

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	11 March 2010
Title:	Statement of Purpose of the Hampshire Adoption Service
Reference:	1319
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to present the updated Statement of Purpose of Hampshire's Adoption Service (see Appendix 1) for approval by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, highlighting the key parts of the document that have been revised since it was last presented.

1.2. This paper seeks to

- Adhere to National Minimum Standard 1.2 for Adoption Services, which requires that the Adoption Agency must formally approve the Statement of Purpose and review, update and modify it where necessary at least annually.
- Support the Corporate Priorities and enable and encourage all children and young people, who are looked after by Hampshire Children's Services, to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, provide a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being, in line with the Every Child Matters five outcomes (Children Act 2004).
- Set out revisions to the Statement of Purpose, which are highlighted within section 5 below.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The Adoption Regulations (2002) state that "The adoption service provider (in this instance, Hampshire Children's Services Department) shall compile, in relation to the adoption service, a written statement, referred to as The Statement of Purpose, which shall consist of:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption service; and
 - A statement as to the services and facilities to be provided by the adoption service.
- 2.2. The adoption service provider is responsible for providing a copy of the Statement of Purpose to Ofsted, the body which inspects the adoption services, and the following key stakeholders:
- Any person working for the purposes of the adoption service;
 - Any adoptive parent or prospective adoptive parent of the adoption service;
 - Any child placed with an adoptive parent by the adoption service; and
 - The parent of any such child.
- 2.3. Information for children about adoption, including the Statement of Purpose, is also available in two age appropriate booklets provided to all children who are looked after, for whom adoption is the plan. ('All About Adoption' and 'Adoption what it is and what it means' – copies available from christine.stray@hants.gov.uk)
- 2.4. The proposals in this report are expected to support the County Council's corporate priorities as follows:
- "Making Hampshire safer and more secure for all" – by enabling as many of Hampshire's children as possible, who are looked after, to remain in their local communities and to fully participate in and contribute to the life of those communities.
- "Maximising well-being" – by ensuring that Hampshire's children who are looked after are provided with good quality family based care placements that meet their needs and enable them to move successfully through their transition to independence.
- "Enhancing our quality of place" – through provision of high quality services that target those children who are the most vulnerable.
- 2.5 Provision of adoption services, as described within the Statement of Purpose, supports all five outcomes of the Children Act 2004 by ensuring every child or young person who is placed for adoption or adopted in Hampshire is securely attached to their adopter/s, who have the skills to meet their needs and encourage each child to reach their full potential.

3. Finance

- 3.1. Not applicable

4. Performance

- 4.1. The executive side of the council need to:

- satisfy themselves that the adoption agency is effective and achieves good outcomes for children;

- Ofsted's inspection of Hampshire County Council's adoption services in 2009 concluded that the service was good.

5. Revisions to the Statement of Purpose

- 5.1. The Adoption Service benefits from having staff with a range of appropriate qualifications relevant to the work they are undertaking within the service. Staff also have considerable experience of working with children and families. This is now reflected in the Statement of Purpose.
- 5.2. Following the Ofsted Inspection 2005 the Adoption Service was remodelled to provide a consistent and comprehensive adoption service within each area. The three Adoption Teams are based at Havant, Aldershot and Hythe. The Adoption Support Services, including Panel administration and Adoption Adviser, are based at Glen House, Swanwick. The Statement of Purpose now contains the details of all these locations.
- 5.3. Hampshire has now successfully appointed Lyndsey Marshall, who is the named Adoption Support Adviser.
- 5.4. Further amendments relate to the complaints procedure. The Statement of Purpose now incorporates the Complaints and Customer Relations Manager's new address. The revised procedure is based on Getting the Best from Complaints (Department for Education and Skills 2006).
- 5.5. The Advocacy Service is now incorporated into the Statement of Purpose. This service provides access to an independent and confidential advocacy service on behalf of children looked after by Hampshire County Council.
- 5.6. This Statement of Purpose acknowledges the importance of feedback and for this purpose any comments should be addressed to Karen Parkinson, as the Adoption Service Manager, rather than to the Complaints Team as in the previous Statement of Purpose.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The Adoption Service in Hampshire prides itself on the level of consultation that takes place on an ongoing basis with key stakeholders. Hampshire's Adoption Service is deemed by Ofsted to have a sound approach to working with birth families that enables them, should they wish, to be involved in planning for their children's future. There is a positive and non-judgemental approach to working with, and supporting, birth families and prospective adopters. All service users are encouraged throughout their involvement with the service to provide feedback and comments. This feedback then assists the service in building on good practice and developing the service.

7. Future direction

- 7.1. Ongoing work is taking place to develop Hampshire's Adoption Service and the Statement of Purpose will be revised at appropriate times in order to reflect these developments.

7.2. A further adoption inspection is anticipated in 2011/12.

7.3. Performance is monitored regularly by the service.

8. Recommendation(s)

8.1. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children and Families approves the updated Statement of Purpose of the Adoption Service.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>		<u>Date</u>
The Adoption and Children Act		2002
The Adoption Agency Regulations		2005
Adoption National Minimum Standards		2003
Children Act		2004

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. A race and equality impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. A crime and disorder impact assessment has been considered in the development of this report and no adverse impact has been identified.

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact identified

b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Not applicable