



**Borough of Poole**

**Adoption Service**

**Statement of Purpose**

**2008-2009**

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	Page 3
2. Principles of the Service .....	Page 3
3. Aims and Objectives of the Service .....	Page 3
4. Services Provided by the Adoption Service .....	Page 4
Recruitment, Approval, Training Support of Prospective Adopters	
Children and Young People	
Family Finding Role	
Support to Birth Parents and relatives	
Adoption Counselling	
Intercountry adoption	
Adoption Support services	
Adoption and Permanence Panel	
Special Guardianship	
Permanence	
Step-parent Adoption	
5. Name and Address of Adoption Manager .....	Page 7
6. Numbers, Qualifications and Experience of Staff Working in the Adoption Services .....	Page 7
7. The Adoption Service Management Structure .....	Page 7
8. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Adoption Service .....	Page 8
9. Complaints .....	Page 8
10. Independent Reviewing Mechanism.....	Page 9
11. Advocacy Service.....	Page 9
12. Ofsted .....	Page 9
13. Approval of the Statement of Purpose .....	Page 9

## **1. Introduction**

The Borough of Poole acts as an Adoption Agency to provide adoption services as required under the Adoption Act 1976, Adoption Agency Regulations 1983, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the National Minimum Standards for Adoption.

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 Poole.
- 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 support 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 Borough of Poole Adoption Service are to:-

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

- Adhere to permanency planning timescales as laid down in National Minimum Standards, in order to avoid delay and maximise each child's opportunity to experience a stable and secure family life.
- Provide appropriate choice of adoption placements, within the South Coast and South West Adoption Consortium area, and beyond where appropriate, for children 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.
- Recruit, assess and support adopters to provide permanent family care for children where their individual needs and history will be understood, valued and respected.
- 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.
- 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.

#### **4. Services Provided by the Adoption Service**

##### **Recruitment, Approval, Training and Support of Prospective Adopters**

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

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 workshops run by a clinical psychologist, bi-monthly support groups, social events, and individual support from members of the adoption team.

## **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. Poole's Children and Young People's Integrated Service employs a specialist teacher, education welfare officer and educational psychologist to support inclusion and educational attainment.

A clinical psychologist is available to offer a consultation service and therapeutic counselling for children and adoptive parents. A specialist health worker is 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.

Independent advocacy is available to children in care.

## **Family Finding Role**

The Adoption Team Manager allocates an adoption team worker to all cases where adoption may be an option being considered in childcare planning. The adoption team social worker does not take on the childcare case responsibility but works alongside the childcare social worker, providing advice about adoption issues, and identifying any factors which may inform recruitment needs.

## **Support to Birth Parents and relatives**

Birth parents and relatives have access to independent support and counselling, through a registered adoption agency Families for Children (from July 2006). Information is given to birth parents about this service at an early point in the permanency planning process.

A Birth Parents Support Group is run in conjunction with another local authority. This group meets at bi-monthly intervals.

## **Adoption Counselling**

The adoption team offers a service to adopted adults who are seeking access to records about their adoption and family of origin.

A limited service is available to birth relatives, although assistance with tracing adopted birth children is not offered. There are priority groups where a service may be offered, for example where there are medical issues in the birth family.

## **Intercountry adoption**

The training and assessment of people seeking to adopt a child from overseas is commissioned from Parents and Children Together (PACT) a registered adoption support agency.

## **Adoption Support Services**

A range of adoption support services are provided, as required by the Adoption Act 1976 and new duties under the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2003:-

- assessment of need for adoption support service and decision whether to provide support services;
- therapeutic services by adoption social workers, CAMHS and through the independently provided services commissioned from Families for Children.
- Clinical Psychologist and Education Psychologist attached to Fostering and Adoption Service.
- adopters support groups;
- advice and information on adoption and adoption website links;
- adopted children groups via financial support through adoption allowances
- birth parents support group
- direct and indirect contact arrangements are facilitated by the adoption team; this includes letter box arrangements.

## **Adoption and Permanence Panel**

The Adoption Panel meets monthly at the Civic Centre, Poole. Panel business and composition are determined by regulation and details are contained in the Adoption Service Policy and Procedure Manual. Each panel member has detailed panel guidance, receives induction and training and has signed an agreement clarifying role and responsibilities regarding attendance, training, confidentiality, conduct and valuing diversity.

The panel is independently chaired and is supported by a panel administrator from the Legal and Democratic Services. The panel has a legal adviser, a medical adviser employed by the PCT and a professional social work adviser.

The agency decision maker is the Head of Service for Children and Young People's Social Care.

## **Special Guardianship**

On 30<sup>th</sup> December 2005 The Adoption and Children Act introduced a new order called Special Guardianship. A special guardian formally takes on the legal powers and responsibilities of parenting a child until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Unlike adoption, special guardianship does not end the legal relationship

between the child and their parents. The special guardian/s are given parental responsibility and are legally entitled to the final say in most decisions about the child's upbringing. However the birth parents continue to have parental responsibility and would have to be consulted in specific situations.

Many children who could benefit from special guardianship are those in the care of a local authority. The Adoption and Children Act requires local authorities to have a range of support services. Where children in care are the subject of an application for a Special Guardianship Order, the Adoption and Permanence panel is asked to make recommendations.

## **Permanence**

The Adoption and Permanence Panel may also consider planning for children where plans for permanence may not include a legal order. For example some children may be best placed in long term foster care, which can meet their needs to have a strong sense of personal belonging to and identity with the family.

## **Step-Parent Adoption**

Non-agency adoption applications, usually a step parent seeking to adopt a child, require an assessment and recommendations in a report to court prepared by social worker. The adoption team social workers undertake these assessments.

### **5. Name and Address of Adoption Manager (information as required by Regulation 2(1))**

The adoption manager is:-

Karran Stroud  
Adoption Team Manager  
Children and Young People's Social Care  
14a Commercial Road  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH14 0JW

Telephone Number: 01202 714711

E-mail: [k.stroud@poole.gov.uk](mailto:k.stroud@poole.gov.uk)

### **6. Numbers, Qualifications and Experience of Staff Working in the Adoption Services at Appendix I (information as required by Regulation 2(1)- available as appendix on request)**

### **7. The Adoption Service Management Structure (information as required by Regulation 2(1))**

The Children and Young People's Social Care Service Unit Head holds overall senior responsibility for the Adoption Service. The Principal Manager Fostering and Adoption manages the work of the Adoption Team Manager, (Organisation chart attached as Appendix 2).

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Adoption Service**

The Adoption Service works within the overall Quality Assurance Framework for Children and Young People's Social Care, 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.

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

As part of the South Coast and South West Adoption Consortia and BAAF Southern Region, Poole Adoption Service actively considers and shares good practice and policy development.

The Adoption Service is inspected on a 3-yearly basis by (since 2007) Ofsted.

## **9. Complaints**

### **Complaints Procedure**

The complaints procedure for the Borough of Poole's Social Care services follows the guidance and legislation set out in the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. Information on the procedure and how to access it is given to service users when their needs are being assessed. It is also available on request, or at various sites across the authority including youth services, GP surgeries and other Social Care locations.

The Consumer Relations Officer / Complaints Manager (telephone number 01202 714740) maintains close links with the Adoption Team, and monitors the process, outcomes, recommendations and learning from all complaints.

In summary, the complaints procedure is made up of 3 stages

- Stage 1: Local resolution or problem solving stage. The manager will work with the complainant to try to resolve their issues
- Stage 2: Investigation stage. An investigation by someone who is not responsible for the service (this may be someone who is not directly employed by the authority) alongside an Independent Person who is not an employee of the Borough of Poole. A senior manager will then respond to the complainant
- Stage 3: Review Panel Meeting stage. A panel of 3 people who are not employees of the Borough of Poole will review how the

complaint has been dealt with and make any further recommendations to resolve the complaint. The Head of Service will then respond to the complainant

If a complaint remains unresolved, a complainant may request further examination of the issues by the Local Government Ombudsman.

## **10. Independent Reviewing Mechanism**

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

## **11. Advocacy Service**

NCH provides independent and confidential advocacy service for children in the care of the Borough of Poole. 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. Independent advocacy is available to adopted children and young people where an adoption support need is identified.

NCH can be contacted at:- 0800 1218707  
NCH, 235 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth, BH8 8DD

## **12. Ofsted**

Ofsted South  
Freshford House  
Redcliffe Way  
Bristol  
BS1 6NL

Telephone number: 08456 404040  
E.mail : [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

## **13. Approval of the Statement of Purpose**

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated annually and formally approved *by the Community Support and Education Scrutiny Committee.*

**Gerry Moore**  
**Head of Service**

## Statement of Purpose Appendix 2

### CYPSC UNIT STRUCTURE

