



**adoption**  
services

**Adoption Services**

# **Statement of Purpose**

**2013-2014**



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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 as amended 2011 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's birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected.
- 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 and will be at the centre of Hampshire's adoption process.
- 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 at all stages of the adoption process and in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be properly recognized and positively valued and promoted. Children will not be kept waiting for an ideal match.

### 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.
- 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 adoption plans for relinquished children, prospective adopters' assessments and linkings with children to be progressed without delay
- Ensure all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and trained to fulfil their agency functions
- Ensure that where possible and appropriate, siblings will be placed together and that decisions to separate siblings are made following a sibling assessment.
- Ensure that children's plans for adoption are agreed by the Agency Decision Maker to meet court timetables (implemented from September 2012 when children's plans for adoption no longer can be presented to the Adoption Panel where a Placement Order is required in order to place a child for adoption).
- 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**

The adoption service is structured into two area Children's Adoption Teams (East and West), a County wide Integrated Recruitment Team (recruiting for both adoption and fostering), Adopter Assessment Team, Foster Carer Assessment team, Integrated Panel Advisory Service and an Adoption Support Team.

The two area Children's Adoption Teams are staffed with child care social workers and has a team manager and assistant team manager. The Integrated Recruitment Team and Integrated Assessment Teams are staffed with adoption and fostering social workers and support workers. Each of these two teams has a team manager with an assistant team manager in the Assessment Teams. The Recruitment Team is responsible for the recruitment of adoptive parents and foster carers. The Adopter Assessment Team undertakes the training and preparation of prospective adopters, undertakes the Prospective Adopter's Assessment and supports prospective adopters through approval to placement and final Adoption Order.

The outcome of the Government's consultation on the new assessment process for prospective adopters is due currently and will be for likely implementation during Summer 2013. This will introduce a new two stage assessment process for prospective adopters and will last a maximum of six months for most applicants.

Hampshire has been trialling the new Prospective Adopter Report as part of the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) pilot project and will use this for all new assessments from April 2013.

The Adoption Support Team provides a comprehensive range of support services to adoptive families within Hampshire. It is staffed by adoption social workers, support worker, team manager and an assistant 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 can meet a child's religious, cultural and ethnic needs and promote a child's sense of identity which is important to a child's well-being and helps them to enjoy and achieve in life.

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

Access to consultation with clinical psychologists is available to social workers about children and a similar consultation service is available for 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 volunteer advocates from the Hampshire Children's Advocacy Service who offer support to young people as appropriate.

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

The service responds within statutory 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 support to help them understand the backgrounds and needs of children with plans for adoption and to see the situation from the child's point of view. Hampshire welcomes prospective adopters irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, religion and disability. We recognise that children need adopters from all kinds of backgrounds and that the ability and willingness to meet a child's needs is the most important factor.

Fostering for Adoption and Concurrent placements with adopters also approved as foster carers are being made where this is in the best interests of the child. At the point of enquiry and assessment prospective adopters are being offered the opportunity to explore these options.

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) PERMANENCY PLANNING**

The Children's Adoption Team Managers allocate a social worker to all cases, where adoption may be an option being considered as part of childcare planning, to begin parallel 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 are formulated, monitored and reviewed.

#### **(d) SUPPORT TO BIRTH PARENTS AND RELATIVES**

Birth parents and relatives have access to independent support and counselling. This is provided by Barnardos, via a contractual arrangement with Hampshire. 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 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 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 via Hantsdirect. All eligible adoptive families are entitled to an adoption support needs assessment and an 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 that 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 Adoption Support Team and others in conjunction with CAMHS and other relevant professionals/providers.
- Adopter 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 Children's 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 service level agreement 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 during a five-week month and at other times to avoid delays for children's planning for adoption.

#### **(h) STEP-PARENT ADOPTION**

Hampshire has specialist step parent workers who are located in the Adoption Assessment Team to undertake the assessment and court report.

## **5. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE ADOPTION MANAGER AND ADOPTION SUPPORT ADVISER**

### **Mary Blanchard**

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

Telephone number: 01489 587549

E-mail: mary.blanchard@hants.gov.uk

## **6. THE ADOPTION SERVICE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

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 parent's training and the prospective adopter report approval process. The adoption panel experience is similarly evaluated. A new Adopter's Participation group has been set up to include the views of adoptive parents in the development of services.

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

website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 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 – Mary Blanchard, County Service Manager

EAST ADOPTION	WEST ADOPTION TEAM	INTEGRATED RECRUITMENT TEAM	ADOPTION ASSESSMENT TEAM	FOSTERING ASSESSMENT TEAM	PANELS	POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE	GLEN HOUSE ADMIN TEAM
<b>Team Manager</b> Sandra Stanbrook (BA, CQSW, NVQ4)	<b>Team Manager</b> Kaye Robinson (DipSW, NVQ4)	<b>Team Manager</b> Rachel Reynolds BA(Hons), DipSW, PQ	<b>Team Manager</b> Mariaan Moody (BA Social Work)	<b>Team Manager</b> Lee Moden BA(Hons), DipSW, PQ	<b>Panel Advisor</b> Liane McDonald (BA, CQSW, NVQ4)	<b>Team Manager</b> Amanda Roberts (BA,MA, Dip SW)	Marion Andrews (MCMI, NVQ4)
<b>Assistant Team Manager</b> Dee Denham  Clare Quirke Debbie Grey Judy Poole Margaret Chamberlain Barbara Kay Donna Martin Ian Smithers Ros Horncastle Caroline Dalwood Kate Taylor Joan Benn vacancy  <b>Admin Support</b> Roz Francis Chris Stray Denise Cursons (Aldershot) Val O'Grady (Aldershot)	<b>Assistant Team Managers</b> Carole Kloss  Baljinder Kenth Graeme Moppett Andy White Susan Harrington Sue Birkett Jo Davis Claire Fry Wendy Morgan Maggie Barrand  <b>Admin Support</b> Jan Emes Merriddy Trollope Caryn McKenna Denise Cursons (Aldershot) Val O'Grady (Aldershot)	Tracey Edwards Carole Worley Teresa Aldridge Vacancy x2 FSW vacancy x1  <b>Recruitment &amp; Marketing Officer</b> Jodie Whaley  <b>Marketing Assistant</b> Louise Waite	<b>Assistant Team Manager</b> Alison Street  Carole Rogers Sian Tiley Sheila Miller Sally Roach Rachel Knight Lynn Kathy Dent Elaine Maywood  Independent Social workers	<b>Assistant Team Manager</b> Sam McLachlan  Chris Knowlton Cox Caroline Clayton Lindzi Newman  Independent Social Workers		<b>Assistant Team Manager</b> Sarah Woods  Pete Lawes Graham Humphries Jayne Laysan Ros Smith Blanca Villalta Rebecca Thomas Kathy Bavister Alastair Leeson-Smith	Julia Whatley Donna Frampton Maria Hooper Nicky Bowles Michelle Cox Eileen Bartlett Andrea White Margaret Penney Sandra Coffin Amber Rapley Tressa Robinson Admin Officer vacancy

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
<b>All social workers have relevant qualifications and are registered with GSCC</b>			



## 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:

### **Mary Blanchard**

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

E-mail: [mary.blanchard@hants.gov.uk](mailto:mary.blanchard@hants.gov.uk)

**This Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 and fulfils the agency's duties and responsibilities as set out in the Adoption National Minimum Standards published under the provisions of Sections 23(1) and 49(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000**

**Information is available in other formats on request.  
For further information please contact Mary Blanchard**