- Requests for assessment for adoption support services are received by the Adoption Support Service Team. An adoption support assessment framework document is completed for each request, in order to identify whether there are adoption support needs. If the outcome of the assessment identifies an adoption support service is required then a decision is made as to how this can best be met. This may be through the Adoption Agency's own service provision, or through signposting to other agencies.
- Some therapeutic services are provided from within the team and in conjunction with CAMHS and other relevant professionals/providers.
- Adopters Support groups in partnership with the Post Adoption Centre
- A range of workshops and training days for adoptive families and children on single issues.
- Adoption Information Exchange
- Support of direct contact arrangements (by Area Adoption social workers and the Adoption Support Team)
- Mediation Service provided by Adoption Support Agencies
- Confidential telephone helpline and regular surgeries provided by the Post Adoption Centre



(f) INTER COUNTRY ADOPTION

Hampshire adoption agency has a contract with Parents and Children Together (PACT) a registered voluntary adoption agency to assess, train and prepare those people who are seeking to adopt a child from overseas.

(g) ADOPTION PANELS

Hampshire County Council Adoption Service provides an advisory service which oversees the recruitment, training, management and administration of four adoption panels. Each adoption panel meets once a month. Arrangements exist for extra panels to be convened to avoid delays in planning for children.

(h) STEP-PARENT ADOPTION

Hampshire has specialist step parent workers in each of the area adoption teams to undertake the assessment and court report.

**5. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE ADOPTION MANAGER
(information as required by Regulation 2(1))
AND ADOPTION SUPPORT ADVISER**


Lyndsey Marshall

County Adoption and Integrated Recruitment Service Manager
Hampshire County Council
Children's Services
Glen House, Glen Road
Swanwick
Hampshire
SO31 7HD

Telephone number: 01489 587540

E-mail: lyndsey.marshall@hants.gov.uk

Qualifications: Diploma in Social Work, BA (Hons) Public Sector Studies, MBA



6. THE ADOPTION SERVICE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE
(information as required by Regulation 2(1))

The Adoption Manager works directly to the Head of County Services. For the management structure of the Adoption Service please see section 13.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The Adoption Service works within the overall Quality Assurance Framework for Children and Families, which sets out a range of general and service specific standards and methods by which these standards are monitored. Children for whom adoption is being considered or who have been placed for adoption are reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers.

Hampshire Adoption Service continually monitors and evaluates its service at every stage of the adoption process to ensure quality and effectiveness. Hampshire welcomes feedback from service users.

Feedback from prospective adopters on service quality and effectiveness is obtained via feedback sheets on adoptive parents training and the prospective adopter report approval process. The adoption panel experience is similarly evaluated.

As part of the Adoption Consortium with Oxfordshire, Surrey and PACT and as a member of BAAF's Southern Regional Group of Local Authorities, Hampshire County Council Adoption Service actively considers and shares good practice and policy development.

The Adoption Service is inspected on a 3-yearly basis by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills).



8. COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Hampshire County Council Children's Services complaints procedure is based on Getting the Best from Complaints (Departments for Education and Skills 2006) The service is provided to service users at the point of contact.

The Complaints and Customer Relations Manager's address is:

Hampshire County Council
Children's Services
Complaints Team
Elizabeth Court 11
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8UG

Tel: 01962 847 484

Fax: 01962 834 510

e-mail: childrens.services.complaints@hants.gov.uk

The Complaints and Customer Care Manager maintains close links with the Adoption teams and monitors the process, outcomes and recommendations of all complaints. An overview looks at all complaints across the service bi-annually.

The Complaints Procedure is made up of 3 parts:

- Stage 1 Local Resolution
- Stage 2 Investigation
- Stage 3 Review Panel

If complainants remain unsatisfied at Stage 3 they can ask for their complaint to be examined by the Local Government Ombudsman.

9. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING MECHANISM

Prospective adopters are given written information about the role of the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) as part of their preparation process. They are also provided with leaflets about the IRM when information is being prepared for presentation to panel.



10. **ADVOCACY SERVICE**

Hampshire provides access to an independent and confidential advocacy service for children looked after on behalf of Hampshire County Council. The service supports young people in meetings and reviews, offers independent advice and advocacy, supports young people in making a complaint and facilitates consultation and participation of young people in matters affecting their lives. This service can be accessed via the Participation Team:

Lee Culhane
Participation Officer
Hampshire County Council
Elizabeth Court 11
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8UG

Telephone number: 01962 845313
e-mail: lee.culhane@hants.gov.uk

11. **OFSTED**

Hampshire County Council is inspected by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills). You can contact Ofsted to ask more about their inspection of children's services, make a complaint or raise a concern about a service that Ofsted inspects or regulates, or you can view inspection reports online.

OFSTED
Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Telephone number: 08456 404045
e-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

12. **APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually and formally approved by the Executive Lead Member.

Hampshire County Council strives to meet the requirements laid down in the Adoption Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards (Department of Health) published under the Care Standards Act 2000. It also reflects the requirements as laid down under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

The service is particularly mindful of the outcomes framework in Every Child Matters, namely: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing

13. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE CHART

COUNTY ADOPTION & INTEGRATED RECRUITMENT SERVICE – Lyndsey Marshall, Service Manager

EAST ADOPTION	WEST ADOPTION & ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES	INTEGRATED RECRUITMENT TEAM	INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT TEAM	PANELS	GLEN HOUSE ADMIN TEAM
Team Manager Sandra Stanbrook (BA, CQSW, NVQ4)	Team Manager Kaye Robinson (DipSW, NVQ4)	Team Manager Rachel Reynolds (BA Psychology and Sociology, Dip SW)	Team Manager Mariaan Moody (BA Social Work)	Team Manager Liane McDonald (BA, CQSW, NVQ4)	Zoe Lock Louise Burke Glenice Barraclough Eileen Bartlett Andrea White Margaret Penney Sandra Coffin Julia Whatley Donna Frampton Maria Hooper
Assistant Team Manager Dee Denham	Assistant Team Managers Sarah Woods Carole Kloss		Assistant Team Manager Lee Moden		
Clare Quirke Debbie Grey Rita Harrison-Roach Judy Poole Margaret Chamberlain Barbara Kay Donna Martin Ian Smithers Ros Horncastle Caroline Dalwood Kate Taylor Admin Support Roz Francis Chris Stray Denise Cursons (Aldershot) Vacancy (Aldershot)	Baljinder Kenth Graeme Moppett Sue Andrews Andy White Susan Harrington Sue Birkett Pete Lawes Graham Humphries Jayne Laysan Ros Smith Blanca Villalta/Rebecca Thomas Kathy Bavister Alastair Leeson-Smith Jo Davis/Claire Fry Wendy Morgan Maggie Barrant Admin Support Jan Emes Merriddy Trollope Caryn McKenna Denise Cursons (Aldershot) Vacancy (Aldershot)	Tracey Edwards Janice McKain Mags Rivett Elaine Mayward Lesley Riley Kathy Dent Teresa Aldridge Elly Davey Carole Worley Michelle Solley	Sarah Alden Marianne Smith Carole Rogers Sian Tilley Chris Knowlton Cox Caroline Clayton Lindzi Newman Sheila Miller Kay Keen Vivien Walker Susan Austin Zoe Chignell Independent Social Workers		
Children's Services Department Public Service Plaza Civic Centre Road Havant PO9 2AX Phone: 02392 446688 Fax: 01962 834540	The Corner House 2-8 Cambridge Road Aldershot Hampshire GU11 3JZ Phone: 01252 320624 Fax: 01252 343736	Hythe Area Office West Shore House West Street Hythe SO45 6AA Phone: 02380 877702 Fax: 02380 840270	Glen House Glen Road Swanwick SO31 7HD Phone: 01489 587000 and 01489 587017 Fax: 01489 575594		

All social workers have relevant qualifications and are registered with GSCC



14. **FEEDBACK**

We welcome feedback about our policies and procedures so if you have any comments about this Statement of Purpose, please address them to:

Lyndsey Marshall

County Adoption and Integrated Recruitment Service Manager
Hampshire County Council
Children's Services
Glen House, Glen Road
Swanwick
Hampshire SO31 7HD

E-mail: lyndsey.marshall@hants.gov.uk

**Information is available in other formats on request.
For further information please contact Lyndsey Marshall**