



SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds on
Thursday, 7th September, 2006 at 9.30 am*

(* A pre-meeting will take place for ALL members of the Board at 9.00 am)

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

- J Bale (Chair) - Guiseley and Rawdon
- J Chapman - Weetwood
- B Cleasby - Horsforth
- R D Feldman - Alwoodley
- A Harrison - Garforth and Swillington
- V Kendall - Roundhay
- L Mulherin - Ardsley and Robin Hood
- T Murray - Garforth and Swillington
- K Renshaw - Ardsley and Robin Hood
- B Selby - Killingbeck and Seacroft

Co-opted Members (Voting)

- Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)
- Prof P H J H Gosden - Church Representative (Church of England)
- Mr R Greaves - Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
- Mr C Macpherson - Parent Governor Representative (Special)
- Mrs S Knights - Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

- Mr T Hales - Teacher Representative
- Ms C Foote - Teacher Representative
- Mrs S Hutchinson - Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Mr P Gathercole - NCH Representative
- Ms T Kayani - Youth Work Partnership Representative

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A G E N D A

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1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25 of the Access to Information Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded)</p>	
2			<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public</p>	
3			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes)</p>	
4			<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To declare any personal/prejudicial interests for the purpose of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 13 of the Members' Code of Conduct</p>	
5			<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence from the meeting</p>	
6			<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th July 2006 as a correct record</p>	1 - 10

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
7			<p>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS</p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which gives Members the opportunity to ask questions of the Director(s) who chair the Corporate Priority Board which matches the Scrutiny Board's portfolio, or the Director's nominee</p>	11 - 12
8			<p>ADOPTION IN LEEDS - SESSION ONE</p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which details the evidence to be considered as part of the first formal session of the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into Adoption in Leeds</p>	13 - 56
9			<p>ADOPTION IN LEEDS - SESSION TWO</p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which details the evidence to be considered as part of the second formal session of the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into Adoption in Leeds</p>	57 - 136
10			<p>YOUTH SERVICES</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which sets out and invites Members to approve draft terms of reference for the Board's inquiry into Youth Services</p>	137 - 142
11			<p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which details the Scrutiny Board's current Work Programme</p>	143 - 168

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
12			<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Thursday, 12th October 2006 at 9.30 a.m. in the Civic Hall, Leeds</p> <p>(Please note that a pre-meeting is scheduled for all members of the Board at 9.00 a.m.)</p>	

Agenda Item 6

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 13TH JULY, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor J Bale in the Chair

Councillors J Chapman, B Cleasby,
R D Feldman, A Harrison, V Kendall,
L Mulherin, T Murray, K Renshaw and
B Selby

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING):	Mr E A Britten	Church Representative (Catholic)
	Prof P H J H Gosden	Church Representative (Church of England)
	Mr R Greaves	Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
	Mr C Macpherson	Parent Governor Representative (Special)
	Mrs S Knights	Parent Governor Representative (Primary)
CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON- VOTING):	Mr T Hales	Teacher Representative
	Ms C Foote	Teacher Representative
	Mr P Gathercole	NCH Representative
	Ms T Kayani	Youth Work Partnership Representative

11 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the July meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services), especially Councillor A Harrison and Ms T Kayani who were both attending as Members of the Board for the first time. The Chair also welcomed both Executive Members for Children's Services, in addition to Mrs S Knights who had recently been re-appointed to the position of voting co-opted member, Parent Governor Representative (Primary).

12 LATE ITEMS

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair admitted to the agenda draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board inquiry into Adoption in Leeds, which was to be considered as part of agenda item 15. The document had been unavailable at the time of the agenda despatch.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared personal interests, due to their respective positions as either school or college governors:-

Councillors Bale, Cleasby, Kendall, R D Feldman, Harrison, Mulherin, Renshaw, Selby, Mr C Macpherson, Mr R Greaves, Mr E A Britten and Mrs S Knights.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 7th September, 2006

Mr C Macpherson declared a personal interest in agenda item 11, due to his daughter being on the roll of the North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) from September 2006 and a personal interest in agenda item 15, having been approved as an adopter. (Minute Nos 20 and 24 refer).

Professor P H J H Gosden declared a personal interest due to being a member of the School Organisation Committee.

Mr P Gathercole declared a personal interest in agenda item 14, due to being a representative for NCH which provided services to looked after children. (Minute No 23 refers).

Further personal interests were declared throughout the meeting. (Minute Nos 21 and 23 refer).

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Mrs S Hutchinson.

15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Scrutiny Board (Children’s Services) meeting held on 9th June 2006 be approved as a correct record.

16 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5th June 2006 be noted.

17 DISCUSSION WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which enabled Members to discuss the Board’s priorities for the forthcoming municipal year with the Lead and Support Executive Members for Children’s Services.

In attendance at the meeting to respond to Members’ queries and comments were Councillor Brett, Lead Executive Member for Children’s Services, Councillor Harker, Support Executive Member for Children’s Services, Rosemary Archer, Director of Children’s Services and Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds.

Following an overall update on children’s service provision in Leeds from both Executive Members, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:

- Members sought clarification on the criteria used to define a child as ‘vulnerable’ and the mechanisms established to prevent children from falling into that category;
- Further information was given on the proposed children’s trust commissioning arrangements and on the methods which would be used to consult Members on these proposals and various other

children's services issues on an ongoing basis, including Member seminar arrangements;

- Emphasis was placed upon the intention to increase partnership working arrangements both at local and district level when delivering children's services in Leeds.

RESOLVED – That the discussion with Executive Members for Children's Services regarding the Board's priorities for the forthcoming municipal year be noted.

(Councillor Murray joined the meeting at 10.00 a.m. during the consideration of this item)

18 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which afforded Scrutiny Board Members the opportunity to put questions to the relevant service Director and which also sought views on how Members wished to deal with this agenda item at future meetings.

Councillors Brett and Harker, Lead and Support Executive Members for Children's Services respectively and Chris Edwards, Chief Executive of Education Leeds, were in attendance to answer Members' questions.

The Chief Executive of Education Leeds fielded a range of questions regarding the administration and serving of Fixed Penalty Notices in Leeds which had been submitted prior to the meeting. In summary, the answers submitted to the Board addressed the following issues:

- the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued in Leeds since the introduction of the scheme;
- the protocol established in Leeds which enabled the Education Welfare Service only to issue Fixed Penalty Notices;
- the number of cases where the Education Welfare Service had refused to issue Fixed Penalty Notices despite requests from schools and the reasons for such refusals;
- the number of Fixed Penalty Notices which had been issued in respect of parents taking their children out of school during term time;
- the reasons why the Education Welfare Service had refused to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those parents who had taken their children out of school;
- the extent of the consultation process which had preceded the introduction of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme;
- the ways in which the monies collected by the scheme were allocated.

Members then made further enquiries into the procedures surrounding the serving of Fixed Penalty Notices. Following the submission of a specific example where the Education Welfare Service had refused to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice despite a school's wishes, the Chief Executive of Education Leeds invited the Member in question to discuss the issue further with him outside the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the information contained within the report be noted;
- (b). That the Members' Questions item of business only be included as an agenda item if prior notice of questions has been received by the time the agenda is due for publication.

19 FORMAL RESPONSE - CHILDREN ACT INQUIRY

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the formal response to the recommendations of Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) which arose from its inquiry into the implementation of the Children Act in Leeds.

In attendance at the meeting to answer Members' queries and questions were Keith Burton, Lead Chief Officer, Children's Services and Louise Tonkinson, Communications and Marketing Manager.

Following a question and answer session regarding the progress being made in response to several of the inquiry's recommendations, Members proposed that the draft consultation and engagement toolkit detailed within the action plan could be submitted to the Scrutiny Board prior to it being submitted to Executive Board for formal adoption.

Members then noted that further update reports relating to the implementation of the Children Act in Leeds were intended to be submitted to the October 2006 and January and April 2007 meetings of the Board.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the draft consultation and engagement toolkit be submitted to the Board prior to it being submitted to Executive Board for formal adoption;
- (c). That further update reports on the progress of the implementation of the Children Act in Leeds be submitted to the October 2006 and January and April 2007 meetings of the Board.

20 FORMAL RESPONSE - SPECIALIST INCLUSIVE LEARNING CENTRES INQUIRY

Members received a report from the Chief Executive of Education Leeds which detailed the formal response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) following its inquiry into Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs).

Paul Barker, Team Leader and Carol Jordan, Strategic Manager, both of Education Leeds were in attendance to answer Members' queries and questions.

A summary of the recently published report from the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee, entitled 'Special Educational Needs' had been circulated to Members for information.

Following a brief summary of the information detailed within the report, a question and answer session then ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:

- the extent to which a coherent SILC strategy was emerging throughout the city;
- the measures being taken to improve the morale of both SILC staff and parents of children attending the centres, and the effect that uncertainty surrounding staffing levels could have on morale;
- the ways in which the funding arrangements of the SILCs were being developed to reflect the changing patterns of their service delivery;
- the methods which were being used to interact with parents, and the need for active engagement to be part of the SILCs' communications strategy;
- the actions which had been taken following a review of the SILCs' partnership arrangements in Leeds;
- timescales relating to the review of information received by parents which advised them of the SILCs' admissions procedure and the possibility of the results from such a review being circulated to Members for information;
- the measures which were being taken to ensure that adequate opportunities for staff development existed both in SILC and mainstream settings;
- the capacity of the portage service currently delivered in Leeds;
- the models of governance which had been considered to reflect the partnership nature of the SILCs in Leeds;
- the capacity that the Organisational Change Team would have to support those schools facing significant change;
- the ways in which the Making Leeds Better initiative may impact upon the health services provided to SILCs in Leeds;
- the quality of training received by staff in mainstream schools who taught children with special educational needs.

It was then proposed that given the complexity of the issue, a working group could be established to monitor the progress of the actions detailed within Education Leeds' formal response, in addition to the issues raised during the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That a working group comprising of Councillors Bale, Harrison, Kendall, Mr E A Britten, Ms C Foote, Mr T Hales and Mr C Macpherson be established to monitor the progress of several actions detailed within Education Leeds' formal response to the inquiry, in addition to the issues raised during the meeting.

(Mr T Hales joined the meeting at 10.35 a.m. during the consideration of this item and Mr C Macpherson left the meeting at 11.05 a.m. at the conclusion of this item)

21 **FORMAL RESPONSE - SECONDARY ACHIEVEMENT INQUIRY**

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive of Education Leeds which detailed the formal response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) following its inquiry into Secondary Achievement.

In attendance at the meeting to answer Members' questions were Gary Milner, 14-19 Strategy Co-ordinator and Mike Cooper, Centre Manager, both of Education Leeds.

Following a brief summary of the details contained within the report, a question and answer session ensued. The main areas of debate were as follows:

- in response to Members' concerns regarding the low number of primary schools which had uploaded teacher assessment and pastoral data for local high schools to access as of mid-June 2006, Members requested an urgent update on this issue;
- the reasons why such a modest target of 50% of all learners in year 10 to receive Individual Learning Plans by September 2006 had been set, and the methods which were being used to increase the number of learners benefiting from Individual Learning Plans;
- clarification was sought on the actions being taken to review the adequacy of the safeguarding arrangements concerning work experience and work placements, and it was proposed that an update on the issue could be submitted to Members prior to the December 2006 meeting when the Secondary Achievement inquiry was next scheduled to be considered by the Board;
- further information was provided on the progress which was being made to ensure that a range of accredited routes for demonstrating functional skills were available for learners in Leeds, including the proposed diploma pilot project;
- the mechanisms which had been established to ensure that opportunities were in place for teachers to explore and develop new methods of delivering the curriculum;
- clarification was sought on the progress which had been made in relation to an event to raise employer awareness of the benefits to be gained from providing work placements;
- Members sought assurances in relation to the lack of response timescales which had been incorporated into the report.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That an update on the number of primary schools in Leeds uploading teacher assessment and pastoral data for high schools to access be provided to Members as soon as possible;
- (c). That an update on the actions being taken to review the adequacy of the safeguarding arrangements concerning work experience and work placements be submitted prior to the Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled for December 2006;

(d). That a further report updating Members on the progress made in relation to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) be submitted to the Scrutiny Board in December 2006.

(Councillor Murray declared a personal interest in this item due to being a governor of Thomas Danby College)

22 FORMAL RESPONSE - INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND WORKLOAD OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which detailed the formal response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) following its inquiry into the Recruitment, Retention and Workload of Children's Social Workers.

In attendance at the meeting to respond to Members' questions was Tony Griffin, Head of Community Services – Children, Social Services.

Having raised concerns over the payment for individual Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, the Board was assured that employees within Social Services were not required to pay for their own checks.

In response to Members' questions regarding the time it was currently taking to recruit social workers, the Head of Community Services – Children undertook to provide Members with the relevant data.

RESOLVED – That the report and information appended to the report be noted and that a further update be provided in January 2007.

(Ms C Foote and Councillor Renshaw left the meeting at 12.00 p.m. and 12.05 p.m. respectively, during the consideration of this item)

23 MONITORING SUPPORT TO CHILDREN IN NEED AND IN PUBLIC CARE

The Board received a joint report from the Director of Social Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds which detailed statistics relating to an agreed framework for monitoring the provision for children who were either in need or in public care.

In attendance at the meeting to answer Members' queries and concerns were Stuart Cameron-Strickland, Senior Quality Performance Review Officer and Tony Griffin, Head of Community Services – Children, both from Social Services.

Following an enquiry from Members regarding the early availability of comparative data from those local authorities which Leeds was currently benchmarked against, the Board questioned the statistics within the report regarding the time taken to administer core assessments in Leeds. Members also commented on the progress in providing Personal Education Plans for looked after children.

Members then requested that actual figures in addition to percentages were detailed within any future reports of this nature, to enable the Board to make a more comprehensive assessment of Leeds' current performance.

RESOLVED – That the statistical information detailed within the report be noted.

(Councillor Murray declared a personal interest in this item, as his wife was employed to work with children in a similar capacity as was detailed within the report)

24 ADOPTION IN LEEDS

A report was submitted by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which sought the Board's approval of draft terms of reference for the inquiry into Adoption in Leeds, which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Having noted that the draft terms of reference detailed Sheffield City Council as a possible contributor towards the inquiry, it was recommended that the terms of reference were revised to enable the Board to visit the most appropriate local authority at the time.

A discussion relating to the inherent difficulties which existed when trying to adhere to timescales within the adoption process then followed.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That subject to the removal of the specific reference to Sheffield City Council as a possible contributor towards the inquiry, the draft terms of reference for the inquiry into Adoption in Leeds be approved.

25 WORK PROGRAMME

The Board received a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development which detailed the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Following a discussion relating to the current schedule of meetings, Members proposed that all sessions scheduled to consider the inquiry into Youth Services were brought forward by one month to reflect the urgency of the inquiry. It was also suggested that an additional meeting could be organised if appropriate.

RESOLVED –

- (a). That the report and information appended to the report be noted;
- (b). That the youth services inquiry be rescheduled in order to complete it earlier than proposed in the current work programme.

(Ms T Kayani left the meeting at 12.20 p.m. during the consideration of this item)

26 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 7th September 2006 at 9.30 a.m. in the Civic Hall, Leeds.
(Pre-meeting scheduled for 9.00 a.m.)

(The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.)

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Originator: Kate Arscott

Tel: 247 4189

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 7 September 2006

Subject: Members' questions

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Last year, each scrutiny board was required to include a standard item on its agenda to enable members to ask topical questions of the relevant senior officers, without the need for a full inquiry or written reports.
- 1.2 Members' questions is no longer a required item for each scrutiny board meeting. However, the facility remains available for those boards that wish to do so to ask questions of the relevant director(s) at board meetings.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) found this facility to be a useful way of developing a positive ongoing dialogue about current topics with senior officers, without the need for detailed work on every issue.
- 1.4 Following discussion at the board's meeting in July, members agreed to retain the facility but agreed that members' questions would be included as an agenda item only if prior notice of questions has been received by the time that the agenda for the meeting is published (normally eight days before the meeting).
- 1.5 The scrutiny support unit has received prior notice of questions for this meeting, and the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of Education Leeds will be attending the meeting to respond.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the board identifies any issues for further scrutiny arising from the members' questions session.

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Originator: Kate Arscott

Tel: 247 4189

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 7 September 2006

Subject: Adoption in Leeds – Inquiry Session One

Electoral Wards Affected:	Specific Implications For:
	Ethnic minorities <input type="checkbox"/>
	Women <input type="checkbox"/>
	Disabled people <input type="checkbox"/>
	Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the board's first meeting in June, members agreed to carry out an inquiry into adoption in Leeds as one of their major pieces of work this year.
- 1.2 The board appointed a small working group to draft terms of reference for the inquiry which were agreed at the board's July meeting. A copy of the agreed terms of reference is attached as Appendix1.
- 1.3 The first and second formal sessions of the inquiry were scheduled for this meeting. The first session focuses on providing a general context to the adoption service. Attached at Appendix 2 is a report which outlines the information requested from the Social Services department for this session.
- 1.4 Social Services staff involved in adoption will be at the meeting to present the information and respond to members' questions and comments.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The board is requested to consider the issues raised by the first session of this inquiry.

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Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Inquiry

Adoption in Leeds

Terms of reference

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Through its routine performance monitoring activity, the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) identified rates of adoption as an issue of concern in February 2006. As a result the board suggested that adoption in Leeds should be a topic for scrutiny in 2006/07; this was agreed at the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on 9th June 2006. Adoption has also been highlighted as an area for improvement in the Annual Performance Assessment process.
- 1.2 In order to decide on an appropriate and manageable focus for the inquiry, the board commissioned a small working group from amongst its membership to scope the inquiry. The working group met with a senior officer from Social Services on 30th June.
- 1.3 The working group discussed adoption as one of a range of options for achieving permanence and stability for children who are not able to remain with their birth parents. Members recognised the immense value of other outcomes including fostering, special guardianship and residence orders in achieving this.
- 1.4 However, in order to provide a clear focus, the working group decided to recommend that the inquiry concentrate on looking at possible ways of increasing adoption rates, reflecting the view that a secure permanent parental relationship is the ideal outcome for our children.
- 1.5 Members were concerned to examine the causes of any delays in the systems for approving adopters, identifying children as available for adoption and subsequently matching children with adoptive parents. They were also concerned to look at strategies to increase the pool of people prepared to adopt children who were considered harder to place for whatever reason, for example older children, sibling groups, children with developmental difficulties and children of African, Caribbean or mixed heritage.
- 1.6 The board hopes that this inquiry will assist the council in securing better outcomes for children and young people in relation to the 'staying safe' theme of Every Child Matters and the Children and Young People's Plan.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of, and where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas:
- The 'supply and demand' aspects of identifying and matching children and adoptive parents
 - Funding and capacity issues, and other potential causes of any delays or tensions in the adoption processes
 - The role of regional co-operation and work with voluntary agencies.

3.0 Comments of the relevant director and executive member

- 3.1 In line with scrutiny board procedure rule 11.4 the views of the relevant director and executive member have been sought and have been incorporated where appropriate into these terms of reference. Full details are available on request from the scrutiny support unit.

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

- 4.1 It is envisaged that the inquiry will take place over four sessions. The inquiry will conclude with the publication of a formal report setting out the board's conclusions and recommendations.
- 4.2 It is planned that the inquiry will include a visit to another authority and the opportunity to meet more informally with people who have direct experience of adoption.
- 4.3 The length of the inquiry is subject to change in the light of emerging evidence.

5.0 Submission of evidence

5.1 Session One – 7th September 2006

To consider general background information on:

- The current legislation in relation to adoption
- The role of Social Services as an adoption agency
- The various stages in accepting a child for adoption
- The various stages in approving adopters
- The various stages in matching children with adopters
- Alternatives to adoption, including special guardianship and residence orders

5.2 **Session Two – 7th September 2006**

To consider information specific to Leeds:

- Analysis of the profile of prospective adopters and adoptees in Leeds
- Funding for the adoption service
- Underlying reasons for current performance and measures being taken to improve
- Recruitment and training of potential adopters
- The work of the regional consortium
- The work of the post adoption support service

5.3 **Working Group activities**

It is hoped to arrange for board members to meet with adoptive parents, people waiting to adopt and adopted children.

It is also hoped to arrange a visit to another authority to see what lessons can be learned (using comparator information to identify a higher performing authority of a comparable size).

5.4 **Session Three – 16th November 2006**

To consider information on other agencies involved in the adoption process:

- The role of the courts
- The role of the adoption panels
- The role of voluntary and community sector agencies

To consider national research on good practice

5.5 **Session Four – 16th November 2006**

To consider members' findings from the working group activities

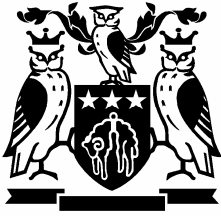
To discuss the issues arising from the working group activities with officers from Social Services

To consider the board's emerging conclusions and recommendations

6.0 Witnesses

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Social Services staff involved in adoption and post adoption support
- Representation from the regional consortium
- Court services
- CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service)
- Representation from an Adoption Panel
- Representatives of voluntary and community organisations involved in adoption
- A local authority with good performance
- Adopted children
- Adoptive parents
- Prospective adopters



**Report of the Chief Officer Social Services
Report to Scrutiny Board**

Date: 7/9/06 Session one

Subject: Inquiry into Adoption Services in Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

- Ethnic minorities
- Women
- Disabled people
- Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report is to the Scrutiny Board group which is looking at adoption services in Leeds and provides information for session one of the group which meets on 7th September as addressed in the terms of reference (paragraph 5.2) of the Scrutiny Board.

2. Main Issues

The current adoption legislation

2.1.1 During the last few years there has been a great deal of attention given to adoption issues. The National Adoption Standards were first introduced in 2001 which included for the first time qualitative requirements and timescales to be met in individual cases; following this were the government targets that monitor the proportion of children adopted from care; subsequently the National Minimum Standards which were introduced with the Care Standards Act 2000 in April 2003 via the Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations.

These prescribe in detail the way in which the Adoption agency must carry out each aspect its work and Leeds City Council Adoption agency had its first inspection against these standards in March 2005. Lastly is the introduction of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which aims to make the process of adoption more efficient and transparent and increases the opportunity for looked after children to be adopted, where appropriate.

2.1.2 It also introduced new arrangements for supporting adopted children and their adoptive families so that at any time after adoption adoptive families can ask for an assessment (including financial assessment) of their support needs. It also allows birth

families to apply for contact or to alter the contact arrangements with the adopted child. We have created a new post adoption support team in Leeds and hope that this will increase the number of people willing to adopt more challenging children.

2.1.3 The Leeds Adoption Agency must belong to a local consortium of Adoption Agencies and we were part of the original group which set this up (addendum 1).

We must also send details of people approved as adopters and children awaiting adoption to the National Adoption Register (addendum 2), so that if there are adopters waiting elsewhere in the country who might match a Leeds child or vice versa a match can be suggested for our consideration. Seven children were placed last year via this route. One adopter received a match in this way.

2.1.4 There are other implications of the Act to do with the court process and updating the law in line with the 1989 Act (addendum 3) but the above provisions are the main issues for us as an Adoption agency but some further provisions of the Act are mentioned below.

3 Role of Social Services as an Adoption agency

3.1 Every local authority must either act as an Adoption agency or make provision for these services to be carried out, usually through a voluntary agency such as Barnardo's or NCH.

This means that the Adoption Agency will recruit, assess and support adoptive parents, accept children as suitable for adoption and approve proposed matches between children and approved adopters.

3.2 The process is detailed below in flow charts attached (addendum 4) but, briefly, the case for children and applications for approval go before an adoption panel who make a recommendation for or against and then these recommendations go to the "Decision maker" (currently the Chief Officer – Children's Services) for ratification or not. Under the new Act the two adoption panels must have independent Chairs. The volume of business makes a third panel necessary and we are in the process of looking at setting this up.

3.3 One of the changes introduced by the new Act was the right of adoptive applicants to be seen by the adoption panel and to be able to refer their application to an independent panel for review if they are turned down. This panel (IRM) can recommend, but not make the Adoption Agency change its decision.

3.4 The local authority Adoption Agency must also have an ASSA (adoption services support adviser) who will keep an eye on adoption support matters within their department and act as a visible person to people outside the department. This person must be a senior manager and is currently the Chief Officer (Children's Services).

3.5 Another thing the local authority must now do is to provide an independent source of advice on adoption to birth parents and we carry out that obligation by an arrangement with After Adoption Yorkshire a voluntary Agency based in Leeds which offer support, counselling and advice independently of the neighbouring local authorities.

4 Stages in the adoption process for both children and adopters.

4.1 The attached flow charts describe the process by which children needing adoption and people wishing to adopt are eventually brought together.(addendum 4)

4.2 All prospective adoptive parents are provided with a written guide to the process at the beginning of their interest in becoming adopters. (addendum 5)

5 Alternatives to adoption.

5.1 The new approach to providing security to children separated from their birth families emphasises permanency rather than any one solution such as adoption.

5.2 This recognizes a range of situations which may require different solutions. In particular the issue of a child's attachment to its birth family is important, and while the child may recognize that it needs a family other than its birth family in which to grow up, it does not want to be adopted and lose its formal connection with the family. In these circumstances a Special Guardianship order will meet the need. It severs the connection with the Social Services but does not amount to full adoption. (addendum 6)

Relatives and current foster carers are the people most likely to choose this route to permanency as an alternative to adoption.

5.3 Another alternative is a Residence Order which again severs the connection with the Social Services and gives some legal parental responsibility to the carer but recognizes perhaps an active connection between the child and its birth family. (addendum 7)

5.4 Lastly the carer and child may wish for the continued involvement of a social worker and the support of the social services. In this case a permanent foster placement is identified where the child can grow up but remain the responsibility of the social Services.

5.5 In all the alternative routes to permanency we try to ensure roughly equal financial provision, where appropriate, so the choice of permanency is not influenced by financial support but is decided by what is best for the child and carer. A foster carer, for example, who wishes to apply for a Special Guardianship or Residence Order, can rely on the same level of financial support as they received as a foster carer.

6 Recommendation

Members of the Scrutiny Board are asked to note the information presented in this report and its appendices to inform the first session of the inquiry.

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**Members of the Consortium
include:-**

Local Authorities:-

Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale, Wakefield,
Kirkcstons, North Yorkshire, Barnsley,
Hull, York, East Riding, Sheffield, NE
Lines, Doncaster, N. Lines

*Voluntary agencies that contribute
families for inclusion on the consortium
database include:-*

NCH
Catholic Care
Adoption Barnardos Yorkshire

Associate Members are;

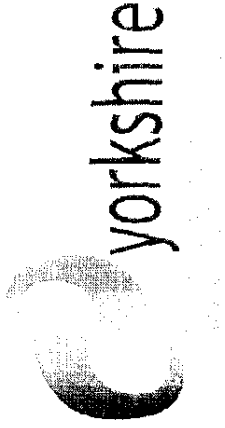
BAAF, After Adoption Yorkshire &
Adoption Register for England & Wales

Contact Details:-

**Debbie Church
Consortium Co-ordinator**

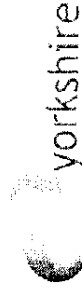
c/o NCH
**11 Queen Square
Leeds LS2 8AJ**

Tel: 0113 2430027
neyac@nch.org.uk



Information for adopters

*Working together for children
needing adoption*



Information on families.

Adopters details are sent to the consortium as soon as they are approved providing that the adopters have consented to this.

When are families available to be considered by the consortium?

Families are available to other members in the consortium after 3 months from approval (or earlier if requested to do so by the agency).

The consortium co-ordinator will enter the details of the families as soon as they are received and will run a check to see if there are children who could be matched with this family. If there is a possible match the co-ordinator will notify the family's social worker directly.

What about financing placements?

Placements are made under the terms and conditions of the child's agency. This includes payments, grants and allowances. It is the responsibility of the child's social worker and the family's worker to clarify the details in each placement.

Information on Children.

When a child has been identified as needing an adoptive placement and the court has agreed with this decision their details will be sent to the consortium co-ordinator by the child's social worker.

What happens next?

The co-ordinator enters the child's details onto the database and checks to see if any families are available that would match with the child. A list of up to 6 possible families will be drawn up. This will be sent to the social worker who is responsible for finding a family for the child.

Once the social worker has decided on a first choice of family they will contact the family's social worker. The family's social worker will then forward details of the child onto the family. If they feel positive about a potential match a meeting will be arranged with the child's social worker for further discussion before a match is agreed by the adoption panel.

What is the Yorkshire Adoption Consortium?

The consortium brings together all adoption agencies in the region with the aim of increasing the possibilities of finding families for children in the area by linking them with approved adopters.

The Consortium has a Co-ordinator who maintains a database holding information on children awaiting adoption in the region and adopters approved to adopt.

Welcome to
**the Adoption
Register!**

This leaflet explains what the
Adoption Register is and
how it can help
children needing
adoption to be
matched with
the right family
for them.



APPENDIX 2

information for adopter(s)

Photos posed by models

Why do we need an Adoption Register?

There are currently about 4,000 children waiting to be placed in adoptive families. There are also many people approved as prospective adopters who are waiting to be matched with the "right" child for them. Adoption agencies do not have detailed information about all the children and families outside their own region, so the Adoption Register will work with adoption agencies and adoption consortia to make sure that all children and families have the best chance of finding a suitable match.

What is the Adoption Register?

The Adoption Register has two major elements.

There is a computer database that stores details of children awaiting adoption where their own agency has not been able to find the right adoptive family, and details of approved adopters awaiting a placement where their own agency has not been able to match them with appropriate children.

There is also a staff team of experienced database operators and family placement social workers who will look at the information on the database to see whether they can suggest possible "matches" between children and prospective adopters.

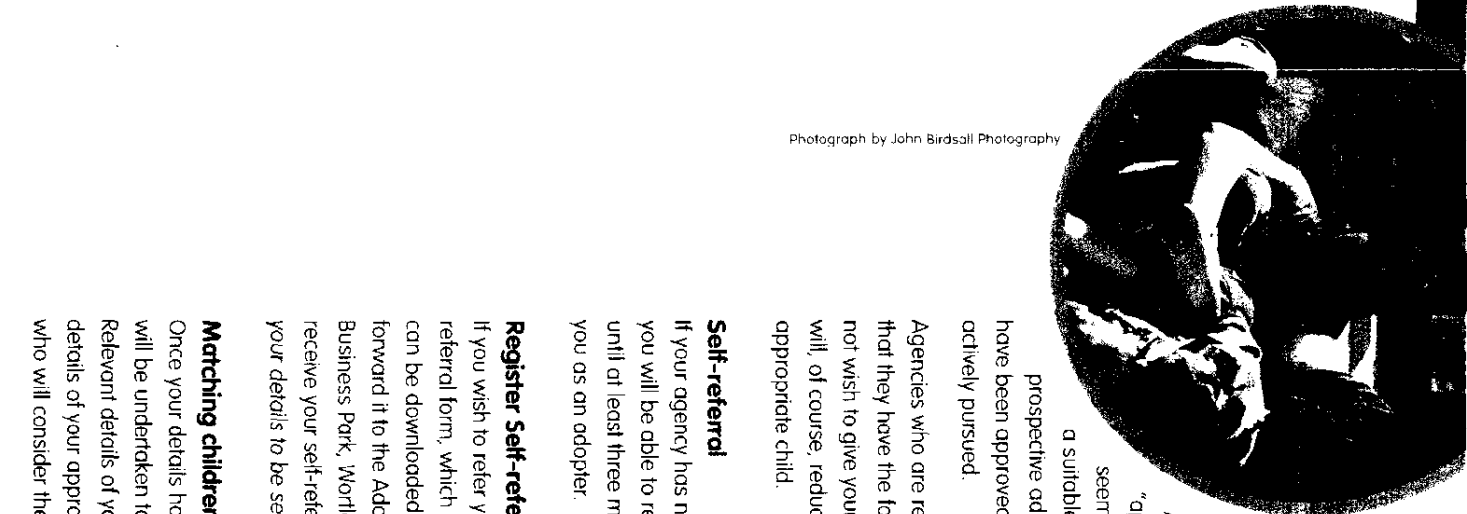
How will the Adoption Register work?

Children

Agencies will refer to the Adoption Register those children who have a plan for adoption but where there is not already a link identified locally which is being actively pursued. The children will be referred to the Register at the latest by three months after the agency has formally decided that adoption is in the child's best interest and either a full Care Order with a plan for adoption has been made, or there is an Interim Care Order and all the required consents, including that of the Court, have been obtained, or the child is accommodated and the consent of those with parental responsibility has been obtained.

Once a child's details have been recorded on the Adoption Register database, a search will be undertaken to identify potential adopters for

2



Photograph by John Birdsall Photography

him/her. Brief details of the families identified and of their adoption agency will be sent to the child's social worker who will consider the proposed link further.

Families

Agencies can refer prospective adopters to the Adoption Register as soon as they have been "approved" by the agency and will usually do this if it seems unlikely that the adopters will be matched quickly with a suitable child in their own region. Agencies must refer

prospective adopters to the Adoption Register three months after they have been approved if there is not a match with an identified child being actively pursued.

Agencies who are referring families to the Adoption Register must certify that they have the families' consent to referral. You can decide that you do not wish to give your consent to referral to the Adoption Register but this will, of course, reduce the opportunity for you to be matched with an appropriate child.

Self-referral

If your agency has not already sent your details to the Adoption Register, you will be able to refer yourself to the Register. You must wait to do this until at least three months after the date on which your agency approved you as an adopter.

Register Self-referral Form (AD 02)

If you wish to refer yourself to the Adoption Register, please complete a self-referral form, which is available in paper form from your adoption agency or can be downloaded from the website: www.adoptionregister.org.uk, and forward it to the Adoption Register for England and Wales, Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park, Wortley, Leeds, LS12 6AJ. When Adoption Register staff receive your self-referral form, they will contact your agency and ask for your details to be sent to the Adoption Register.

Matching children with adoptive families

Once your details have been recorded on the Register database, a search will be undertaken to identify children who match your approval profile. Relevant details of your family, including a written description (profile), and details of your approving agency will be sent to the children's social worker who will consider the proposed link further.

3

Information about your family can initially be sent out up to five times to different social workers for consideration with children. At this point your register entry will be put "on hold" whilst the social workers are given time to pursue possible links with any of the children. If none of the suggested links is pursued, your details on the Adoption Register database will again be made available to enable further searches and links to be made with other children.

Telephone helpline: 0870 750 2176

As a prospective adopter, you will be able to contact the Register direct on the above telephone number. Once we have checked your identity, we will confirm your details have been referred to the Register, give you information about the number of times your details have been sent out to social workers for consideration, and give you general advice. If your details have been sent out for consideration but a link is not being pursued, you can contact your social worker and ask about the reasons given by the child's social worker for not pursuing the link.

How do I know information about me will be kept safe?

- Information about you will be entered on the database only when we have your agency's confirmation that you have given your consent.
- Access to the database is by means of restricted passwords.
- Adoption Register staff have all been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau police check and have signed confidentiality agreements.
- Information about you will be sent only to other approved adoption agencies and only for the purpose of a possible match with a child

We hope you find this information useful, and we look forward to working with you.

www.adoptionregister.org.uk

Adoption Register Contact Details

Adoption Register for England and Wales
Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park
Royds Hall Road, Wortley
LEEDS LS12 6AJ

Tel: 0870 750 2173
Fax: 0870 750 2174
Adopters' Helpline: 0870 750 2176
E-mail: mail@adoptionregister.org.uk
Website: www.adoptionregister.org.uk

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Adoption and Children Act 2002 (“ACA”)

As you are probably already aware, the main provisions of the ACA came into force on 30 December 2005.

These provisions represent probably the biggest changes to child care law since the Children Act 1989 and have huge implications for social work and legal practice.

The purpose of this briefing is simply to headline the major changes.

The ACA, although long in gestation, followed the Prime Minister’s Office own review of adoption law and practice in 2000. The ACA’s stated primary objectives are to update adoption law and to increase the number of looked after children who are placed for adoption; only time will tell whether the new provisions will deliver the latter goal.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF MAIN PROVISIONS

a) Abolition of freeing orders – replacement with placement orders (PO)

- *freeing applications issued before 30/12/05 will continue under the existing court procedures/rules*
- *from 30/12/05, a child will not be able to be placed for adoption unless authorised by a PO or parental consent*
- *LAs will have to apply for PO in care proceedings if the Agency has decided that the child should be placed for adoption*
- *if the parents do not consent to a PO, their consent will have to be dispensed with; the criteria for dispensation will be the welfare of the child*

ADDENDUM 3

- the birth parents' 'Parental Responsibility' (PR) will not be extinguished by a PO
- when placed with prospective adopters, the LA will share PR with them and the birth parents ; the LA will determine the extent to which the other PR holders exercise their PR.
- subsequent to a PO, birth parents will still be able to apply for leave to oppose an adoption order; to be granted leave, they will have to show that there has been a "change in circumstances" since the PO was made.
- a LA will be able to apply to revoke a PO if the plan for the child changes; parents (with PR) will be able to apply to revoke a PO if the child is not placed for adoption and there has been a change in circumstances since the PO was made.
- if a PO is revoked, a care order is revived if it was in force before the PO was made.

b) Parental consent to placement for adoption

- birth parents can relinquish a child for adoption by giving formal consent under s19 ACA; this has to be witnessed by a CAFCASS officer.
- the giving of consent gives the LA PR; when the child is placed for adoption, the prospective adopters will also share PR. The LA will determine the extent to which the other PR holders exercise their PR.
- once the prospective adopters apply for an adoption order, if the birth parents have not withdrawn their s19 consent, they will not be able to oppose the adoption order without the court's leave; they will have to demonstrate a "change in circumstances."

c) Adoption applications – birth parents will have the right to be given notice of the date and place of the adoption final hearing and will be able to attend to be heard on the question of whether an order should be made (unless they have applied unsuccessfully for leave to oppose the adoption).

Application cannot be made to court until children been in placement for 10 weeks. For children placed under S19 consent child can be returned within 14 days if application not lodged.

Locally, Judge Hunt has indicated that adoption hearings will be dealt with in 2 stages, with the prospective adopters (and child, where appropriate) excused from the first stage.

d) s26 contact orders

- once a child placed for adoption, the LA has no duty to promote contact under CA
- the LA, the child, any parent, legal guardian or any relative can apply for contact with a child under s26 ACA, during or after PO proceedings.
- Adoptive parents may be given leave to apply for a variation in any contact order made. They cannot apply as of right.
- the court must consider whether to make a s26 contact order when deciding whether to make a PO.
- s26 orders will not be enforceable once an adoption order made
- s8 contact orders will have to be applied for, as at present, in relation to post-adoption contact.

f) Harmonisation of adoption and children law

- the welfare of the child becomes the paramount consideration in adoption decisions made by the Court **and** adoption agencies
- new welfare checklist, delay and no order principles apply

g) Unmarried couples (including same sex couples) will be able to adopt jointly provided they are deemed to be in an “enduring family relationship”

- i) **New Panel Forms – the Form E and matching report have been replaced by the “Child’s Permanence Report” and the “Adoption Placement Report” (APR). The APR is completed by the social worker and there is provision for adopters to comment on the form regarding information received, any issues outstanding and future Adoption Support.**

- ii) **An Adoption Placement will be formally reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer – 4 weeks, 3 months and thereafter 6 monthly. The Review will discuss progress/court application/Adoption Support.**

ACA PROVISIONS ALREADY IN FORCE

The following provisions of the ACA are already in force:

- 31/10/03 – Adoption Support Regs – legal **duty** for LA to **assess** child and adoptive family’s need for adoption support before matching Panel and on request at any time during child’s minority; **discretion to provide support.**

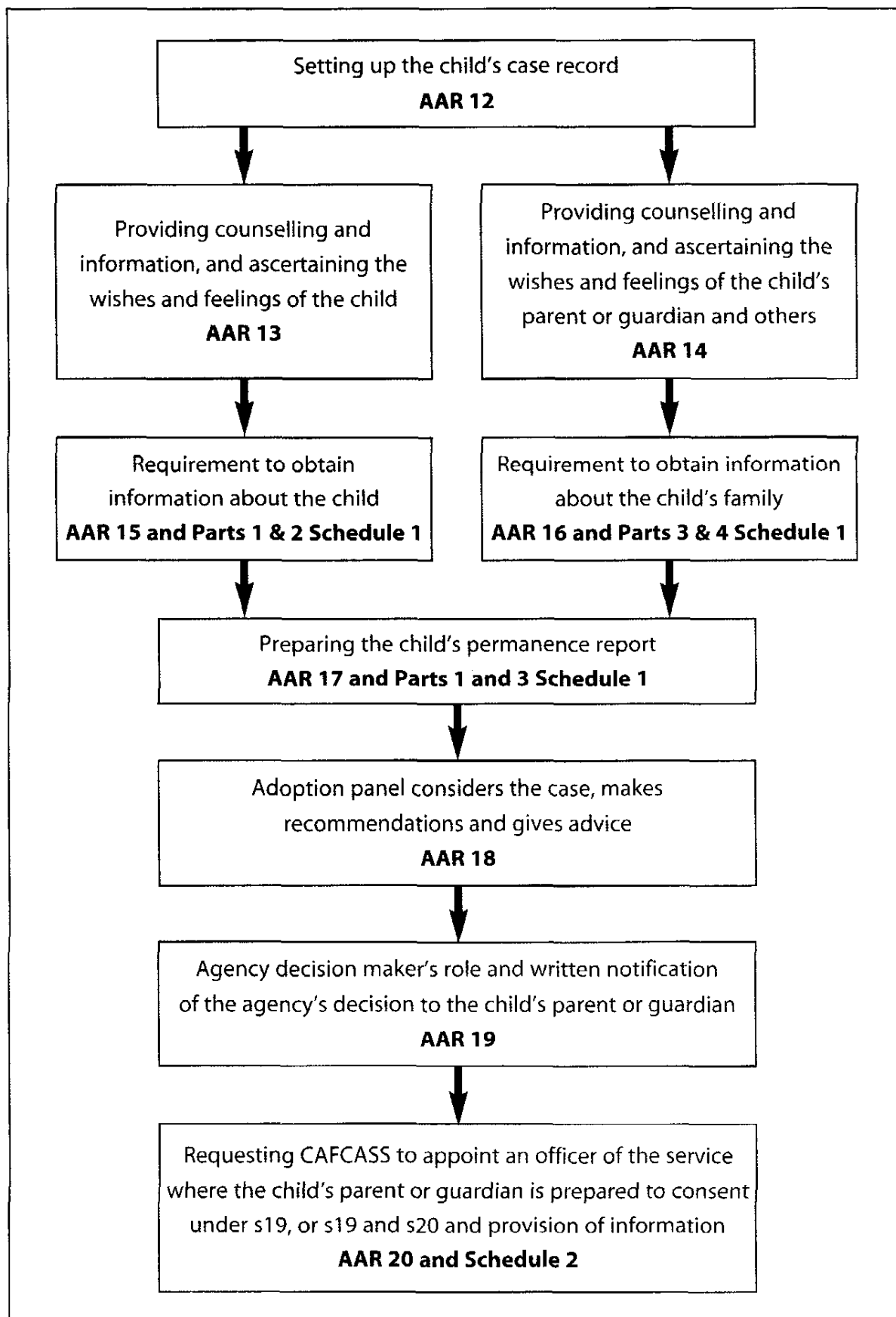
- since 30/4/04 – independent review mechanism (run by BAAF) of agency proposals not to approve or to terminate approval

FURTHER INFORMATION:

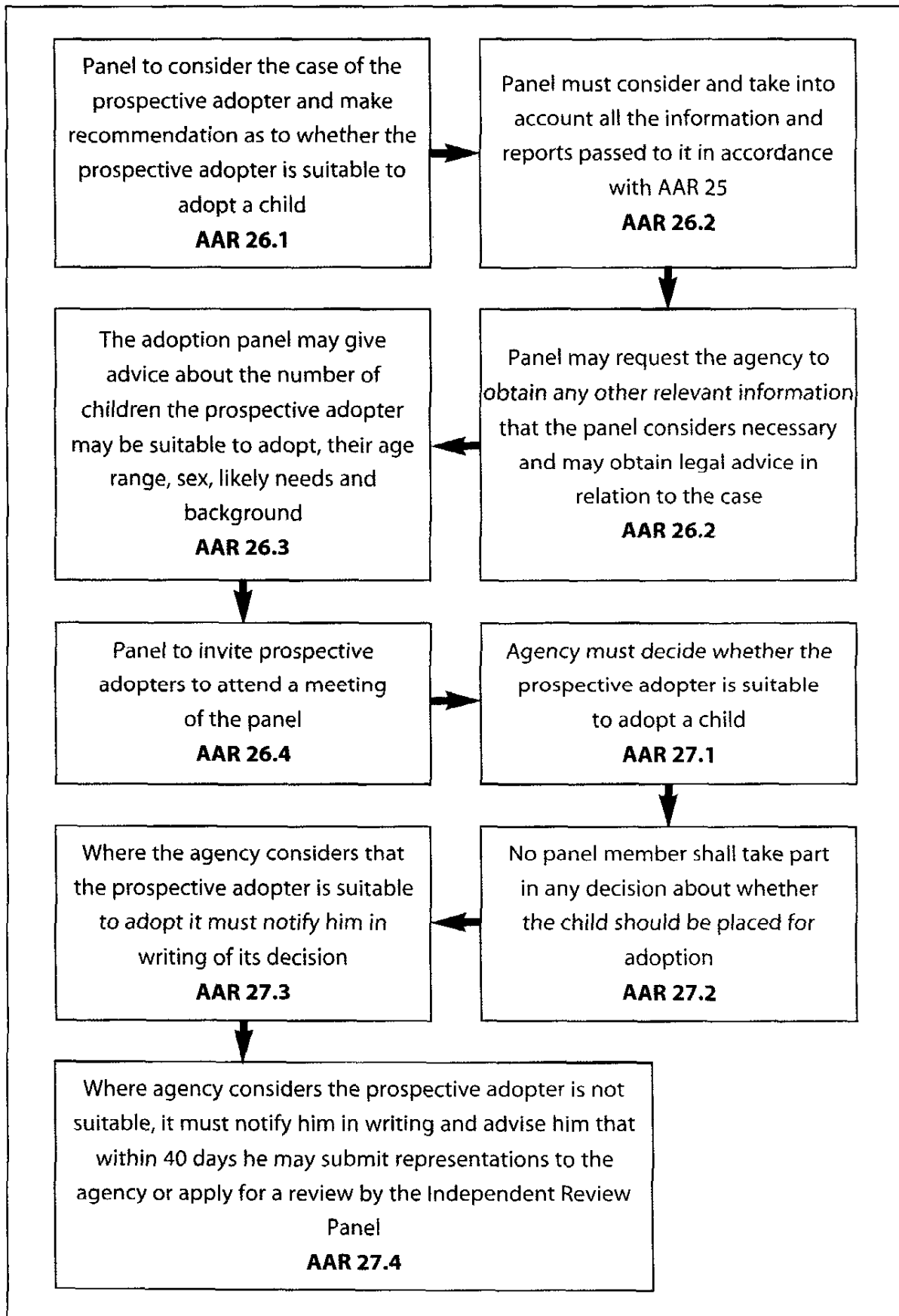
Please go the BAAF website for useful information about the ACA – www.baaf.org.uk

ADDENDUM 4

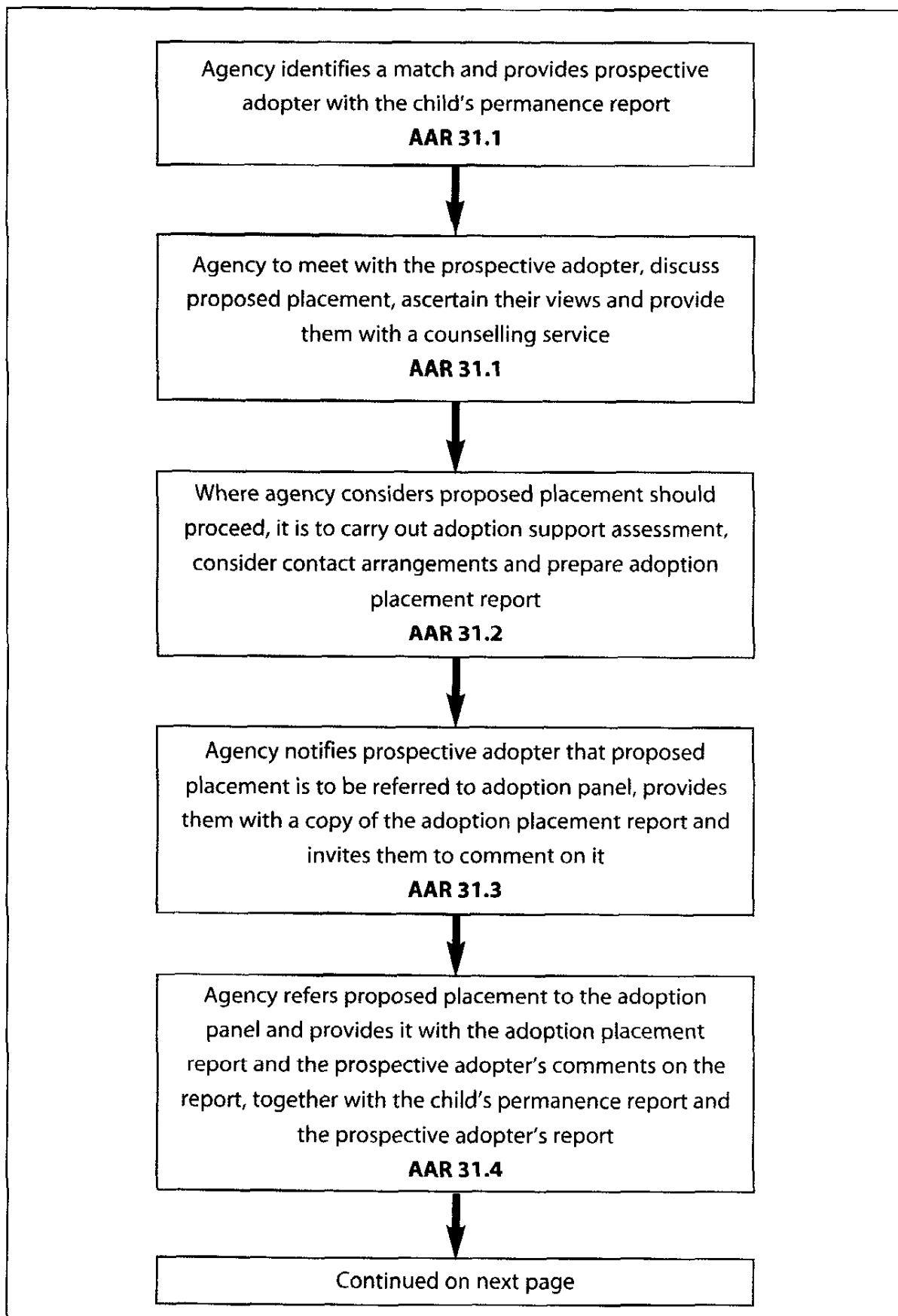
CONSIDERING AND DECIDING WHETHER A CHILD SHOULD BE PLACED FOR ADOPTION



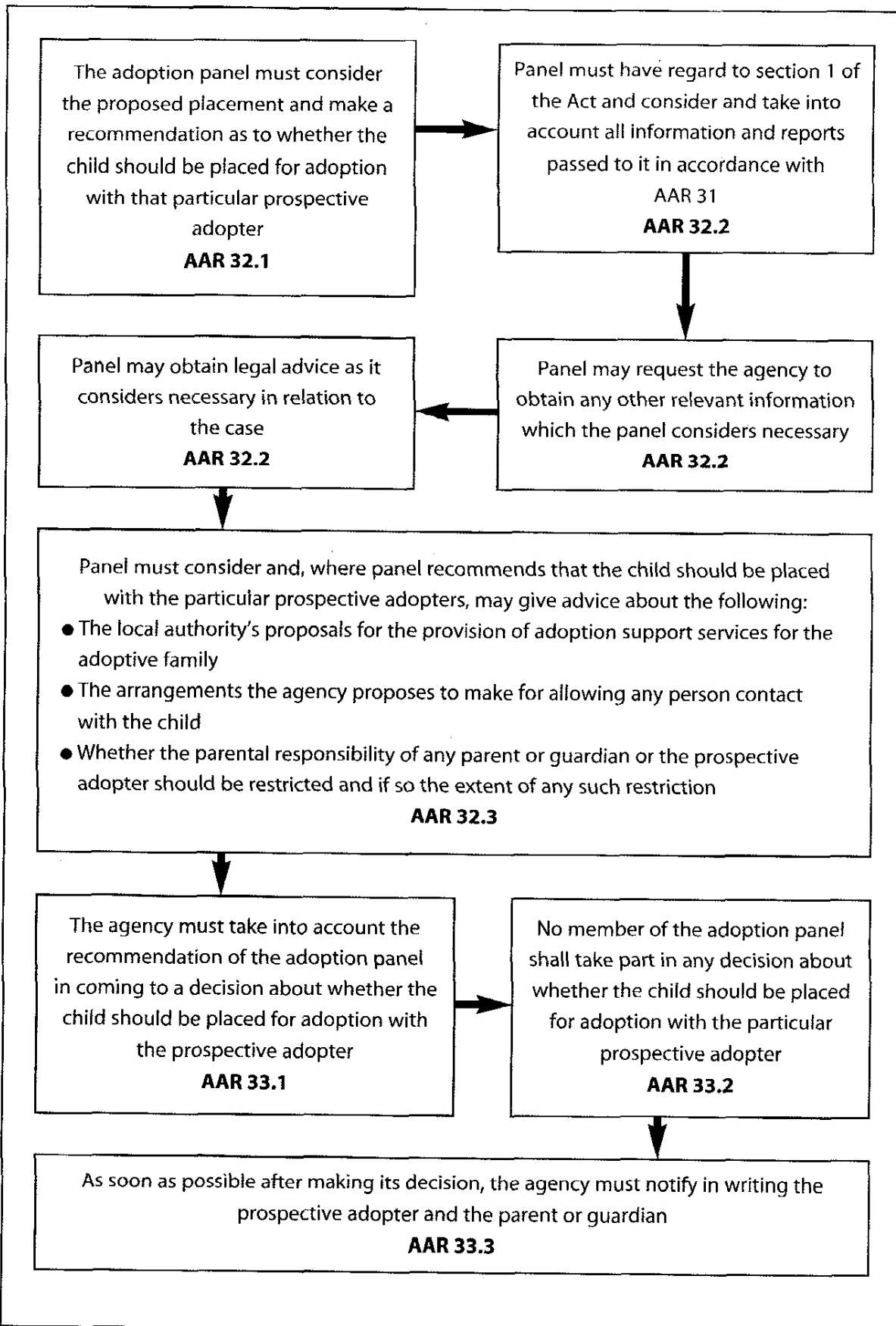
PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGENCY DECISION IN RESPECT OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS



MATCHING AND PROPOSING A PLACEMENT



PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGENCY DECISION ON PROPOSED PLACEMENT



ADDENDUM 5



Fostering and Adoption Services

Adopters Guide

Information for Leeds Adopters
on the Matching and Placement Process



INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to provide information for Leeds Social Services approved adopters on the Matching and Placement planning process. The following information outlines the 'journey' from your approval as adopters at a Leeds Adoption Panel, through the Matching and Placement process to achieving an Adoption Order. Each section describes key features of each part of the process.

The guide is in four main sections:

-
- 1 Adoption Panel and your Approval
 - 2 The Matching Process
 - 3 Placement Planning
 - 4 Placement to Adoption Hearing
-

You may already be familiar with some of this information via your preparation / assessment and discussion with your link worker. However, continued discussion and advice throughout the process with your link worker is very important – this guide provides information about typical stages of the process but aspects of these, including timescales, may differ depending on your particular match and placement.

1. ADOPTION PANEL / YOUR APPROVAL

The recommendation in your *Form F* (Home Study) report will have included details of the age range of child(ren) and number of children you and the agency agree you wish to adopt. You should have a copy of the Form F report via your link worker for your reference.

The Form F should now become available for consideration by social workers who seek adopters for the children they are responsible for. The waiting time for adopters before reaching discussion on possible matches can vary, mainly due to the availability of the age and number of the children you are approved for. Your link worker will keep you advised on this. Availability of your Form F report is coordinated via the Adoption Section and your link worker is kept informed of any interest by social workers in your details.

Other issues at this stage to remember are:

- * Adoption leave – it is advisable that you have looked into / planned your adoption leave. A leaflet PL 515 'Adoptive Parents / rights to leave and pay' should already have been made available to you. If not, please ask your link worker for a copy.
- * Adoption Register – we will forward details of your approval to the National Register. These details become active some months after approval to allow agency matching to be achieved.
- * Financial Assessment - you should have had a financial assessment of your circumstances completed during your assessment. This will be used during the next stage of the process once a match is agreed to assess if you are eligible for an adoption allowance.
- * Your Link Worker – your link worker will be working with you throughout the process and is available for advice.. All the key considerations and decisions you will make regarding your adoption commitment will involve your linkworker, so do make use of their guidance and support

2. THE MATCHING PROCESS

A number of key elements make up this part of the process and have to be agreed and achieved before a match with a child(ren) is agreed at Adoption Panel. A typical Matching process should work through 3 stages:

Stage 1

- a) Your Form F Report is made available to Social Workers responsible for available children within your approval, as outlined in Section 1 above.
 - b) Social Workers will respond to the Adoption Section, indicating an initial interest in your details. Your link worker will be informed of this interest, and initial discussion between the Social Worker and your link worker can then take place.
 - c) Your link worker will contact you and discuss with you general details of the child(ren) concerned. If you wish to find out more, this may involve a visit from your link worker to discuss the child's information in more detail.
 - d) If this meeting is positive and you and your link worker agree to pursue this further, there will need to be a meeting arranged between yourself, the social worker and your link worker.
-

Stage 2

- a) A meeting with the child's Social Worker and your link worker. This meeting is designed to explore the suitability of the possible match, allowing an opportunity for you to discuss the child in detail. At this stage you will have access to a range of information on the child, mainly via a *Form E* report. A *Form E* is the report that is presented to Adoption Panel recommending adoption for the child concerned.

Guidance on the Form E report:

The Form E contains a range of information on a child, including Health; Education; Birth Family History and Placement Needs for Adoption. Also included is a Child's Profile which will include information on the child's Personality; Behaviour; Abilities.

The Form E is central to your considerations of a possible match and should be discussed in conjunction with your link worker. In addition to the Form E, there may be other reports / information available eg: from current caring Foster Carer; Psychologist; Education; Medical.

If you wish to seek further advice or detail regarding the Form E report or additional Reports / information, please discuss this with the social worker and your link worker. We can arrange access to our Medical Advisor on health issues, or nursery / school on education issues, for example.

- b) Agreeing to a proposed Match. Having carefully looked at the child's details and discussed this in the meeting with the social worker and your link worker, you may all agree to this as a suitable match. The Social Worker and your link worker will then need to confirm this with their respective managers. At this stage, it should be possible to make available to you any child's photographs / video etc if they have not been already.
-

Stage 3

- a) Matching Report. A Matching Report is required by Adoption Panel to formally agree any proposed match. This will be completed by your link worker and the child's social worker and details the suitability of the proposed match. Your link worker will discuss the report with you before it is forwarded for Panel consideration. The report will also detail any requirements that have been agreed for post placement support via an adoption support assessment.
 - b) Approving the Match at Adoption Panel. The matching report is presented to a Panel by your link worker and the child's social worker. They will discuss the range of suitability issues and why the proposed match is considered positive and appropriate. The Panel recommendation to approve a match goes to the Agency Decision Maker. This can take a few days for a formal decision to be made.
-

Some Questions and Answers about Matching:

How many Form E's can I expect to be made available to consider?

It is unlikely that you will be expected to consider more than 3 Form E's at any one time. This will also depend on the availability of children suitable for your approval. We normally ask you to consider one set of child's details at a time.

What if I don't want to pursue a match?

Issues of unsuitability regarding any match will be discussed at the earliest stage of the process. You should discuss any concerns with your link worker. We will not pursue a proposed match unless everyone, most importantly yourselves, is happy to proceed. If you do not proceed, we will then consider other available children with you.

What happens if the Social Worker does not want to pursue a match?

If the social worker decides after meeting you that he/she does not want to proceed, you will be informed at the earliest opportunity. The Social Worker will also discuss this with your link worker. Very occasionally, a Social Worker will meet 2 to 3 adopters at the same time in order to make the right choice. If this is the case, you will be informed at the outset.

What happens if Adoption Panel are not happy with a proposed match?

The matching report should be a considered proposal, detailing all suitability issues. However, if Panel are unable to recommend, the reasons why will be made available via your link worker and discussed with you. Some matches can be complex and require further clarification by Panel before proceeding.

What happens if I / we are not successfully matched ?

If you have not had the opportunity to consider suitable matches within 3 months of your approval, it may be that you wish to consider your details being made available via the National Adoption Register or via the Regional Consortium of Adoption Agencies. There may be a range of reasons why no suitable match has arisen – your link worker will be in regular contact to discuss any issues with you. After a certain period of time, it may be appropriate to review your approval to assist with matching possibilities but the timescale before this is proposed needs to be discussed with your link worker.

If I need more information, what should I do?

If you are unsure about a child's information, or require clarification on any information given to you, please discuss this with your link worker. This is particularly important if you need guidance on a child's health / development prognosis for example – we can arrange for you to discuss this with a Medical Advisor. If in doubt, you should request more information - we will do our utmost to help you.

3. PLACEMENT PLANNING

Once the proposed Match has been agreed by the Agency decision maker, the process moves to planning the child's placement with you. You may have had some preliminary discussion with your link worker about placement planning and already had some discussion with the child's social worker and current foster carer. At this stage however, the child, if old enough, will not have been made aware of the match – this is usually best left until all the placement planning arrangements have been agreed.

The Placement Planning process should typically include the following steps:

- a) **Arranging the Placement Planning Meeting.** Following the agreed match from the Agency decision maker, your link worker will discuss with you, the child's social worker and the foster carer for the child, possible dates / times for a *Planning Meeting*. This is usually arranged as soon as is convenient to all parties to avoid unnecessary delay.
- b) **The Placement Planning Meeting.** This meeting needs to discuss and agree a range of matters, including a provisional start of placement date – when the child should be placed with you. The meeting often takes place at the foster carers home, with the first opportunity for you to meet the child taking place at or directly after this meeting. This will depend on the child's age and you will have discussed this before the meeting with your link worker.

Involved in the Planning Meeting will be:

- * the prospective adopters
- * your link worker (who normally acts as chair for the meeting)
- * the child's social worker
- * the child's foster carer(s). Additionally, there may be have been agreement for others to be involved in the meeting eg a Social Work Manager. If so, this should have been discussed with you beforehand.

The meeting normally follows a standardised format, and needs to record agreements and decisions including:

- * Period of Introductions to the child for the adopters
- * provisional start of placement date
- * any contact issues for the child
- * any other issues for the child that need addressing
- * financial support, including adopters eligibility for adoption allowance
- * adoption support

You will sign and in due course receive, a written copy of the *Placement Planning Agreement*. At the meeting however, you will need to record and retain the details of the Introduction period - introductions can often start directly after the meeting.

Following this meeting, we are also able to confirm for your employer, adoption placement details for adoption leave purposes. Your link worker will arrange for a form to be signed and returned to you.

c) Introductions

The timescale needed for introducing you to the child and the nature and type of introductions will have been discussed and agreed at the Placement Planning Meeting.

There are no hard and fast 'procedures' about introductions, rather, good practice which recognises a range of different factors, including: child's age; circumstances of foster carer; availability of all parties etc. Each introduction plan will be agreed to suit the needs of the child and the needs of the placement.

However, there is a fairly common approach to introductions which incorporate the following key factors:

-
- * At the start of the introduction period, you will build up contact by visiting the child at the foster carers home, spending increasingly longer periods with the child. This period is also very important in building a relationship with the child's foster carer(s).*
 - * Introductions will normally increase in frequency and time spent with the child, at the foster carers and away from the carer as the process continues.*
 - * The introduction period will include opportunities for all parties to discuss progress. Often there will have been a mid – period introductions 'review' arranged at the planning meeting to allow for this.*
 - * The latter part of the introduction period, particularly for older children, provides opportunities for a child spending longer periods with you, including visiting your home.*
 - * The period of introductions should work towards the agreed provisional placement start date as agreed at the placement planning meeting. This can change however, if all parties agree – eg. moving start of placement forward if the process is going very well and this is in the child's best interests. If there are difficulties however, then there will need to be a meeting involving all parties to look at the issues and review progress.*
 - * If the process is going well, 2 – 3 weeks of introductions for most children is normally sufficient to achieve an agreed start of placement with you*
 - * The introductions period should be characterised by all parties being in regular contact. Your contact with your link worker is very important – if you have any issues you need to discuss, you need to let your link worker know as soon as possible. Open communication assists with successful introductions.*
 - * Finally, the introductions period can certainly be quite intensive and you will need to be realistic about the practicalities of achieving successful introductions. This should have been discussed at the planning meeting to allow for realistic expectations about your availability and how the introductions are structured.*
-

4 PLACEMENT TOWARDS ADOPTION ORDER

Having achieved the child's placement with you, we still need to work together towards ensuring progress towards the Adoption Hearing where you finally legally adopt.

This period includes placement visiting and meeting requirements which will include:

- ^ a 'Post Placement' Meeting, held at your home, 28 days after the start of placement. This meeting will involve: adopters, the child's social worker, your link worker. The meeting is normally chaired by your link worker, but can sometimes be chaired by a social work Team Manager. The meeting is held to review the initial stages of the placement and confirm progress.*

* Visits from the child's Social Worker. The child's social worker is expected to visit you and the child on a regular basis. Visiting frequency will normally have been discussed at the placement planning meeting but will again be discussed and agreed at this meeting.

* Visits from your link worker. These will be agreed to take place on a regular basis to ensure guidance and support for you. You may find that on occasions, your link worker and the social worker may arrange to visit you together.

* A Child Care Review. This is a meeting which is normally held up to six months into the placement and involves the social worker, you, the child (if age appropriate), your link worker and is chaired by an independent reviewing officer. This meeting will review the progress of the placement and allow everybody opportunities to make a contribution.

Timescales and Steps towards the Adoption Hearing

The above visiting and meeting requirements can continue for some months before you can formally apply for an Adoption Hearing. Agreeing to apply for the Adoption Hearing needs to take place between the Department and you and follows a period of time which allows sufficient confirmation of progress.

For very young children, including babies, this will not usually take long to achieve, so some adopters will find they can apply for a Hearing earlier in the process. Older children at / above school age may require a longer period to confirm progress. The timescales involved will be assessed and discussed with you throughout this period. The agreement to apply for the Hearing will take place at an appropriate meeting. Hearing application court fees can be reimbursed by the Department – for details, please discuss with your link worker.

The application for the Hearing is made by you and you will be informed of a date by the Court. Application to Adoption Hearing timescales can vary, often due to available Court time. We are experiencing improvements however in waiting times for Hearings – your link worker will be able to give you more information and guidance on this at the time.

The Adoption Hearing will consider a report, prepared by the social worker, confirming the progress of the placement and supporting your application to adopt.

Adoption Hearings normally take place at Leeds Magistrates Court and are arranged to be relaxed, informal and family friendly. The Court wants to provide an appropriate setting for the celebration of your legal adoption, involving you, your child and the staff who have worked with you throughout the process.

Useful Contact Details

**Leeds City Council / Department of Social Services
Adoption and Fostering, Merrion House, Merrion Centre,
Leeds LS2 8QB**



email: ss.fostering.and.adoption@leeds.gov.uk

Adoption Section: 0113 2474747

Team Managers / Adoption and Permanency 0113 2474747

Resource Manager / Children 0113 2243592

Adoption Support Team 0113 2243756



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ADDENDUM 6

Special Guardianship Orders

Amendment to the Children Act
1989.

What is a Special Guardianship Order?

- A Special Guardianship order appoints one or more people to be a child's Special Guardian.
- A Special Guardian is granted 'Parental Responsibility' for the child. The birth parent's legal link to the child remains but their parental responsibility is limited as outlined below.
- Special Guardians (SGs) are therefore responsible for all aspects of caring for the child and are able to make almost all of the major decisions about their upbringing – e.g. Where the child lives or goes to school, authorising medical treatment.

- There are exceptions to the decisions they can make, for instance an SG cannot change the child's surname or take them out of the country for longer than 3 months without the leave of the court or the consent of the parents. The birth parents also retain the right to consent or not consent to the child being adopted.
- There is a range of help and support available for Special Guardians, including financial support.

Who Can Apply?

- Any guardian of the child
- Anyone with whom the child has lived for 3 out of the last 5 years
- Anyone who holds a Residence Order
- A local authority foster carer with whom the child has lived for one year unless the department supports the application prior to a year
- Anyone who has the consent of all those with PR
- Any person, including the child, who has the leave of the court to apply
- Applicants must be aged 18 or over

Applications

- Non-Agency applications:
these relate to applications where the LA have had no involvement in placing the child.
- Agency applications:
Where a child is looked after by the LA or an application is supported by the LA during proceedings.

Non Agency Applications

- Social workers from the area will undertake these assessments.
- The completion of a Schedule 21 report will be required.
- All non-agency applicants are entitled to advice and assistance from the department. However they will not be entitled to a support package, including financial support.

Agency Applications

- Where children are settled in their placement with foster carers or FNCs the department encourages them to look at options for permanency such as Adoption, Residence Order or Special Guardianship.
- The Department has now agreed to financially support carers for any of the above orders on an equal basis.

Agency Application Process

- Two gateways:
 - Where the child is in proceedings the social worker undertakes the court report.
 - Where a child is placed with foster carers or FNCs a fostering and adoption officer will prepare the report in conjunction with the child's social worker.

Procedures for Agency Applications

- Referral during care proceedings:
 - If a report is requested by the court the Team Manager Children should contact Team Manager Adoption and Permanence with basic details.
 - Information and guidance will then be sent to the TMC for allocation to the child's social worker.

Referral following a review:

- a formal referral for a SGO can only be made following a recommendation made at a LAC review.
- the CSM must agree the financial support prior to any assessment taking place. A notice of the proposal for financial support should be sent to the carer.
- The prospective Special Guardian needs to formally notify the Team manager Adoption and Permanency of their intention.

Social Work Tasks

- To counsel, advise and ascertain views of applicants, birth parents and children regarding the implications of SGOs.
- To complete the Schedule 21 court report:
 - Arrange CRB and LA checks.
 - Undertake 3 references – not more than one family member.
 - Arrange health checks.
 - To complete an assessment of support needs and include a summary of this in the report for court.

Support for Special Guardians

Using Appendix 3 in the procedures for SGOs the social worker should complete an assessment of the prospective Special Guardian's needs for support services.

under Special Guardianship Regulations the following prescribed services should be available. This includes:

- telephone helpline
- therapeutic services
- training
- respite care
- mediation
- financial support
- groups
- support for contact

Financial Support

For ongoing financial support the child needs to fit one of the eligibility criteria as set out in the Decision Sheets for Ongoing Payments.

Once agreed carers will continue to get paid at their current rate including holiday, birthday and Christmas allowances. These will not be means tested. The allowance will be paid minus child benefit and child tax credit.

If the carer is getting an enhancement or a fee this will continue.

Payments will continue until the child reaches 18 or leaves home before this.

Entitlement to Leaving Care Services

- Children who were looked after immediately before the making of an SGO qualify for advice and assistance under the Children (Leaving Care) Act between the ages of 16 and 20.
- All children will be entitled to a request for leaving care services at the appropriate age. This will be undertaken by Pathway Planning.

Ongoing Payments post 18

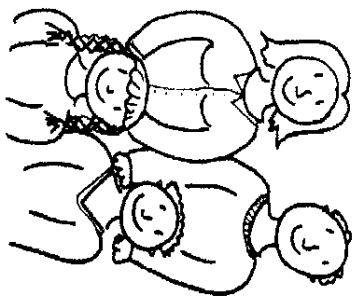
- For those young people in full time education or training the carer can continue to receive financial support until the course is completed.

Post Order Support

- Requests for support post order will initially come to the specialist worker for SGOs via the telephone advice line.
- An assessment of support needs may be undertaken or the SG may be sign-posted to other services where appropriate.
- Issues of financial support can be considered post order.

Considering A Residence Order

A guide for carers



ADDENDUM 7

Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

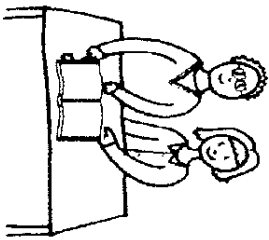
August 2005

● Introduction

Some children in care are looked after by members of their family (Known as family network carers or kinship carers) who are approved by the Social Services Department as foster carers.

Other children live with foster carers who are not related but have lived there for some time and formed a strong attachment.

Where children are settled in their placements, the Department encourages carers to apply for a Residence Order.



A Residence Order is an order made by the Court that decides who a child or young person should live with. If a person applies for and is granted a Residence Order the order has the effect of granting "parental responsibility" on them i.e. They can make day to day decisions about the child as if they were his or her parent.

Many foster carers and family network carers want to apply for Residence Orders. There are a number of reasons why:

- The responsibility for the child is transferred from the social worker to the carer, giving them more freedom and making family life more like "normal" families.
- All the additional duties of fostering a child are removed e.g. attending review meetings, form filling, regular social work visits, annual health needs assessments (medicals).
- It gives a message to the child that the carer is committed to them and wants them to stay in the family long-term

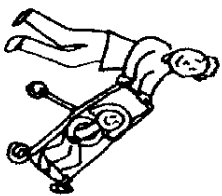
Some carers are reluctant to apply for a Residence Order because :

- They believe that once the Care Order is discharged, the Social Services Department will no longer support them.
- They believe they will be financially disadvantaged.
- They consider it is a greater commitment than fostering.

This leaflet sets out to explain what carers considering a Residence Order can expect from the Department in terms of financial and non-financial support.

● Why apply for a residence order?

Research shows that the most stable and beneficial placements for looked after children are with long-term carers. Where children know that their carers are committed to bringing them up until adulthood, they can then put down roots and begin to get on with their lives. This generally results in better educational, health and social outcomes for children.



● Who can apply for a residence Order?

The Social Service Department cannot apply for a Residence Order, but it can support and encourage other people to do so where it is better for the child to be on a Residence Order than a care order.

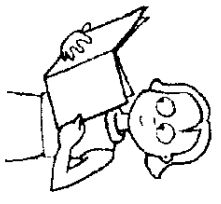
● Types of Financial Support available

There are three types of financial support that the Social Services Department can provide for carers thinking of applying for a Residence Order.

1. **Assistance with legal costs when someone is applying to court for a residence order**
2. **Specific and/or time limited assistance in order to get a placement up and running.**
3. **Ongoing financial support to carers on a set-payment basis.**

Financial support will be paid to carers taking out a Residence Order provided this is in accordance with an agreed plan (agreed at a formal review) and Social Services is supporting the carers application.

1. **Assistance with legal costs when someone is applying to court for a residence order**

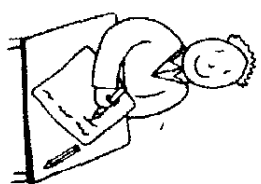


Where a carer wishes to apply for a Residence Order, they will need to identify a solicitor who can make the application on their behalf. It may be that some carers will be entitled to legal aid in order to fund their application, so they will not need to pay legal costs.

If carers are not entitled to legal aid, the Social Services Department will contribute to the legal costs if:

- The child in question is subject to a Care Order
- The application for a Residence Order is part of the Care Plan agreed at a Review.

● Cases where a child is not subject to a Care Order



There are some circumstances where a child is placed with a relative as an alternative to care proceedings and the child is not subject to a care order. Carers in such circumstances may wish to apply for a Residence Order to stabilise the child's situation. In these circumstances Social Services will pay the legal costs provided:

- The carer has been refused legal aid to fund their application
- There would otherwise be clear grounds for a Care Order
- The relative's application is supported by the Department and is part of an agreed plan made at a Child Protection / Child and Family Support / Looked After Child Review meeting.

2. Specific and/or time limited assistance in order to get a placement up and running.

This is dependent on circumstances of the carer and what they need to make a Residence Order viable. This type of financial assistance is unlikely to last more than a few weeks as ongoing costs will be met from the weekly payment (see below)

3. Ongoing financial support to carers on a set-payment basis.

Where carers are applying for a Residence Order as an alternative to a child staying on a Care Order, Social Services has made a commitment that carers should not be financially worse off by obtaining a Residence Order.

● Example

The Social Services Department will pay Residence Order carers a weekly amount that means they receive the same as if they had continued fostering. This is how it works:

In each circumstance the rate paid to residence order carers will be the Weekly Boarding Out rate minus the Child Benefit amount. This is because once a Residence Order is made, carers are entitled to claim Child Benefit themselves.

For an 11 year old child the weekly boarding out rate for fostering is £129.30 (2005/6 rate)

Once a Residence Order is made, the carer is entitled to receive child benefit for this child (£17.00 per week if child is only or oldest child in the family, £11.40 if there are older children)

The weekly payment to the carer would therefore be (129.30 -11.40 = 117.90)

This payment is to help with the day-to-day costs of feeding, clothing and entertaining a child of that age.

The current weekly Boarding Out rates are set out below:

These are the rates payable at April 2005 and will increase with inflation on a yearly basis:

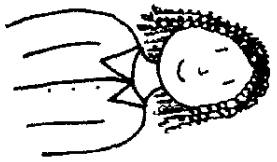
Age of Child	Weekly Boarding Out rate
0 – 4	£ 91.20
5 – 10	£103.85
11 -12	£129.30
13 – 15	£129.30
16+	£163.40

In addition to the weekly payment, residence order carers will also be paid, automatically, allowances for Birthday , Christmas and Summer Holidays. The rates are:

Birthday – additional 1 weeks payment

Christmas – additional 1 weeks payment

Summer Holiday - additional 2 weeks payment



For the 11 year old child above, whose birthday was in March, and where there is at least one older child in the family the carer would receive a weekly payment of £117.90 from Social Services.

In addition the carer would be paid the following grant payments each year:

March	£ 129.30 birthday grant
July	£ 258.60 summer holiday grant
December	£ 129.30 Christmas grant
Total	= £ 517.20 per year in additional grants.

Grants are paid automatically – carers will not have to claim them.

● **Review of Payments**

Ongoing payments to carers with Residence Orders will be reviewed annually. This review will check that circumstances remain the same.

● **Fee Paid Carers**

Social services will ensure that fee paid carers receive similar financial arrangements once a residence order is taken. Carers should ask the Social worker for details.

● **Payments after age 16.**

A Residence Order lasts until a child's 16th birthday. Payments will normally cease when the child reaches the age of 16 or if the order is discharged. **However** the Department has agreed to financially support carers in certain circumstances, for example if a young person is still in full time education at school or college.

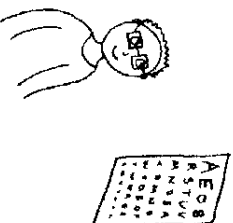
The Social Services Department can make discretionary payments to carers up to the young person's 18th birthday. Such arrangements will be approved on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the young persons and their carers particular circumstances.

● **Impact of Residence Order on other benefits**

Carers receiving Residence Order payments will still be entitled to apply for Pension Credit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.

● **Children with additional needs**

Where a carer is looking after a child with additional needs because of a disability or chronic health condition, they will be entitled to claim Disability Living Allowance and/or Mobility allowance in the same way as any parent. This will not affect the weekly allowance paid to the carer by the Social Services Department.



● Non-financial assistance and support

Social Services acknowledges that it is a big step for a carer to take out a residence order, and that continued social services help and support may be needed..



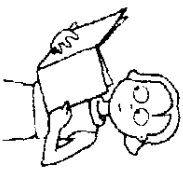
The social worker, in partnership with the carers and the child, will identify whether there is a need for continued social work support. If so, a Child and Family Support Plan may be agreed on. This could, for example, help with ongoing contact arrangements.

If future contact with birth parents is not straight forward an agreement could be made that the social worker will stay involved to help with this

● Next Steps

If, having read this leaflet you are interested in applying for a Residence Order, you should:

Talk to the social worker responsible for the children) concerned.



A discussion then needs to take place at the next Looked After Child Review and the agreed plan to apply for a Residence Order included in the child's Care Plan.

The social worker will then advise you of the next steps.

Finally, it is a big step to take on the care of someone else's child. If you decide to do this, the Social Services Department accepts that we have a role to play in supporting you in making a long-term commitment to the child or children in question. We take our responsibility to you very seriously.

If you feel at any point now or in the future that you are not getting the support you need, please get in touch with us, either through your social worker or their Team Manager.

If you want to complain about a poor service contact Complaints Section, details below:

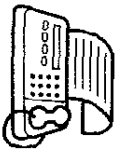


Complaints Manager,
Social Service Department,
110 Merrion Centre,
Leeds LS2 8QB

Tel: (0113) 2478627



Fax: (0113) 2477228



This booklet can be obtained in other languages, large
print and audio tape versions. Please ask the agent

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Originator: Kate Arscott

Tel: 247 4189

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 7 September 2006

Subject: Adoption in Leeds – Inquiry Session Two

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

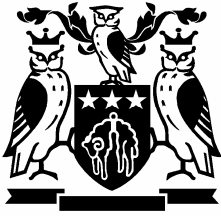
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the board's first meeting in June, members agreed to carry out an inquiry into adoption in Leeds as one of their major pieces of work this year.
- 1.2 The board appointed a small working group to draft terms of reference for the inquiry which were agreed at the board's July meeting.
- 1.3 The first and second formal sessions of the inquiry were scheduled for this meeting. The second session focuses on providing specific information about the adoption service in Leeds. Attached at Appendix 1 is a report which outlines the information requested from the Social Services department for this session
- 1.4 In addition, background information on the work of the regional consortium is provided at Appendix 2.
- 1.5 Social Services staff involved in adoption and post adoption support will be at the meeting to present the information and respond to members' questions and comments. In addition, the regional consortium's administrator will be in attendance to discuss the role it plays in the adoption process.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The board is requested to consider the issues raised by the second session of this inquiry.

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**Report of the Chief Social Services Officer
Report to Scrutiny Board**

Date: 7/9/06 Session two

Subject: Inquiry into Adoption Services in Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

- Ethnic minorities
- Women
- Disabled people
- Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. This report is to the Scrutiny Board group which is looking into adoption services in Leeds and provides information for session two of the group which is meeting on 7th September as addressed in the terms of reference (paragraph 5.2) of the Scrutiny Board inquiry.

2. Background

2.1 The adoption services in Leeds are provided by the Social Services and National Children's Homes (NCH) and Barnardo's . Only Social Services are legally able to provide the full range of services to adopters and children. NCH and Barnardo's provide services to adopters by assessing them and supporting them. They then sell the adoptive placements to Social Services anywhere in the country. Private agencies are not allowed under current law.

2.2 The adoption services fit within the Children's strategy for Leeds and conform to the "Every Child Matters" agenda and the Adoption Implementation Plan is attached as an addendum. (addendum 1)

3. Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Scrutiny Board inquiry on adoption on 7th September 2006 (session 2)

Main Issues

4. Profile of prospective adopters and adoptees in Leeds

4.1 The Social Services registers a varying number of adopters each year and equally accepts a varying number of children for adoption. The historical record is attached as an addendum. There has been a decrease in the number of people being approved as adopters in recent years but the numbers are now increasing again. (addendum 2).

4.2 There has been a consequent decline in the number of adoptions (78 in 2003/4, 81 in 04/05 and 53 in 05/06). In this current year (06/07) so far 13 children have been adopted. A new factor is the new Guardianship Orders (which is explained in addendum 6 to the previous report for session one), of which there were two last year but seven so far this year. DfES has anticipated this by announcing that they will assess performance of Social Services Departments in this area by adding the number of adoptions to the number of special guardianship orders. By this standard we are on course for a significant improvement in our performance.

4.3 For information an anonymised list of approved adopters waiting for a match and a similar list of children are attached as addenda. (addendum 3 and addendum 4)

5. The funding of the adoption service

The budget for this financial year is attached as an addendum (addendum 5) and is hopefully self explanatory. The inter agency budget is set aside to buy placements from other agencies, usually the voluntary agencies mentioned above.

The need to pay independent Chairs for the adoption panels has required us to increase the budget for the panels.

6. Underlying reasons for current performance and measures being taken to improve.

There are a number of reasons why the number of adoptions has reduced in the last two years:

- The effect of decisions taken at one point in time on policy or practice take a year or two to be felt because of the length of time between people registering an interest as an adopter and being approved and matched with a child. The current situation has probably arisen from a decision taken two years ago to prioritise long term fostering applications, the lack of which was causing a bottleneck in the short term fostering placements.

At that time the teams on the section did both fostering and adoption and prioritizing in one part of the work would cause a drop in figures in another. I have since restructured the section into fostering teams and adoption teams so that this cannot happen again.

- The types of children needing adoption have changed so that more children with complex needs, in terms of behaviour, age and cultural heritage (particularly mixed

heritage children) are needing adoption but it takes longer to find, assess and match them with adopters. The adoptive parents also wait longer (up to two years) before applying for adoption orders because they want to be sure that their relationship with the child has stabilized and any major problems have been sorted out and that they can cope in the future.

- A shortage of fieldworkers two years ago did mean that adoption was not prioritized and led to considerable delay in report writing and responding to potential matches. This situation has now improved.
- The introduction of the requirement to give adoptive applicants the opportunity to attend their adoption panel has slowed down the panel approval process and a third adoption panel is needed but we have not yet been able to achieve this because of the need to have a third medical adviser. Negotiations with the Health Authority to resolve this are under way.
- Several inspection reports have commented that the section is understaffed for the size of its task. The opportunity of a central government ring fenced grant was taken to create an adoption support team and to create two extra mainstream posts last year. It is expected that the effect of this will not be felt till later this year as it has taken considerable time to fill these posts.

We have now addressed the causes of the reduction in the number of approvals and consequent adoptions and the numbers of approved adopters are now rising again.

7. The work of the regional consortium

This has been addressed in the previous session and written information supplied with the report for that session. Our representative on that consortium will be attending this session and can answer any queries.

Membership of the consortium has given us access to a wider range of potential placements for adoption.

8. The work of the post adoption support service

This department has led in this area of work and we have had a specialist post for it for some years. The ring fenced grant three years ago allowed us to create a team of workers to develop this work. Information on the service is attached as an addendum (addendum 8) and the team manager of this team will attend this session.

It is planned that this new service will enable us to:

- provide support to adopters now experiencing difficulties with children they may have adopted some years ago. It is now recognized that adopting children who are no longer babies presents extra challenges to parents and that some will need dedicated support. This includes the other children of adopters and we offer support to them as well.

- The awareness that we can offer support at any time in the future will encourage some people to consider adopting older children and children who may present some challenges.
- Give advice and support to other professionals who may be supporting adopted children and their parents in difficulty.

We hope this will increase the number of children adopted in the long term, especially those hitherto considered unadoptable. This will not produce a large number of adoptions but will be a significant improvement of service to children who might otherwise grow up in care.

The three year plan for this service is attached as an addendum (addendum 9).

9. Recommendation

Members of the Scrutiny Board Inquiry into adoption are asked to note the information presented in this report and its appendices to the second session of 7th September 2006.



Leeds Social Services

Adoption Implementation Plan 2006-2007

Author: Sarah Johal/Val Hales

Date: 1 April 2006

Date Agreed: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Review Date: September 2006

Adoption Implementation Plan:

Introduction:

The Government's modernisation agenda has imposed stringent requirements upon local authorities regarding the way its services are planned, provided and monitored. Planning is the cornerstone of the performance management framework and a key process in ensuring we effectively meet the needs of our service users and provide high quality services. Social Services Planning Framework seeks to focus the work of the Department through the development of two plans:

- Level I – Strategic Plan;
- Level II – Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan:

Planning is often criticised for being distant from 'frontline reality'. The Implementation Plan is designed to be an 'active document' that details local actions for the achievement of key priorities. It underpins the Strategic Plans supporting the achievement of the Departments 'Shared Purpose' and Council Plan. The 'Implementation Plan' is a combination of Strategic and Local Service Priorities. Strategic priorities are the tasks that have been fed into the Implementation Plan from the Strategic Plan. Service Priorities are those which are local to each individual Service Area fed into the Implementation Plan and based upon: consultation; research; identified development opportunities undertaken by individual teams.

Area Analysis:

Services Provided:

The Adoption Service provides a recruitment , assessment, registration , support (Including post adoption),matching and training service to adopters and people who have been adopted.

It operates two adoption panels and a third is being considered.

It provides a home assessment service for people wising to adopt from abroad. A fee is charged for this service.

The section works in co-operation with the Family Placement service to provide adoptive placements for children with disabilities.

Structure:

The Chief Officer for children's services, Edwina Harrison is the ASSA and Departmental decision maker for the adoption panels.

The adoption section is currently located in the adoption and fostering section of the Children's Resources section.

Rodger Walker is the registered Manager of the Adoption service.

Two Team Managers, Val Hales and Sarah Johal manage the Adoption teams, which are divided up on a geographical basis.

Ownership:

This Implementation Plan must be owned by all staff within the Adoption Section. The Implementation Plan will be widely available to all staff and should link to the staff appraisal system where appropriate.

Documentation Management:

The Area Implementation Plan will be managed and updated by the Adoption Management Team.

Key Theme 1 : Be Healthy

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
1. Develop and implement an 'Adoption Strategy' in-line with performance targets and new adoption standards to improve speed and number of adoptions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase output of approvals to 90. Prepare annual adoption training preparation plan. Second time adopters to access NCH training. Implement the post adoption action plan 	Supervision and monitoring of the output of the staff concerned against set targets. Reviewed at ½ year stage by Team Managers Adoption Support Team Meetings and their report to the Resource Team Manager.	March 07	Team Managers	£101,045	£1,127 per assessment x 90 = £101,045.	"
					£5,000	12 preparation courses.	
			June 2007	Adoption Support Manager	£77,086		
1.1 Develop placement for children with uncertain development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider concurrent planning Info. sheet for adopters re: uncertain development Closer liaison /planning with family placement Devise recruitment plan for this group of children 	C&F + Annual Report.	January 2007	Margaret Orchard & Stuart Wilson & Team Managers		To be costed 06 – 07.	
1.2 Further develop placement choice for BME children through the use of 2 specialist posts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop family finding eg brochure info on specific children (e.g.BME), To assess 14 (15% of 90 assessments) adopters for BME children 	Children & Families mtgs. Annual Report	June 2006	A&P Team	"		
		C & F's and annual report	January 2007	Management Team			

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
1.3. Creation of a third adoption panel to improve throughput.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion with health re: funding of medical advisor 	F&A Management Team and Adoption Panels.		Head of Children's Services	£6,440	Additional funding required for medical advisor. Business case to be put to Health.	

Key Theme 2 : Stay Safe

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Ensure that all staff receive training and refresher training in Child Protection as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Managers to check staff training portfolios 	Supervision and appraisal.	On-going	Team Managers			
Post approval for training for adopters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCH course – Caring for SA Children. Parenting strategies. Piece of Cake. 	Collation of attendance figures.		Team Manager Adoptions	Adoption support grant.		
Develop safe care planning with adopters	Safe care plan to be included in Form F assessment to panel	Adoption Panel		Panel members & agency advisor to panel			

Key Theme 3 : Enjoy and Achieve

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Further develop post-adoption support and Special Guardianship support.	<p>Implement post adoption support action plan.</p> <p>Construct SGO Plan once initial proposals agreed.To consult with fostering and adoption support for resource sharing</p>	<p>Six monthly development day with team.</p> <p>6 monthly reviews</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>May 06</p>	<p>Head of Children's Resources</p> <p>Louise Barnett/Sarah Johal</p>	Funded through adoption support grant		
Develop educational support for adopted child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See A S Plan. • Liaison with Education co-ordinator for LAC 	Annual Review	On-going	Team Manager adoption support	Staff time		

Key Theme 4 : Make a Positive Contribution

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Further develop the partnership with "After Adoption Yorkshire".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and improve services for birth parents, (counselling). 	Partnership meetings.	On-going	Head of Children's Resources and Team Manager.	Contract with AAY £46,000	Costs likely to increase as this work develops. Possible charging policy	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop intermediary services. 	" "	On-going		Contract with AAY		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminar / training events for staff and adopters. 	" "	On-going	" "	Adoption support grant		
Develop the partnership with Barnardos to provide supported lodgings for adopted young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement contract with Barnardos to ensure the provision of service 	Partnership meetings	On-going	Team Manager	Adoption support grant £43,000		
Participation of adopters in matching process at an early stage	Arrange adoption profile information evening for adopters.	Evaluate post date	July or Sept 06	Team Managers Adoption & Stuart Wilson			
Continue to develop partnership with CAMHS	See adoption support plan	Review through ASP		Team Manager Adoption Support			

Key Theme 5 : Social Inclusion

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Develop and promote the adoption opportunities amongst all ethnic groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint working between recruitment officer and specialist F&A Officer to target BME groups through advertising, publicity etc. 	Supervision and appraisal	Ongoing	Team Managers			
Provide support for adopted children in the education system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and information to be provided for teachers and governors. 	Inter agency adoption support forum Adopters support group	Ongoing	Education Support Co-ordinator and Adoption Support Team	Staff time for cases Staff training time		
Provide appropriate placement and support for children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Placement to identify and assess suitable families. In conjunction with AST provide a range of support services for children with disabilities. 	Recruitment strategy	Jan 07	Team Managers			
		:Liaison with adoption & family placement managers	Nov 06	Team Managers			
Develop support services for minority groups	Set AS group for men and single adopters	ASTeam	November 06	Adoption Support Team	Staff time		

Key Theme 6 : Achieve Economic Well-being

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Develop post-adoption support to include adopted children and adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement post adoption plans. 	Supervision	Ongoing	Resource Team Manager			
Continue to develop and provide schedule 2 and intermediary services for adopted people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement ACA regs. Liaise with AAY re SLA intermediary services 		June 2006		Contract with AAY	Likely to see increased costs with growth in this provision.	

Key Theme 7 : Workforce Development

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Appraisals	Ensure all staff have an annual appraisal.	Annually by Resource Manager	March 07				
Continuing professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff access appropriate training to improve practice and service. • Joint working with other agencies (eg Adoption Clinic). 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short course budget. • Adoption support budget. 		

Key Theme 8 : Quality Assurance and Monitoring

						Six-Month Review	
Area for Development	Specific Actions	How will this be Monitored?	Target Date?	By Who?	Cost / Resources?	Comment	Ach.
Ensure the effective and pro-active management of Compliments and Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that staff report the compliments which they receive from Adopters. 	Reports to be to be requested six-monthly from the Complaints Section	March 07	Complaints Section			
Ensure that the Adoption Service meets the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Service and Adoption Support Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Minimum Standards Action Plan. Action audit and develop plan for Adoption Support Minimum Standards. 	Management development days	On-going March July 2006	Management team			
Ensure ACA implementation complete	Review project board recommendations.	Reconvened project Board	Sept 06	Team Managers adoption with Lynne Buckle			
Monitor adoption panel activity and performance.	<p>Annual report (inc. statistical information)</p> <p>Annual review of panel members</p> <p>All reports checked by team managers children & adoption.</p>	<p>Report to executive committee</p> <p>Panel feedback</p>	<p>May 2006</p> <p>December 2006 ongoing</p>	<p>Team Managers adoption</p> <p>Chair of Panel Panel members</p>			

hmr/AdoptionImplementationPlan

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ADOPTION PANEL STATISTICS

Adopters approved by Panel:

1992/93	54
1993/94	46
1994/95	55
1995/96	36
1996/97	30
1997/98	65
1998/99	68
1999/00	58
2000/01	59
2001/02	72
2002/03	81
2003/04	55
2004/05	43
2005/06	59

Children accepted for adoption

1992/93	148
1993/94	159
1994/95	131
1995/96	
1996/97	150
1997/98	77
1998/99	84
1999/00	89
2000/01	94
2001/02	108
2002/03	81
2003/04	98
2004/05	76
2005/06	84

Children matched with adopters:

1992/93	93
1993/94	61
1994/95	59
1995/96	63 (6 Inter-agency)
1996/97	65 (21 Inter-agency)
1997/98	89 (7 Inter-agency)
1998/99	74 (3 Inter-agency)
1999/00	76 (5 Inter-agency)
2000/01	83
2001/02	94 (12 Inter-agency)
2002/03	84 including (12 Inter-agency (7 Consortium) (1 Vol. agency)
2003/04	63 including (8 Inter-agency) (1 Consortium)
2004/05	63 including (2 Inter-agency) (2 Consortium) (4 Vol. agency)
2005/06	66 including (9 Inter-agency) (6 Consortium) (4 Vol. agency)

Children currently on referral for adoption = 54			
Females = 19			
Males = 35			
	Female	Male	Total
Ethnicity			
White UK	12	27	39
Jamaican	0	1	1
Pakistani	1	2	3
White UK / Italian	0	1	1
White / Asian	0	3	3
White UK / Iraqi Kurdish	1	0	1
White British / African/Caribbean	1	0	1
Chinese	1	0	1
African	2	0	2
White British / Iranian	1	1	2
Total	19	35	54
Religion			
No Specified Religion	18	33	51
Muslim	1	2	3
Total	19	35	54
Age Range			
Babies 0-12mths	9	17	26
Pre-School Age(1 - 4)	7	13	20
Age group 4+	3	5	8
Total	19	35	54
Sibling Groups			
Children in sibling groups of 2	5	5	10
Children in sibling groups of 3	1	5	6

Addendum 3

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number of Adopters Approved and awaiting a match = 32	
Couples	30
Single Female	1
Female Couples	1
Total	32
Adopters Ethnicity	
White British	27
White British / Indian	2
Indian	2
WhiteBritish/White Asian	1
Total	32
Age group of children	
0-12	4
0-12 Freeley given baby	1
Pre-School (1 - 4)	20
Age 4+	7
Total	32
Number of children approved for	
1	27
2	5
Total	32
Gender of children	
Male	1
Female	11
Either	20
Total	32

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Adoption Services Budgets

1. Assisted adoptions: £783,820

NB. This is an accumulating budget, primarily made up of ongoing weekly adoption allowances for children up until the age of 18 and beyond if in full time education. This budget now includes funding for post adoption support payments of £100,000 which was until this year part of the 3 year ring fenced adoption support grant.

2. Inter agency adoption s: £165,570

This provides for payments to agency providing families for Leeds children that we been unable to place either in house or via the consortium.

3. Adoption panel costs: £19,320
4. Adoption support training: £15,000
5. Barnardos Supported lodgings: £41,206
6. Special Guardianship support: £4,000
7. After Adoption Yorkshire SLA £42,636
8. Professional staff costs: £459,639
9. Administrative support costs £94,165

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APPENDIX 6

2006/7

Recruitment Strategy / Fostering and Adoption

Highlighted below are the targeted / specific recruitment initiatives achieved or planned for 2006/7, in addition to ongoing placed advertising / publicity.

* Foster Carer and Adopter recruitment is advertised on a continuing basis throughout the calendar year. Various advertising and publicity initiatives are designed to produce on average 30 Fostering enquiries and 25 Adoption enquiries per month (minimum). See reverse for regular advertising commitment examples and web pages.

+ Adoption Info Meetings are monthly ^ fostering info packs requests > adoption info packs requests

06	JAN *	FEB *	MARCH *	APRIL *	MAY *	JUNE *
FPP Campaign	FPP Profiling		Bus Rears..... Campaign	NAR Exchange Day 2	In house Exchange Day	BME Adoption Campaign?
			New Adoption Web pages	Foster Care Fortnight		
			PFS Implementation Group	BME Group		PFS Group
^ 35 > 31	^ 37 > 35	^ 41 > 40				
JULY *	AUG *	SEP *	OCT *	NOV *	DEC *	
Bus rears Campaign ends	Carnival / BME Mela	Strategy Review	PFS Model starts? National Adoption Week/BME Theme Black History Month BME Group	PFS National Adoption Week/BME Theme	PFS	
BME Group		New Web pages / PFS				BME Group

07	JAN *	FEB *	MARCH *
PFS ongoing.....			

BME Recruitment Strategy 06 - 07

06

	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
			Agree BME Elements / AIP		NAR Exchange Days	U.A.S Meeting?
					BME Planning Group	
					FCF	Children's Profile Brochure?

07

	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
	Adoption Campaign Planning	Comm Highlights Carnival Feature Carnival	Restart Drop In? BME Planning Group Strategy Review	Adoption Week Black History Month Black Achievers Awards PFS start?	Black Families Fost Campaign?	BME Planning Group

07

JAN FEB MARCH

DAY 1 PREPARING TO ADOPT

9.30am Introductions to the day – fire exits/toilets/refreshments
Brief look at what we will be covering today

9.45am Human Bingo

10.00am Introduce your neighbour

10.10am The meaning of adoption exercise 2 pg 11

10.25am The Adoption Process pg 19

10.35am What we have to offer exercise 3 or alternative do as a large group and write up on flip chart reasons for adopting in general / Why are children adopted do the same as above .

11am coffee break

11.15am The children's future who decides exercise 1 pg 20

11.35am Who are the children quiz pg 22 do as a large group and discuss as you feed back the answers. The quiz and answers are on pg 40-41. At this point could talk about the adoption planning process for the child pg 48 will need adjust so it is personal to Leeds policies.

12 – 1pm Lunch

1pm Child development quiz pg 59 answers pg 60

1.30pm What children need from parents pg 61 + video sections 3 + 4 illustrate reciprocity

2pm Adopters personal experience

2.30pm coffee break

2.45pm Children's basic needs pg 62-63

3pm What's acceptable behaviour pg 79 instructions for exercise on pg 70/71

3.45pm End of the day any questions and what we will cover tomorrow

DAY 2 PREPARING TO ADOPT

9.30.1 Welcome and round -

One thing each person remembers or took away from Day 1
Any questions from Day 1 or issues raised?

Aims of the day + programme

10.00 Adopters experience

10.45 COFFEE

11.0 Overcoming the Effects of Abuse (+ health warning)

The experiences of neglected and abused children
Ex 2 whole group ex. Write up on flip chart –
Experiences.....Behaviours

11.30 Children's behaviour and our responses

Case studies (single sex gps.)

- How do you feel about this behaviour?
- Why do you think it might be happening?
- What would you do?

!2.15 Positive interventions - Presentation (p75)

12.30 Making it better

Ex Promoting Attachment

1.00p.m. LUNCH

1.45p.m. Adopters Experience

2.45p.m. Tea

3.00p.m. Video Adopters talking section 1

4.00p.m. Finish

Day 3 Preparing to Adopt

9.30 Welcome

Questions from yesterday
Aims and programme

9.45p.m. Thinking about change

Thinking about change/loss in own life– guided recall 30secs

- How did you feel?
- How did you behave?
- How long did it last?
- What made things worse?
- What helped?

15mins in sm gps (sgle sex) + feedback

How would you feel if 6 mnths later asked to repeat loss?

What would be your reaction?

Impact on children depends on their resilience

10.05 What a child loses

Whole gp ex Jamilla

What a birth parent loses

Video and discussion

The stages of grief – presentation

10.30 How well do you know your family background?

Quiz and presentation – which gaps matter the most?

10.45 A child's life story – Ben

- What will he need to know about his birth family?
- What would he need to know?
- How will he know?

COFFEE

11.15 Contact, making it work – Jamilla

- How do you feel about the arrangements for contact?
- How will this contact benefit you?
- How can you make the contact work for yourself and your family?

Contact brings benefits for adopters e.g. helping child settle
Talk thro' how contact works in practice

11.45 Resilience: where does it come from?

Why do some people survive difficulties and hardships reasonably well, while others with similar experiences do not?

Helping a child build resilience

What is resilience? How do we build it?

12.45 LUNCH

1.30 Adoptees experience

2.30 Tea

3.00 Adoption: the everyday challenges

What if? Indiv + with partners, choose 3 scenarios

What and when to tell

Handout + workbook article Alan Burnell

Adoption as a life long task – presentation

3.45 Asking for help - balloons

Conclusion

Summarise + Adoption support services

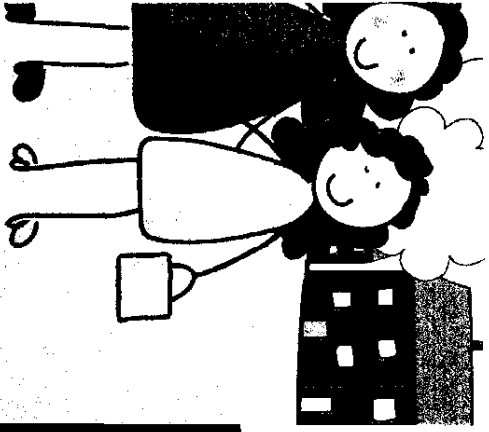
GOOD LUCK!

Futures

Futures works with volunteers to support young people leaving care, homeless young people and accepted young people. We have different groups of volunteers: those that offer a home to young people, those that offer emergency accommodation, and those that offer support for a few hours a week.

Volunteers are people who enjoy being with young people and care about what happens to them. They get training and 24 hour support. They receive expenses that don't affect benefits. Our volunteers come from many different backgrounds and have differing skills and abilities. They may be families, single people, parents, grandparents, lesbian or gay.

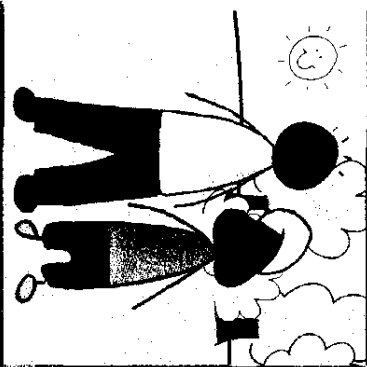
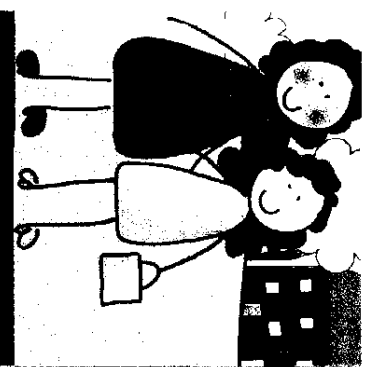
Young people are usually aged between 16 and 18; they come from all different areas and backgrounds. They have different needs: some need little support, some need a lot of your time and support.



ADDENDUM 8i

Barnardo's Futures
2 Rokeby Gardens
Headingley
Leeds LS6 3JZ
Tel: 0113 2757314

Email: futures@barnardos.org.uk

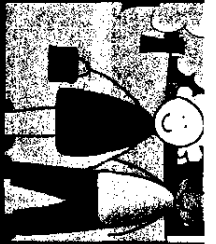


Adoption supported lodgings to support young people and their families

Barnardo's
YORKSHIRE
GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE
www.barnardos.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 216250 724179/05

Barnardo's
YORKSHIRE
GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE



Young people

**Are things difficult at home?
We may be able to help**

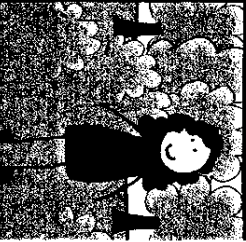
We work with volunteers who have a special interest in helping young people and their families, and can offer you a safe place to stay when things aren't going too well at home.

As well as offering you some accommodation the volunteer will work with you and your family to try and help you all.

You may be able to stay with them every so often so that you and your family can have a break from each other or you may decide you are getting ready to leave home and become more independent in which case you might want to consider staying with somebody for longer.

We will discuss with you and your parents what type of help you all think is best for you and your family and then try to match you with a volunteer we think you will get along with.

You will always be able to meet the volunteer and go to visit their home so you can see if you like each other before deciding if you would like to go and stay with them.



Parents

Are you and your teenage child having difficulties getting along?

We have established our service in recognition that parents and young people often experience difficulties at this time. Our aim is to support you and your child by offering safe and supportive accommodation with volunteers who are committed to helping families stay together.

How can we help?

It may be that you just need occasional 'time out' from each other or it may be that your child may benefit from moving into more permanent accommodation in order for you all to be able to maintain your relationship with each other.

Some of our volunteers will be able to offer regular planned breaks and others may be able to provide longer term accommodation or a combination of both. In some cases we may be able to provide emergency accommodation in times of crisis.

We want you to be involved at all stages of the planning for your child to receive supported lodgings. You will be able to see where your child is going to stay, meet with the volunteer and keep in regular contact with them.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life and are all people who have an interest in helping young people and their families stay together. They have been assessed and trained by us and receive 24 hour support.

We try to match young people with volunteers who can offer appropriate support to meet their needs. Young people always get a chance to meet with a volunteer and visit their home before a making a decision about going to stay. We would want you, as parents to be involved in this process as much as possible.

Volunteers

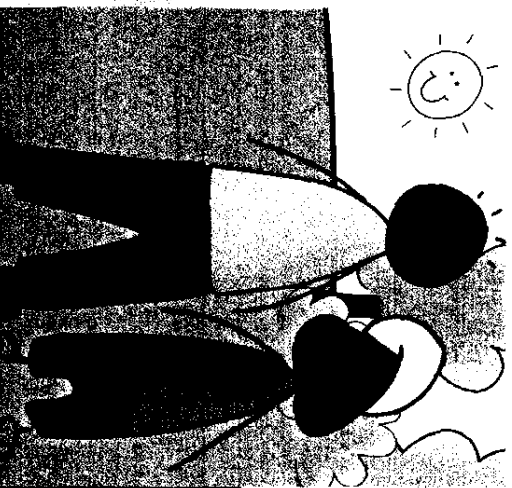
You will need to like young people and have a commitment to helping families who are experiencing difficulties.

For all children teenage years can be particularly difficult as young people are developing a strong sense of identity and trying to become more independent. For adopted young people, some of whom may have had difficult or traumatic life experiences this can be an even more difficult time. Parents and young people sometimes need to have break from each other in order to keep things on a more even keel.

Our adopted supported lodgings service has been developed to try and support young people and their families at this time and to ensure that vital relationships between children and parents can be maintained.

Do you have a spare room and some time to offer support to a young person and their family?

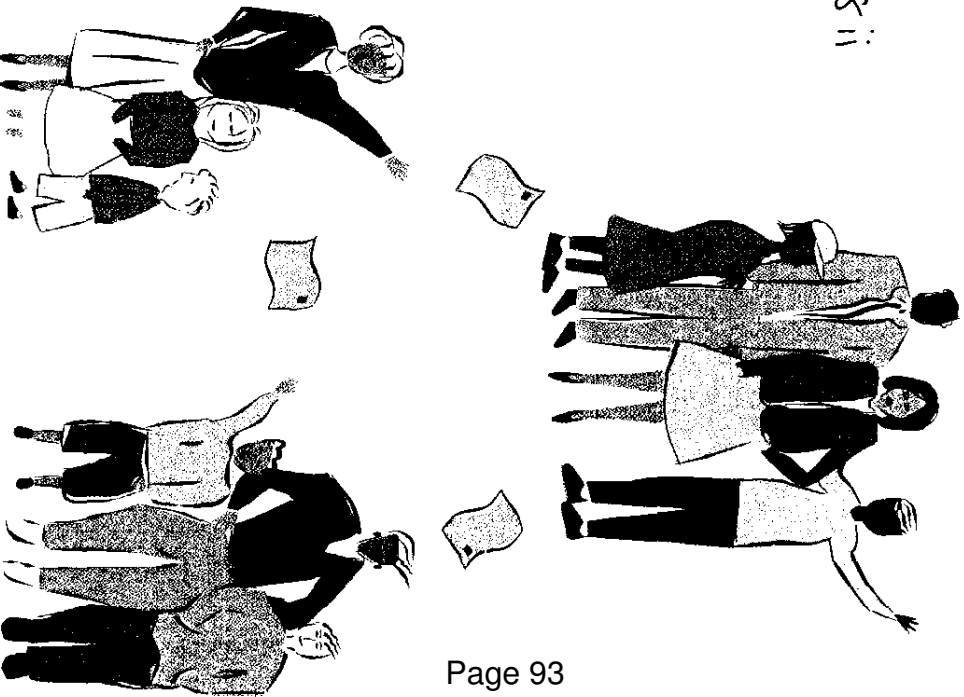
If you could offer either short term planned breaks or longer term accommodation to help support a young person and their family, please contact us.



Adoption Service

ADDENDUM 8 ii

Information
for all those
involved in
setting up an
Adoption
Contact
Agreement





Contents

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Retaining Links	4
How the Adoption Contact Register Works	4
Key Points for Birth Parents	5
Key Points for Adoptive Parents	8
Contact Agreements Arranged in the Future	11
Problems and Queries, Advice and Counselling	12
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The purpose of this booklet is to assist adoptive families, birth families and social workers to arrange and negotiate adoption contact agreements together.



1. An Introduction to the Adoption Linking Services

- The purpose of the Post-Adoption Linking Service is to provide a means by which information, letters and photographs may be exchanged between birth families and adoptive families until the child reaches adulthood.
- Contact may have different meanings for people using the service. Whilst in a few cases, direct or face to face contact may be part of the adoption plan, this service is primarily set up to act as a post box/ Information Exchange, passing written information between the birth family and the adoptive family.
- The Information Exchange will enable information to be exchanged over a long period of time.
- The Information Exchange will ensure complete confidentiality for the respective parties.
- The Information Exchange will not be able to accept presents, money or gift vouchers
- The Exchange will only disclose/send information as detailed in the Adoption Contact Agreement.
- Over a long period of time contact needs can change. If one party feels that the original contract agreement needs to be renegotiated, please contact the adoption archivist.



2. How to set up an Agreement

- The Adoption Contact Agreement needs careful thought by all those involved. The social worker and the Fostering and Adoption Officer should discuss possibilities and ideas with the birth family and the adoptive family as well as with the child if she/he is old enough to have a view on the subject.
- There is a special form to use to draw up the agreement. It is essential to be precise when recording the arrangement. Complicated contact agreements are less likely to work than clearly worded simple statements, understood by everyone concerned.

Contact Agreements should be considered at the planning stage of any adoption placement

- Hopefully initial discussions will ensure a workable agreement is reached which is satisfactory to everyone. The fine tuning of the agreement can be completed in the period after the child is placed and before the adoption order is made.
- Where the birth family is not in agreement with the adoption plan, it may not be possible to explore the setting up of a contact agreement at this stage. The possibility of arranging an agreement in the future however should always be discussed and clearly recorded so that all views are represented.
- Once the type and frequency of the contact has been agreed the Adoption Contact Agreement should be prepared and all parties should receive a copy. This needs to be kept in a safe place. A copy of the agreement must be placed on the adoption file, in order that a further copy can be taken for any signatory to the agreement who may misplace his/her own copy.



3. Retaining links

- There are different ways for adoptive families and birth families to retain links:
 - ... Some families prefer a two way link with both parties sending and receiving information. Photos may or may not be part of this.
 - ... Some adoptive families wish to receive information/photos from birth families but prefer not to send (or birth families do not wish to receive).
 - ... Some birth families wish to receive information from adoptive families but prefer not to send (or adoptive families do not wish to receive). It is usually best to have a set date. However, whatever your agreement, please avoid Christmas and Birthdays as these are emotional times for everyone.
 - Information at other times to be sent only when there is a significant change or event in either the birth family or the adoptive family e.g. serious illness, death or major achievements etc.
 - Change of address by either the birth parents or adoptive parents. This is particularly important for the future if the child wishes to try and trace his or her birth family. It is vitally important if either family moves to live abroad.

4. How the Adoption Contact Register works

- Once an adoption order has been made, the adoption case files are stored in the Leeds Social Service archive. Files are kept for 100 years. If a contact agreement has been drawn up between the birth family and the adoptive family, the information is separately recorded on the Adoption Information Exchange. When information/letters/photographs are sent to the Exchange, the adoption archivist will record and store the information on the child's file, until it is requested.

5. Key Points for Birth Parents

Information to be sent by birth relative

- It is important to remember to write the child's birth name and surname on any information sent to the Adoption Archivist.
- Presents, vouchers and money will not be accepted.
- The Exchange should only send or disclose information which has been detailed in the Adoption Contact Agreement. Any variation to this should be discussed beforehand with the Adoption Archivist.
- It is important to remember that your child needs to feel good about being in an adoptive family and not guilty or worried about you. Please do not send emotional letters to your child as this will not be easily shared with them and may cause unnecessary worry. If you want assistance in writing a letter please ask your social worker or the Adoption support workers. (There are examples of two letters at the end of this section).
- Please do not put your address or telephone number in any letter or your child as this can cause upset.

Information to be received

- It is important to remember that you have to request information on each separate occasion you are due to receive some information. This will ensure your information is sent to the correct address and does not get lost.
- Please keep the Archivist informed of your address. Adopted adults often return to Social Services wishing to find out information about their birth families. Leaving your address will assist us with tracing family members.
- If you do not request the information it will be kept on the child's file for you to request at a later date.
- When your child reaches 18 years of age they will be able to request access to their files. This may include any information sent in by adoptive parents over the years which has not been requested by birth parents.



Example letter by birth parent

Example letter by birth parent

Dear Sally

I hope you are well and happy with your family and friends. I hope you are enjoying school. I went to visit your birth grandma last Tuesday as it was her birthday.

We had a lovely time and she opened her presents. I hope you had a good birthday. Did you get some nice presents? I remember when you had your first birthday and we went to the park. You used to like playing on the swing but I had to keep hold of you as you kept letting go. You had a cheeky smile. Your birth father, Chris is still working as a printer. We are going on holiday to Scarborough in the summer and staying in a caravan. We like to walk on the beach and have an ice cream and I might even paddle in the sea. Your birth Auntie Maureen, my older sister, sends her love to you. We used to see her every week when you were little. You have two birth cousins - Amy aged 2 years and Peter who is just 6 months old. He has got two teeth now and can sit up by himself.

Chris says he hopes that you are growing bigger and sends his love. We both think about you a lot and hope you enjoy school. I know that you will be happy and well looked after by your mummy and daddy. It's lovely to hear how you are growing up. I look forward to seeing how much you have grown when I see your photo.

Here's two photos for you. One of me and Chris when we were at your birth grandma's house. Can you see that we were having a party and a bit of a laugh. The other is your two cousins - don't they look cheeky? I've put their names and dates of birth on the back so that you can look at them and remember who they are.

Anyway, I am thinking about you and I will write next year.

Lots of Love

Andrea, your birth mum

Dear Michael

How quickly this year has gone - it does not seem long since I last wrote to you. I cannot believe you are 14 soon.

I loved the photograph of you diving. I am so pleased that you are a good swimmer; you probably got that from my father Jack. He was also good at football and rugby - I wonder if you are?

I moved two months ago and I am glad I did. The last house was old and always seemed cold and damp. This house is more modern and it is really warm and cosy. Also, it is much quieter round here than where we used to live.

Your half-brother, Richard is 10 years old and Stacey is nearly 8. They fight like cat and dog most of the time. Richard supports Manchester United and Stacey supports Leeds (though I think she does that to wind him up). I have sent photographs of them doing monkey bars at the park.

I had a big surprise recently when the doctor told me I am expecting a baby. It is due next March. Richard and Stacey are already arguing about what it is going to be called and who will play with him or her.

I know that you have a younger adoptive brother but I am not sure how old he is. I wonder if you two fight? I saw from the other photograph you sent that you have two dogs. They look very friendly. I have got a German Shepherd. He looks really fierce but he is soft - he is called King.

Well, I can't think what else to tell you right now, though I expect I will think of lots more the minute I post the letter.

Be happy and healthy and do as well as you can at school. We are all thinking of you and will write again next year.

Lots of Love

Marlene



6. Key Points for Adoptive Parents

Information to be sent out by adopter(s)

- It is important to remember to write your child's birth name on any information sent to the Adoption Archivist so that they can locate the correct files.
- Birth relatives need honest information about their child's progress. They do not want to feel blamed by the adoptive family. Facts such as height, build, personality, likes and dislikes are likely to be of interest as well as how the child is getting on at school, hobbies, activities and friendships etc.
- Please remember that birth parents look forward to receiving information and photos. Please bear in mind the presentation of your correspondence and any photos should be of a reasonable standard so they can be put in a frame.
- Do not send school reports which clearly identify the school or school photos where a child is wearing a school emblem. This can jeopardise the confidential nature of the placement and may cause upset to the birth family and to yourself.
- Adoptive parent(s) can contact the Archivist to check whether the information sent has been requested by the birth relative.
- If the adoptive family does not send information as detailed in the original agreement, then the Archivist will contact the family by letter reminding them of the arrangement.

Information to be received by adoptive parent(s)

- Information received for the adoptive family will be automatically sent out by recorded delivery when the Archivist receives it from the birth family.
- The information will not usually be opened by the Archivist. Any concerns you have about the contents of the information should be directed back to the Archivist or the Principal Caseworker Adoption support for discussion before you share it with your child.

It is important to remember that as your child grows up he or she may have particular wishes or feelings in relation to contact. Any requests to change the arrangements must be made in writing to the Adoption Archivist who will endeavour to arrange for the agreement to be re-negotiated by both parties.

Example of two letters sent by adoptive parent(s)

Dear Tracey

Dean has settled down well and is making lots of friends at school. He has grown and is now one and a half metres tall. He is still very slim but is growing very tall. He loves his food and his favourite is chicken nuggets. He loves climbing and can now ride a bike without stabilisers. He is very confident and plays with his friends who live nearby. He is doing well at school but doesn't always listen to the teachers!! He is doing well with his reading but struggles with his writing. The school are very pleased with his progress.

We went on holiday in the summer and he enjoyed playing in the sand and eating ice cream. He likes building lego and loves hearing stories. We sometimes look at his life story book which has some photos of you in and we talk about you. He likes to talk about his birth family and we are pleased that you are writing to him to let him know how you are.

We will write again next year. Hope you are well.

Best wishes

Tom and Lucy



7. Contact Agreements Arranged in the Future

In certain circumstances it is possible to set up a contact agreement after an Adoption order has been finalised. Again everyone must agree to it, and of course, any agreement will depend on people being located and then contacted by the Social Services, in order for the agreement to be drawn up.

In situations where either party cannot be found it is possible to leave information on the child's file in case of contact in the future.

Adopted adults often return to the Department seeking information about their birth origins. For birth parents wanting to be contacted when their child becomes an adult, leaving up to date information, and an address will be a useful aid in assisting with tracing family members.

Dear Julie and Michael

Since I wrote last year Susan has really grown up. She is healthy and happy and at thirteen she likes going out with her friends and listening to music. She loves fashion clothes and there is always something new that she wants - but doesn't always get!! Susan went camping in the summer with school for a few days and really enjoyed herself apart from getting soaking wet when there was a thunderstorm!

Susan is doing okay at school but still struggles a bit with her lessons. She has extra help in the classroom to help her concentrate.

Susan has a good sense of humour and is constantly making jokes. I wonder who she gets that from? She is also very stubborn - are there any family traits in this??

Her younger adopted brother is 10 years old and they get on well most of the time. She's quite protective of him but can't stand it if he wants to talk to her when her friends are around.

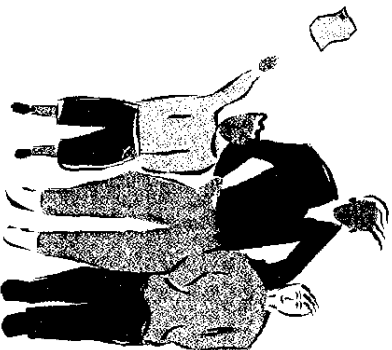
Susan hasn't decided what she wants to do when she leaves school but is quite keen on cooking and might become a chef. She also quite likes the idea of helping animals in some way. We have two dogs who she loves to pieces.

Thanks for your last letter. Susan enjoyed reading about her half sisters and your letters gave us an opportunity to talk about her birth family. Susan is aware of who everyone is and it is nice to get up to date information for her. She has said that she would like to write next year to you herself. Would that be okay?

Anyway, I'll sign off now and hope you are keeping well and happy.

Best wishes

Maureen





8. Problems and Queries, Advice and Counselling

- Anyone experiencing particular difficulties or wanting further advice regarding the **Adoption Information Exchange** can write to the Adoption Archivist, or c/o the address below:
Adoption Support Team, Leeds Social Services, Adoption Archives, Selectapost 9,
110 Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8QA
Tel 0113 247 8874 or 0113 247 4654
- The **Adoption Support Team** is also able to provide advice, information and counselling for involved people with adoption – this includes adopted people, birth parents and adoptive parents.
Tel 247 4654.
- **After Adoption Yorkshire** is a regional independent post adoption service offering advice and counselling to anyone affected by adoption. Their address is:
After Adoption Yorkshire, 31 Moor Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 4BG
Tel 0113 230 2100 www.afteradoptionyorkshire.org.uk
- For adoptive families there is an organisation called **Adoption UK** – they offer a range of advice, support and on adoption.
Adoption UK, 46 The Green, South Bar Street, Banbury,
Oxfordshire OX16 9AB
Helpline 0870 7700450 www.adoptionuk.org.uk
- **Counselling Services** and support for birth families can be obtained from:
Natural Parents Network
NPN Helpline Tel 08454 565031
- The **National Organisation for Counselling Adoptees and their Parents (NORCAP)** can be contacted at:
112 Church Road, Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1LU
Tel 01865 875000

Leeds City Council Department of Social Services

CONSENT AGREEMENT

Contact address:

Department of Social Services, Adoption Archives,
 110 Merrion Centre, Selectapost 9, Leeds LS2 8QB Tel 0113 2478874

Adoption Contact Agreement between birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s):

Child's Information:

Birth Surname:	Smith
Forename(s):	John
DOB:	4.5.97
Year of Adoption Hearing:	1999
Adoption Officer/Social Worker:	Jo Bloggs (Social Worker) and Mary Poppins (Fostering and Adoption)

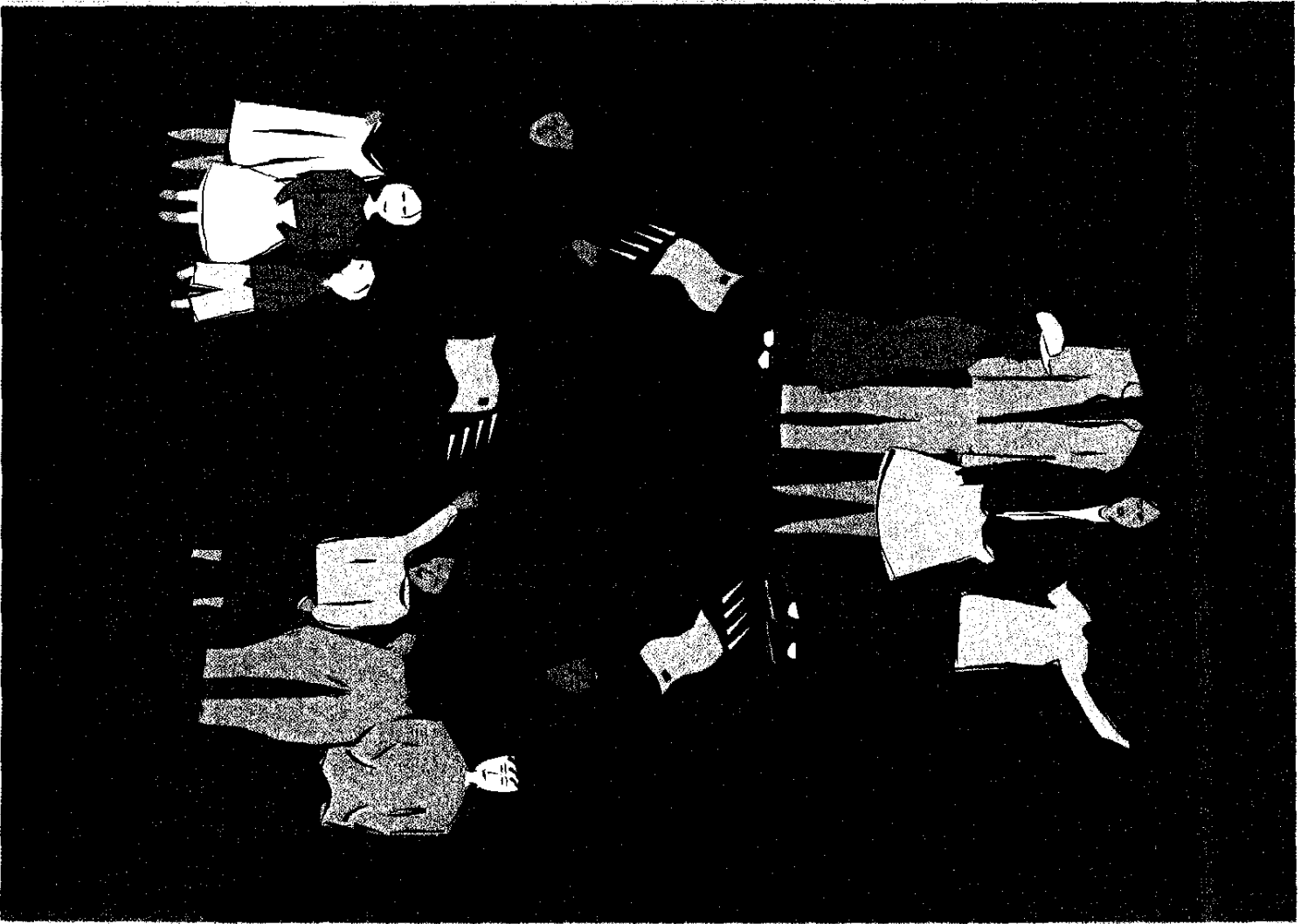
Details of Agreement (eg exchange of letters/photos etc, by whom, when etc)

- Ann and Benny are the adoptive parents of John. They would like to exchange an annual letter and photograph with Betty, John's Birth mother.
1. Ann and Benny should send their information to the Adoption Archives address listed above in October of each year
 2. Betty should contact the Adoption Archivist to confirm her address and any information will be sent to her.
 3. Betty should send her information for John to the Adoption Archives in September and the Adoption Archivist will send this on to Ann and Benny.

Signatories of Agreement: (First name only)

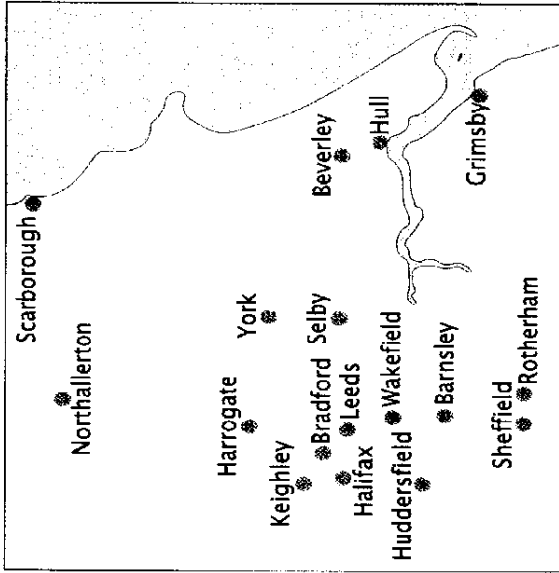
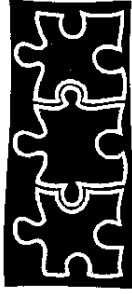
Birth Parents:	Adoptive Parent(s):
Date:	Date:
Social Worker:	Child:
Date:	Date:

This is a voluntary agreement and can be re-negotiated by either party.



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After Adoption Yorkshire



COVERING THE REGION HERE TO HELP PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY

As part of our strategy to make our services more accessible we have developed a comprehensive system of out-reach bases close to most large towns in the region.

Appointments can be arranged near to your home or at our main office in Leeds.

HOW TO GET HELP

You can contact us direct

- ◆ Ring us on 0113 230 2100
- ◆ Write to us at 31 Moor Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 4BG.
- ◆ Email to: info@aay.org.uk
- ◆ Visit our web site at www.afteradoptionyorkshire.org.uk
- ◆ We will respond to all enquiries promptly and within 7 days.

0113 230 2100

Advice Line Opening Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	10.00 am	to	1.00 pm
Wednesday	4.00 pm	to	7.00 pm

An Independent Specialist Support Service for People Involved in Adoption

ADDENDUM 8iii

**31 Moor Road, Headingley
Leeds LS6 4BG**

Tel. 0113 230 2100

Office: 0113 278 6487

Fax: 0113 278 6050

email: info@aay.org.uk

web: www.afteradoptionyorkshire.org.uk



WHO CAN WE HELP?

Adopted People

- ◆ If you would like to talk to someone about your adoption.
- ◆ If you want advice on finding out about your birth family.
- ◆ If you want support before or after a reunion.
- ◆ If you want to share your adoption experience with others in a group setting.

Birth Families

- ◆ If you want to share feelings about your child's adoption with somebody who will take time to listen.
- ◆ If you want to talk over the possibility of your son or daughter making contact with you.
- ◆ If you want advice on contacting your adopted son or daughter or birth relative.
- ◆ If you want advice or information about your adopted child or birth relative.

Adoptive Families

- ◆ If you want help in telling your child about adoption.
- ◆ If you want advice and support about strategies for parenting children with challenging behaviour.
- ◆ If you adopted a child of a different race or culture and need to talk this over.
- ◆ If you want advice and support on any matter relating to adoption including issues relating to contact with your adopted child birth family.



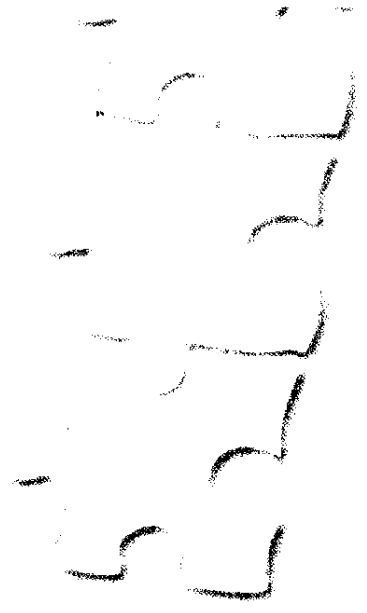
WHAT WE OFFER

- ◆ Appointments available across the region.
- ◆ Telephone advice line.
- ◆ Confidential advice, support and counselling.
- ◆ Support groups for adopted people, adoptive parents and birth families.
- ◆ Search service to assist those wishing to trace birth relatives.
- ◆ An intermediary service for people who are wanting to make or renew contact with their birth relatives.
- ◆ A mediation advice and support service on a range of adoption issues.
- ◆ Mentoring and "Buddy" schemes for adoptive parents, adopted people and birth parents.
- ◆ Consultation and training for professionals.
- ◆ Workshops and seminars by leading adoption specialists including current practice and research in adoption.
- ◆ A commitment to providing a sensitive service based on respect for your individual needs, regardless of race, gender, age, ability or sexuality.



WHO WE ARE

- ◆ We are a team of specialist workers with personal and professional experience of adoption.
- ◆ We are funded by grants including Community Fund, donations from trusts and individuals, and partnership arrangements with local authorities across Yorkshire, Humberside and NE Lincolnshire.
- ◆ We are a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.
Reg. no. 3236906.
Charity no. 1057667



After Adoption Yorkshire now offers services across Yorkshire.

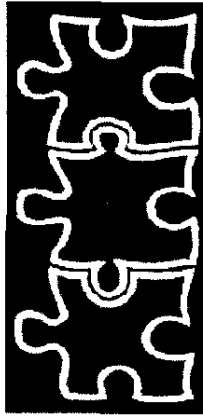
You can be seen at one of our 12 local bases, at our Leeds office, or by agreement at your home.

Appointments can be made by calling:

0113 230 1200

AFTER ADOPTION
YORKSHIRE
FREEPOST NEA 10204
LEEDS LS6 2Y

After Adoption Yorkshire

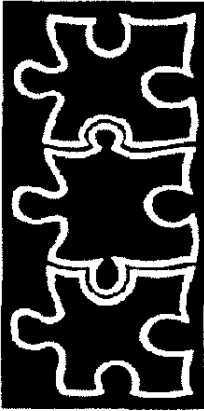


Birth Parent Service

Support Services
For Birth Parents
in Leeds

ADDENDUM 8iv

Advice Line Opening Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
10.00 am to 1.00 pm
Wednesday 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm



Our Birth Parent Service aims to:

- Help you to talk about the effects of adoption on you and your family.
- Listen to your story and how you are feeling about your child's adoption.
- Let you know how other parents like yourself feel and if appropriate put you in touch.
- Help you to write a letter for your child
- Help you to understand the future contact arrangements for yourself and your child.
- Help you to see your part as a birth parent in your child's life.

Who are we?

We are a small independent organisation based in Leeds

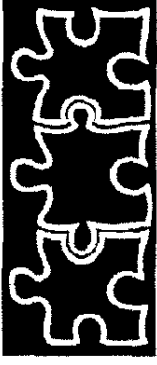
We work separately from other organisations such as social services.

We offer a confidential service.

Who do we help?

Anyone who is involved in adoption, especially birth parents, people who have been adopted and adopters.

We have been offering independent support to birth families and relatives for a number of years and have found it is beneficial in helping to ease social and emotional difficulties.



If you would like further information please fill in your details below, detach and post (no stamp required).

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

There is an initial service cost which includes the purchase of up to two birth, death or marriage certificates. Details of costs on enquiry. If the search is going to cost more, we will let you know and ask your permission before continuing.

Fees are not refundable if we are unable to help you find the person you are looking for.

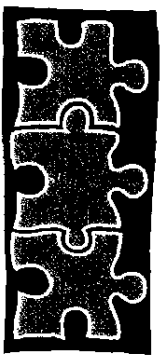
If you find difficulty in meeting these fees we may still be able to help, please ask.

If you would like us to search for you, please ring 0113 278 6487 to discuss the details.

Contact us at:
After Adoption Yorkshire
31 Moor Road
Headingley
Leeds LS6 4BG
Tel: 0113 278 6487
Email: info@aaay.org.uk
Website: www.afteradoptionyorkshire.org.uk



Search Service



After Adoption Yorkshire

Support services for those involved in adoption in Yorkshire and the Humber



After Adoption Yorkshire

Support services for those involved in adoption in Yorkshire and the Humber

After Adoption Yorkshire is an independent charity which provides support, advice, intermediary and mediation services, for anyone in the Yorkshire and Humber region whose life is touched by adoption. One of the most common reasons people approach us is to ask for help in finding out about birth families. We have found that it is important for people to know something about their origins and to be able to 'fill in the gaps' about their background.

In the past, adoption was surrounded by secrecy, and support for those whose lives had been affected by adoption was very limited. This situation has now improved and adopted people are able to find out details about their adoption and to make contact with their birth relatives. The situation for birth relatives is still limited but they are able to get information through an intermediary, from organisations like After Adoption Yorkshire.

- To provide an affordable search service to people living in the Yorkshire and Humber region
- To provide advice for those who wish to carry out their own search
- To provide advice, and share in the experience of the search for those who wish to use the Search Service
- To offer support to users in their search and in any subsequent reunion
- To provide the expertise to carry out a search for those who do not wish to, or are not able to carry out a search themselves

Our Search Service is open to anyone with adoption connections, whether they are new to searching, have some knowledge, or have already started the search but are unable to make progress.

What facilities do we offer?

- Access to the GRO microfiche indexes of Births, Deaths and Marriages 1900 to 1983
- Access to CD-Rom for Births, Deaths and Marriages 1984 to 2002
- Access to a PC loaded with the UK Info Disc (a database of names, and addresses compiled from last year's UK and Northern Ireland Electoral Registers)
- Access to the GRO website, for online certificate ordering
- Information about postcode areas and registration districts

Other facilities are not available at the Search Service

- Adopted children's register (only held at the family records centre in London)
- Northern and Southern Irish indexes to Births, Deaths and Marriages (these are held in Belfast and Dublin)
- Scottish indexes to Births, Deaths and Marriages (held in Edinburgh or via the Family Records Centre in London)
- Overseas records

Information for
adopted adults

Not all adopted adults want to search for birth parents, however it may be that at certain times in your life you feel the need to know more about your origins.

We can offer:

- counselling for adopted adults who wish to have information about their birth origins
- a limited tracing service and assistance for adopted adults who wish to undertake a search for their birth relatives

an intermediary services for adopted adults wishing to contact a birth relative – sometimes (on request) we are able to facilitate direct contact with a birth relative.

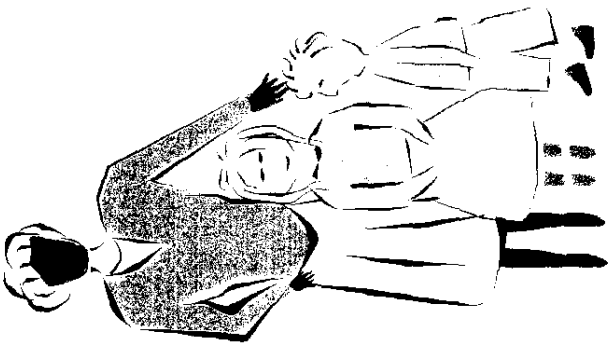
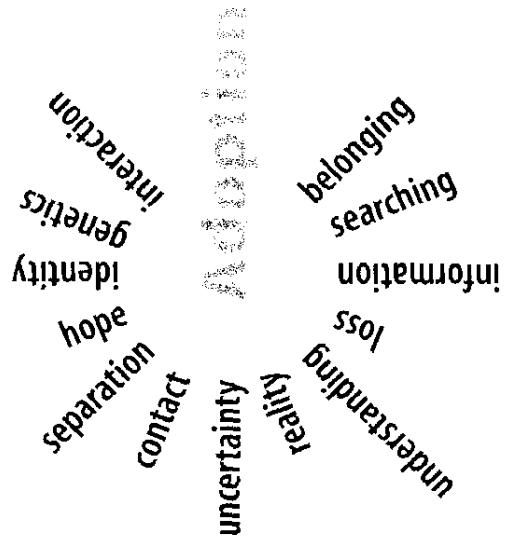
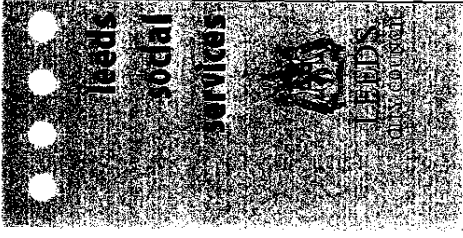


Illustration: J. Griffiths

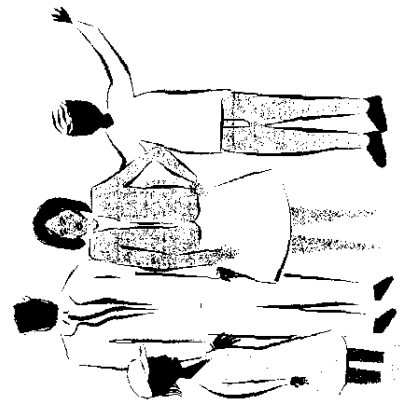
Adoption Support Team
3rd Floor West
Adoption and Fostering Section
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds
LS2 8QB

Tel 0113 224 3756 (24 hrs)

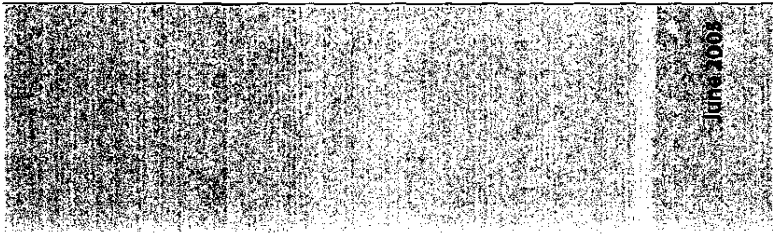
There is an answerphone and we will contact you as soon as possible.



ADDENDUM 8 vi



Advice and support for:



Information for adoptive families

Many children placed in adoptive families have complex and continuing needs arising from their earlier damaging experiences.

In recognition of the needs for adoptive families to receive either ongoing support or advice or assistance at specific times, we are developing a range of services:

We can offer:

- the Adoption Support Team, to give advice and support on a range of issues
- help with negotiating contact arrangements with birth families
- a twice yearly newsletter to keep adoptive parents in touch with services
- a regular support group for adoptive parents
- a social event for new adoptive families
- training and workshops on a range of issues relating to adoption

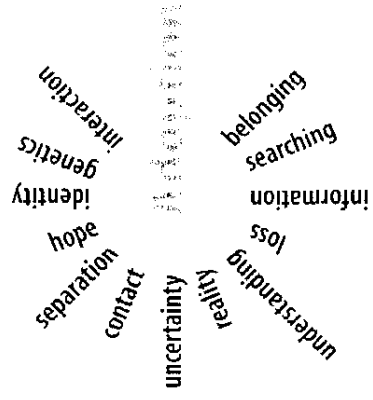
links with the adoption clinic run by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
links with educational services for advice on education issues

Information for adopted children and young people

It is sometimes difficult growing up as an adopted person. It is possible that no-one knows very much about your early history and this can make you feel unhappy. At school it can be difficult explaining that you do not have birth information or photographs for projects, or maybe some children are unkind because they do not understand about adoption.

We may be able to help by:

- listening to your story
- sharing information from your records
- putting you in touch with other young people who are adopted
- giving you information about other organisations specially for young adopted people
- helping you understand your own life story



Information for birth parents/relatives


Having a child adopted is difficult and it is likely that your emotions will continue to affect you long after adoption. Triggers such as dates or events associated with this period in your life will have a lasting impact.

We can offer:

- advice and counselling
- an intermediary service in some instances
- help with updating or renegotiating contact arrangements

The Social Services Department also supports After Adoption Yorkshire. This organisation provides an independent regional service which is accessible to birth families and can offer group and individual support for birth parents.






Adoption Support Presentation

Vai Hales – Team Manager Adoption &
Adoption Support Leeds SSD
Lynn Buckle – Principal Caseworker Adoption
Support Leeds SSD

July 2006



Leeds Adoption Support Team

History:

1999 PCW Post Adoption Established (QP)

1999 – 2001 Strategic Plan – 3 years

- Consultations with staff, adopters (Post Adoption Reference group established)
- Leaflet outlining services
- Links with AAY to develop BP service
- Draw up respite scheme
- Redraft Contact Register leaflet
- Training plan
- Student placement
- Links with CAMHS

2001 – 2004 Evaluation of PCW role using the task force audit tool Plan revised



Leeds Adoption Support Team


History:

2004 Adoption Support Team Established

- Professional Staff
- 1 PCW (Development & Casework)
- 2 Adoption Support Workers
- (1 Home & Away & Contact)
- (1 Training & Adoption Support Assessment)
- 1 Family Adoption Advisor
- Education Advisor/Coordinator

Administrative Staff


- 1 Adoption Archivist
- ½ Admin Support H&A
- ½ Admin Support AST
- ½ Admin Support Special Guardianship



Adoption Support 3 Year Plan (2004-2007)

Includes:

- Implementing Adoption Support Regulations
- Adoption Interest Groups for staff
- Pilot Bonding & Attachment with pre-school children
- Implement H & A Scheme
- Barnardo's Supported Lodgings 15+
- Training Plan – annual
- Student Placement
- Buddy/Mentor Scheme
- Adopters De-Stress Day



Key Developments Achieved Since 1999

- Post Adoption Ref Group
- Inter-Agency Adoption Support Forum
- Joint work with the Adoption Clinics/CAMHS including:
 - Assessments
 - Group Work
 - Training
- Educational input to schools & families
- Specialist training for staff including:
 - Post Adoption Counselling – 7 modules
 - Evidence based adoption support assessment – 4 modules
 - One day courses – BAAF/AAY
- Contract with AAY



Key Developments Achieved Since 1999

Training/seminars for adopters


- Piece of Cake
- Parenting Strategies
- Day Courses
- Related By Adoption
- Parents As Healers
- Birth Parent Counselling via AAY

Newsletter

Support Groups for adopters including:


- Group for single carers
- Parents of Adolescents – joint initiative with CAMHS
- Wacky Group for adopters with pre-school children
- Adopters Liaison Forum
- Social Support Group for children

Theraplay initiative



Examples of Financial Support

1. £500 grant at outset of placement
2. An allowance equivalent to loss of pay for a period of time in the pre-order stage to enable carer to remain at home
3. Individual support worker for a child who has learning difficulties
4. Assistance with taxi fares to help a child attend an Adoptee Social Group – 'The Cooking Crew'
5. Lump sum for ice-skating lessons
6. Family futures assessment/private therapy
7. Lump sum to help towards cost of a larger vehicle for a sibling group
8. Barnardo's supported lodgings costs
9. Specialist babysitting
10. Laundry/Cleaning Costs



Financial Support in Adoption & Other Permanent Placements

Regulation 8

- Provides for financial support to maintain an adoption placement in cases where:
- Necessary to ensure children can be looked after
- Requires extra resources because of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or effects of abuse
- To enable siblings to be placed together

Regular payments must be means tested. Must take into account other benefits payable eg, Child Benefit, CTC DLA

Foster Carer Adoptions

- Payments continue at the same level for 2 years post order. Without means testing, including any fee
- Payments will then either cease if children do not meet eligibility criteria for continued allowance or continue to be paid subject to a financial means test
- In certain cases remuneration (fee) can continue to be paid beyond 2 year period where child has exceptional needs or other exceptional circumstances (Regulation 9)
- Means test for allowances can be waived in certain cases. Decision to waive is based on specific conditions being met. These include:
 - Child meets criteria for FPS
 - Child placed on FPP or TC scheme
 - Child part of sibling group
 - Long term emotional & behavioural difficulties
- Consideration of the Adoption Support package for Foster Carers agreed prior to Adoption Panel matching

Other Permanency Options For Approved Carers

- Special Guardianship Orders
 - Residence Orders – not means tested
- Ongoing payments for SG**
- Must be means tested after 2 years post order
 - Exception where a child needs special care which requires greater expenditure of resources because of illness, disability, emotional difficulties etc (Regulation 6 (2) (b))
 - Decision not to means test is made by Children's Service Manager prior to application and proposal sent to the Foster Carer
 - Financial support can be given to families identified as suitable to care during proceedings – subject to means test. Again may waive means test in exceptional cases
 - Leaving Care Service

Adoption Support Assessments Adoptive Families

Pre-Order

1. During Adopters assessment
2. CPR & child to panel
3. Matching report
4. Reviewed through CC review system
5. Adoption Support staff available for consultation & advice during assessment & planning process

Post order

6. 3 months curtesy call
7. 12 months visit

Post Order Support

1. Check eligibility criteria (Reg 7.2)
2. Assessment
3. Recommendations
4. Review

Adoption Support for Birth Families

Pre-Order/Post Order

1. Independent Counselling via AAY offered
2. Assistance with contact matters, mainly post order

Adoption Support Post Order

1. Financial support subject to an assessment of need may be payable
2. Financial means test undertaken
3. Exceptions – under £500 Team Manager, £500-£1,000 discretion of Head of Resources
4. Review Panel set up to consider complex situations and exceptional circumstances arising from child's needs or household income of adopters
5. Payments usually are off jump sum or time limited

Adoption Support 3 Year Plan (2004 - 2007)
Updated November 2005

<u>DEVELOPMENT/ ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIME SCALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Disseminate information to staff re: Adoption Support	Teams - Area / Fostering & Adoption Rolling programme for areas	All	Oct 2004	Yes		
Update Leaflets		TBA	2005	Yes	Jan 2006	Revise again in light of Adoption & Childrens Act 2002
Adoption Interest Group	Fostering & Adoption Officers & Social Workers	Lynn	Sept 2004	Yes		Poorly attended by fieldworkers. Re-Launch in May 2006. Change group to 'Adoption Supervision / Discussion Group'? Possibly set topics for each month.
Advice Line	Independent no. required	Val	Sept 2004	Yes		
Pilot Project on Bonding & Attachment Pre-School	Set up Multi-disciplinary working group. (Raise at Leeds IAAS Forum)	Lynn & Claire	Ongoing - 2006			Material being considered, preliminary thoughts.

<u>DEVELOPMENT /ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIME SCALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Home & Away Service Pilot Scheme - 10 Families	- Proposal - Procedures & ½ day development 15/09/04	Pam & Sarah	Jan 2005	Yes	April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Revised procedures in light of Adoption & Childrens Act 2002 II. Further advertising/targeted recruitment III. Evaluation report by March 2006 IV. Home & Away focus group 8/2/06
Develop a service for families/children with disabilities in conjunction with Family Placement	- Liaise with worker from Family Placement (Adoption)	-	Ongoing	Yes		
Update Adoption Policies & Procedures & Adoption Support Policy		Lynn Buckle / Val Hales	Nov 2004	Yes	Jan 2006	Revise procedures in light of Adoption & Childrens Act 2002.

<u>DEVELOPMENT /ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIME SCALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Re-Visit Contact Policy	Arrange ½ day for adoption support staff to consider implications	All	29/09/04	Yes	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Contact database being updated by Design. Merlene to chase for Reports II. Arrange training on contact for social workers. Barbara, Pam & Sarah to liaise with EDU III. Re-visit policy in reference to screening mail, look at Sheffield model IV. Merlene to meet alternatively with Pam & Sarah
Disruptions -	Develop database to monitor disruptions Aide memoire & checklist for workers chairing disruption meetings	Lynn	Dec 2004	-	Dec 2006	

<u>DEVELOPMENT /ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIME SCALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Continue to provide training for staff & adoptive families	Prepare annual training programme	Barbara	Jan 2005	-	Feb 2006 ?	Prepare annual training program for adoptive parents to go in Spring Newsletter 2006. I. In conjunction with EDU devise annual program for staff to include contact, attachment, helping children move II. Request assistance from EDU for admin & delivery
Undertake student supervision		Claire Sarah Pam (VAL TO LIAISE WITH EDU)	2007	-	2007	Discuss with EDU whether they can undertake long arm supervision if we deliver work based training – Val to discuss.
Monitor Service Provision	Annual Report & Stats Information	Lynn/Val & Admin	July 2005		July 2006	Lesley to be asked to assist Caroline in collation of stats, alongside main adoption stats – April & Oct.

<u>DEVELOPMENT /ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIME SCALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Introduce Assessment Framework for all new referrals	Await Gov. fine tuning of Regs	Lynn & Val	Ongoing			Look at new Adoption Placement report and revise.
Review systems for recording referral information	Discuss with Admin & ESCR Team	Lynn	Ongoing		Feb 2006	Pam / Sarah / Merlene to re look at contact files and revise format. Merlene to seek costings for new contact files.
Buddy/Mentor Scheme	For new/isolated adoptive parents	Pam & Sarah	April 2005		2006/2007	Further discussion re possible schemes. Pam / Claire to contact Essex scheme. Already considered Adoption UK. ?? whether a more informal arrangement would be better.
Arrange Adopters Day	De-stressing day	All	2006			Julie Pocklington to arrange a date post Feb ½ term – poss Wednesday.
Revamp website		Stuart	2005	Yes	March 2006	Revise in light of Adoption & Childrens Act 2002.

<u>DEVELOPMENT /ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIMESC ALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Asian Adopters Support Group	Liaise with Fostering Officers responsible for Asian Development. Check with regional Consortium.	Nas & worker from Adoption Support Team ? Barbara	Jan 2005	-	July 2006	Consider using initial assessment workers in providing support groups for adopters. Suggest inviting Nasrat Houlton to a team meeting.
Develop Information packs for Adoptive Parents	Specific subjects eg Contact /welfare benefits, explaining adoption, possibly age related.	Barbara & Pam	Jan 2006	June 2006		Pam & Sarah to look at material in the PACT course & chapters from the reference books.

<u>DEVELOPMENT /ACTION REQUIRED</u>	<u>DETAIL</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>TIMESCALE</u>	<u>TASK COMPLETED</u>	<u>REVISED TIMESCALE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Develop Services for birth relatives	Possible “drop-in” session at a neutral venue	All	Ongoing			Re look at service for birth parents ½ development day.
Develop Services for Adult Adoptees	Services to be decided - link with AAY	All	Ongoing			
Development Day for Adoption Team	Input from Adoption Support Team using appropriate materials from the ACE/PACT course.					

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What is the Yorkshire Adoption Consortium?

The consortium brings together all adoption agencies in the region with the aim of increasing the possibilities of finding families for children in the area by linking them with approved adopters.

The Consortium has a Co-ordinator who maintains a database holding information on children awaiting adoption in the region and adopters approved to adopt.

Information on Children.

When a child has been identified as needing an adoptive placement and the court has agreed with this decision their details will be sent to the consortium co-ordinator by the child's social worker.

What happens next?

The co-ordinator enters the child's details onto the database and checks to see if any families are available that would match with the child. A list of up to 6 possible families will be drawn up. This will be sent to the social worker who is responsible for finding a family for the child.

Once the social worker has decided on a first choice of family they will contact the family's social worker. The family's social worker will then forward details of the child onto the family. If they feel positive about a potential match a meeting will be arranged with the child's social worker for further discussion before a match is agreed by the adoption panel.

Information on families.

Adopters details are sent to the consortium as soon as they are approved providing that the adopters have consented to this.

When are families available to be considered by the consortium?

Families are available to other members in the consortium after 3 months from approval (or earlier if requested to do so by the agency).

The consortium co-ordinator will enter the details of the families as soon as they are received and will run a check to see if there are children who could be matched with this family. If there is a possible match the co-ordinator will notify the family's social worker directly.

What about financing placements?

Placements are made under the terms and conditions of the child's agency. This includes payments, grants and allowances. It is the responsibility of the child's social worker and the family's worker to clarify the details in each placement.

**Members of the Consortium
include:-**

Local Authorities:-

**Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale, Wakefield,
Kirklees, North Yorkshire, Barnsley,
Hull, York, East Riding, Sheffield, NE
Lincs, Doncaster, N. Lincs**

Contact Details:-

**Debbie Church
Consortium Co-ordinator
c/o NCH
11 Queen Square
Leeds LS2 8AJ**

**Tel: 0113 2430027
neyac@nch.org.uk**

*Voluntary agencies that contribute
families for inclusion on the consortium
database include:-*

**NCH
Catholic Care
Adoption Barnardos Yorkshire**

Associate Members are;

**BAAF, After Adoption Yorkshire &
Adoption Register for England & Wales**



Information for adopters

*Working together for children
needing adoption*





Yorkshire adoption consortium

What is the Yorkshire Adoption Consortium?

The consortium brings together all adoption agencies in the region and the aim is to increase the possibilities of matching for children and families in the area.

The Consortium has a Co-ordinator who maintains a database holding information on children awaiting adoption and adopters approved to adopt in the region.

Information on Children

Information about children for when the agency has an adoption plan (following adoption panel where a best Interests decision has been made) will be sent to the consortium administrator within one month after the panel or date of the final hearing.

The information will be submitted to the consortium Co-ordinator using the National Adoption Register Form for children. The forms can be sent by the social worker via the post or email.

What happens next?

The Consortium co-ordinator enters the details on the database and checks to see what families are available

that would match with the child. A list of up to 6 matches will be drawn up. This will be sent to the social worker acting as a family finder for the child, who may be the child's social worker or a family placement worker.

It is the responsibility of the agency workers to exchange Form E's and F's and other information. The child's family finder will let the co-ordinator know when a match has been identified and approved by adoption panel.

Information on families.

Adopters details are sent the consortium as soon as they are approved providing that the adopters have consented to this.

Adopters details will be submitted by the agency using the National Adoption register Form within 4 weeks of approval.

Families are available to other members in the consortium after 3 months from approval (or earlier if requested to do so by the agency).

The consortium co-ordinator will enter the details of the families and will run a check to see if there are children who could be matched with this family. If there is a match

the co-ordinator will notify the social workers directly.

What about financing placements?

Interagency matches via local authorities in the consortium are made on a no charge basis. However, the co-ordinator will monitor the level of use by each agency and the maximum debit for any agency will be -10 and anything beyond will incur an inter agency fee. If the agency was in credit by 10 it would be expected that a charge would be made. Voluntary agencies are advertised through the consortium but are only available if an interagency fee can be paid.

Placements are made under the terms and conditions of the child's agency. This includes payments, grants and allowances. It is the responsibility of the child's social worker and the family's worker to clarify the details in each placement.

Contact Details:-

Debbie Church
Consortium Co-ordinator
c/o NCH
11 Queens Square
Leeds LS2 8AJ

Tel: 0113 2430027

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Statistics for Quarter 1 - 4 from 01/04/03 – 31/03/04

Families Placed

	In house	Consortium	Outside Agencies	Total No. of families placed
Barnsley	0	0	0	0
Bradford	5	3	0	8
Calderdale	4	2	0	6
Doncaster	0	0	0	0
East Riding	0	0	0	0
Hull	16	4	2	22
Kirklees	3	1	1	5
Leeds	42	0	1	43
North Lincs	0	0	0	0
NE Lincs	0	0	0	0
North Yorks	8	5	2	15
Sheffield	0	0	0	0
Wakefield	7	2	0	9
York	3	3	2	8
	Within Consortium	Outside of consortium		
Barnardo's	2	5		7
Catholic Care	0	0		0
NCH	4	12		16

Children Placed

	In house	Consortium	Outside agencies	Total No. of Children placed
Barnsley	0	0	0	0
Bradford	7	2	4	13
Calderdale	4	2	10	16
Doncaster	0	0	0	0
East Riding	0	0	0	0
Hull	18	3	11	32
Kirklees	3	5	3	11
Leeds	54	1	8	63
North Lincs	0	0	0	0
NE Lincs	0	0	0	0
North Yorkshire	9	3	0	12
Sheffield	0	0	0	0
Wakefield	9	3	3	15
York	3	5	10	18

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Statistics for Quarter 1 - 4 from 01/04/04 – 31/03/05

Families Placed

	In house	Consortium	Outside Agencies	Total No. of families placed
Barnsley	5	1	1	7
Bradford	19	0	0	19
Calderdale	5	2	0	7
East Riding	11	0	1	12
Hull	14	2	2	18
Kirklees	14	4	1	19
Leeds	36	1	0	37
NE Lincs	0	0	1	1
North Yorkshire	14	3	1	18
Sheffield	6	0	0	6
Wakefield	10	1	0	11
York	4	3	3	10
	Within Consortium	Outside of consortium		
Barnardo's	1	4		5
Catholic Care	4	10		14
NCH	2	8		10

Children Placed

	In house	Consortium	Outside agencies	Total No. of Children placed
Barnsley	5	0	12	17
Bradford	22	4	13	39
Calderdale	6	5	8	19
East Riding	13	0	7	20
Hull	20	2	16	38
Kirklees	17	2	15	34
Leeds	55	2	6	63
NE Lincs	0	0	0	1
North Yorkshire	15	3	5	23
Sheffield	7	0	5	12
Wakefield	13	1	10	24
York	6	2	7	15

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Statistics for Quarter 1 - 4 from 01/04/05 – 31/03/06

Families Placed

	In house	Consortium	Outside Agencies	Total No. of families placed
Barnsley	12	4	0	16
Bradford	25	3	3	31
Calderdale	6	2	1	9
Doncaster	0	3	0	3
East Riding	17	0	1	18
Hull	13	3	1	17
Kirklees	17	7	0	24
Leeds	42	3	0	45
North Lincs	0	2	0	2
NE Lincs	2	7	2	11
North Yorks	15	3	0	18
Sheffield	25	2	2	29
Wakefield	7	5	0	12
York	1	4	0	5
	Within Consortium	Outside of consortium		
Barnardo's	4	4		8
Catholic Care	2	3		5
NCH	3	8		11

Children Placed

	In house	Consortium	Outside agencies	Total No. of Children placed
Barnsley	13	1	6	20
Bradford	32	4	5	41
Calderdale	8	10	3	21
Doncaster	0	4	5	9
East Riding	20	4	5	29
Hull	16	4	17	37
Kirklees	19	7	8	34
Leeds	47	6	13	66
North Lincs	0	2	0	2
NE Lincs	2	4	12	18
North Yorkshire	18	3	10	31
Sheffield	30	0	29	59
Wakefield	7	2	9	18
York	1	7	7	15

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Statistics over the last 3 years – highlighting Leeds

Families

Families currently on database – 36

Out of this 20 are live and 16 are currently on hold

In total there are 207 families on the database (not including Leeds)

Out of this 207 76 are currently on hold.

The table below shows the number of children the families currently on the database are approved for.

Agency	1	1 / 2	2	2/3	1/2/3	Total families
NCH	4	9	2			15
Barnardos	5	3	1			9
Catholic Care	2	6		1		9
Barnsley	7	2				9
Bradford	16	1	2			19
Calderdale	4	3	1			8
Doncaster	8	4	2			14
East Riding	11	3	1			15
Hull	8	1				9
Kirklees	20	5	2			27
Leeds	31	4	1			36
NE Lincs	9				1	10
North lincs	5	1				6
North Yorks	11	8				19
Sheffield	9	4	4			17
Wakefield	9		2			11
York	5	1	4			10

Since the database began recording data in Feb 03 Leeds have entered 159 families

Out of this 11 withdrew.

Total number of families entered (not including Leeds) over the last 3 years is 587 and out of this 52 withdrew.

Children -

There are currently 301 children on the database (not including Leeds) please see below for the breakdown.

Agency	Live	On Hold	Total
Barnsley	10	8	18
Bradford	18	23	41
Calderdale	9	9	18
Doncaster	17	7	24
East Riding	7	5	12
Hull	15	25	40
Kirklees	21	17	38
Leeds	7	25	32
NE Lincs	0	6	6
North Lincs	3	3	6
North Yorks	7	2	9
Sheffield	36	28	64
Wakefield	13	7	20
York	2	3	5

Out of these the following are sibling groups currently on the database –

Agency	Sibling group of 2	Sibling group of 3
Barnsley	3	0
Bradford	6	0
Calderdale	2	1
Doncaster	2	0
East Riding	2	1
Hull	2	3
Kirklees	8	1
Leeds	1	0
NE Lincs	1	0
North Lincs	2	
Sheffield	12	2
York	1	0
Total	45	9

Agencies Scorecard

How balance is calculated

If an agency puts in a family = +1

If an agency takes out a family = -1

Pre 1999 Balance

Agency	Balance
Leeds	+1
Bradford	-3
Kirklees	+2
York	0
North Yorks	0
Wakefield	0
Hull	0
Calderdale	0

Summary of figures

Agency	Families Put in	Families taken out	Balance
Leeds	13	21	-7
Bradford	13	19	-9
Kirklees	19	16	+3
York	19	20	-1
North Yorks	17	10	+7
Wakefield	11	12	-1
Hull	13	8	+5
Calderdale	12	21	-9
Barnsley	6	4	+2
East Riding	2	3	-1
Sheffield	2	1	+1
NE Lincs	11	5	+6
Doncaster	4	7	-3
North Lincs	10	3	+7

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Originator: Kate Arscott

Tel: 247 4189

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 7 September 2006

Subject: Youth Services

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the board's first meeting in June, members agreed to carry out an inquiry into youth services in Leeds as one of their major pieces of work this year.
- 1.2 The board appointed a small working group to draft terms of reference for the inquiry. The working group met with the Head of Youth Service on 27th July to discuss the potential scope for the inquiry.
- 1.3 The draft of the terms of reference have been attached for members' consideration.
- 1.4 In order to manage the board's work programme effectively, without unnecessarily delaying this inquiry, it is proposed that an additional meeting of the board be scheduled for Thursday 2 November, to accommodate the first two sessions of the inquiry.

2.0 Views of the director and executive member

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules Guidance Notes also require that, before embarking on an inquiry, the board seeks and considers the views of the relevant director and executive member. These views will need to be incorporated into the terms of reference.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 The board is requested to agree the terms of reference for the inquiry.
- 3.2 The board is requested to agree to hold an additional meeting on 2 November.

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Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Inquiry

Youth Services

Draft terms of reference

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in June 2006, members agreed that they wished to look at youth services across Leeds as one of their major inquiries for the coming year.
- 1.2 In order to decide on an appropriate and manageable focus for the inquiry, the board commissioned a small working group from amongst its membership to scope the inquiry. The working group met with the council's Head of Youth Service on 27th July.
- 1.3 The group had a wide ranging discussion which included an overview of developments in the council's own youth services over the past few years; the range and variation in services on offer to young people across the city; the many different providers; and the balance between targeted and universal service provision.
- 1.4 As background to their deliberations the working group considered the government publication Youth Matters: The Next Steps.
- 1.5 In order to provide a clear focus for the board's work, the working group decided to recommend that the inquiry took as its end point the question 'What should Leeds City Council include in the youth offer that it will have to publish next year?'
- 1.6 In order to answer that question it was felt that the inquiry should look at current provision and how it varies across the city, in order to build a vision for the future. This would include different service providers and partners as well as different types of targeted and universal provision. The inquiry also needs to consider what young people want and expect from youth services as fundamental to mapping future provision.
- 1.7 The board hopes that this inquiry will assist the council in responding successfully to the Youth Matters agenda and ensuring that the 5 outcomes for children and young people are embedded in the youth offer.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of, and where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas:
- What can be learnt from the existing patterns of provision across the city?
 - What do young people want and expect from youth services in Leeds?
 - What should Leeds City Council include in the youth offer that it will have to publish next year?

3.0 Comments of the relevant director and executive member

- 3.1 In line with scrutiny board procedure rule 11.4 the views of the relevant director and executive member have been sought and have been incorporated where appropriate into these terms of reference. Full details are available on request from the scrutiny support unit.

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

- 4.1 It is envisaged that the inquiry will take place over four sessions. The inquiry will conclude with the publication of a formal report setting out the board's conclusions and recommendations.
- 4.2 It is planned that the inquiry will include a range of additional activities such as visits and opportunities to meet directly with young people and obtain their views.
- 4.3 The length of the inquiry is subject to change in the light of emerging evidence.

5.0 Submission of evidence

5.1 Session One – 2nd November 2006

To consider general background information on:

- Mapping of existing youth service provision across Leeds
- Analysis of the differences in provision between areas
- The balance of targeted and universal services
- The availability of facilities for non-organised activities
- Update on implementing the Youth Service Post Inspection Action Plan
- How young people are consulted and how they influence service development
- Details of the requirement to produce a 'youth offer'
- The Youth Capital Fund and Youth Opportunities Fund

5.2 **Session Two – 2nd November 2006**

To consider information on existing models of partnership including

- The Leeds Youth Work Partnership
- Local youth networks including the one operating in Morley

To consider information on the influence of area management on patterns of youth provision

5.3 **Working Group activities**

Exact activities to be confirmed. Will include discussions with young people (Youth Council, ROAR), visits to activities and possible visit(s) with young people to facilities in other areas.

5.4 **Session Three – 14th December 2006**

To consider the perspective of other agencies involved in delivering youth services, including input from

- Voluntary, community and faith sector providers
- Community Safety
- Extended school services
- Connexions

To consider further examples of partnership working

- The Local Area Agreement Year 9 project

To consider any issues arising from sessions one and two

5.5 **Session Four – 14th December 2006**

To consider members' findings from the working group activities

To discuss the issues arising from the working group activities with officers

To consider the board's emerging conclusions and recommendations in response to the question 'What does Leeds City Council want to include in the youth offer that it will have to publish next year?'

6.0 Witnesses

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- City Council Youth Service staff
- Leeds Youth Work Partnership (LYWP) representatives
- Voluntary, community and faith sector organisations involved in youth provision (to be coordinated through LYWP and Leeds Voice Forum)
- School representatives
- Connexions
- Leeds Youth Offending Service
- Young people (including Youth Council and ROAR)
- Area Committee / Management representation

DRAFT



Originator: Kate Arscott

Tel: 247 4189

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 7 September 2006

Subject: Work Programme

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A copy of the board's draft work programme is attached for members' consideration (appendix 1). The draft programme reflects the issues identified at the board's first two meetings in June and July.

2.0 Work programming

2.1 Attached to this report are the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (appendix 2) and the minutes of the council's Executive Board meetings held on 5th July and 16th August (appendix 3), which will give members an overview of current activity within the board's portfolio area.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 The Board is requested to agree the attached work programme subject to any decisions made at today's meeting.

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Item	Description	Notes
Meeting date: 12th October 2006 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 26th September		
Monitoring meeting	At this meeting the board will consider progress reports on a number of initiatives and services including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services • Transition • School Admissions and Appeals • Extended Schools • Safeguarding Children • Consultation toolkit 	The board agreed to take this approach in June 2006, as a way of maintaining an overview across its portfolio
Meeting date: 16th November 2006 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 31st October		
Adoption	To receive evidence as Sessions 3 and 4 of the board's inquiry into Adoption	The board agreed the terms of reference for this inquiry at its July meeting
Youth Services	To receive evidence as Sessions 1 and 2 of the board's inquiry into Youth Services <i>NB An additional meeting may be arranged for the consideration of this item</i>	The board is due to agree the terms of reference for this inquiry at its September meeting
Inquiry 3	To agree the terms of reference for the board's third major inquiry of 2006/07	

Item	Description	Notes
Meeting date: 14th December 2006 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 28th November		
Youth Services	To receive evidence as Sessions 3 and 4 of the board's inquiry into Youth Services	The board is due to agree the terms of reference for this inquiry at its September meeting
Children and Young People Plan	To discuss the emerging issues likely to be incorporated into the plan.	A final draft will be presented to the board's February meeting
Secondary Achievement	To receive a progress report on implementation of the board's recommendations	In line with recommendation 14 of the inquiry report published in April 2006
Meeting date: 11th January 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 19th December		
Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers	To receive an update on the implementation of the recommendations following the board's inquiry	
Children Act	To receive an update on the implementation of the Children Act 2004 in Leeds.	
Adoption	To approve the board's final inquiry report following its inquiry into Adoption	

Item	Description	Notes
Meeting date: 8th February 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 23rd January		
Youth Services	To agree the board's final inquiry report on Youth Services	
Children and Young People Plan	To discuss a final draft of the plan.	
Inquiry 3	To receive evidence as Sessions 1 and 2 of the board's inquiry	The board is due to agree the terms of reference for this inquiry at its November meeting
Meeting date: 8th March 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 20th February		
Inquiry 3	To receive evidence as Sessions 3 and 4 of the board's inquiry	The board is due to agree the terms of reference for this inquiry at its November meeting
Adoption	To receive the formal response of the Social Services department to the board's inquiry report on Adoption	

Item	Description	Notes
Meeting date: 19th April 2007 - The deadline for reports for this meeting is 10.00am on Tuesday 3rd April		
Youth Services	To receive a formal response to the board's final inquiry report into Youth Services	
Annual Report	To agree the board's contribution to the annual scrutiny report	
Children Act	To receive an update on the implementation of the Children Act 2004 in Leeds	
Final Inquiry Reports	To agree the board's final inquiry report following its third major inquiry of the year	

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

EXTRACT RELATING TO THE SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

For the period 1 August 2006 to 30 November 2006

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
The former Royal Park Primary School To note the outcome of the work undertaken to investigate the viability of implementing proposals considered at November 2003 Executive Board meeting, and to seek approval for proposals in respect of marketing the property against a brief requiring the inclusion of community elements and on the premise the Council will retain long term control of the property by granting a long leasehold interest.	Executive Board	16 Aug 2006	Ward Members and Area Management Committee	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Development

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>Otley Prince Henry's Grammar School To seek approval to inject a capital receipt generated from the proposed sale of the former Newall Primary School into the Capital Programme and to incur expenditure in respect of capital investment at Otley Prince Henry's Grammar School.</p>	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006	Consultation ongoing with DfES	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds
<p>Review of Primary Provision in Boston Spa Primary Planning Area Seeking agreement on the way forward for primary provision in the Boston Spa area and any relevant statutory processes.</p>	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006	Informal consultation	None.	Chief Executive of Education Leeds
<p>Review of Primary Provision in Alwoodley Primary Planning Area To seek agreement on the way forward for structure of primary provision in Alwoodley and any relevant statutory processes.</p>	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006	Formal consultation Autumn 2005	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
<p>East Garforth Primary School</p> <p>To seek approval to the ring fencing of a capital receipt generated from the sale of an area of surplus school land. Approval will also be sought to inject the capital receipt into the capital programme and to incur expenditure in respect of the construction of a new nursery, changing rooms, and an office link between the existing school buildings, and to carry out improvements to the school playing fields at East Garforth Primary School.</p>	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006	Consultation ongoing with DfES	The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds
<p>Review of Primary Provision in Richmond Hill Primary Planning Area</p> <p>Agreement on the way forward for primary provision in the Richmond Hill area and any relevant statutory processes</p>	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Chief Executive of Education Leeds

Key Decisions	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Documents to be Considered by Decision Maker	Lead Officer (To whom representations should be made)
Structure of Children's Services Unit To approve the proposed structure of the Children's Services Unit.	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Children's Services
Children's Services progress report To note the report updating on progress with regard to Children's Services.	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Children's Services
Commissioning Strategy - Children's Services To approve a commissioning strategy for the delivery of Children's Services in Leeds.	Executive Board	20 Sep 2006		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Children's Services
Children's Services Annual Performance Assessment To note the Annual Performance Assessment for Children's Services	Executive Board	18 Oct 2006		The report to be issued to the decision maker with the agenda for the meeting	Director of Children's Services

NOTES

Key decisions are those executive decisions:

- which result in the authority incurring expenditure or making savings over £500,000 per annum, or
- are likely to have a significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards

Executive Board Portfolios

Executive Member

Central and Corporate

Councillor Mark Harris

Development

Councillor Andrew Carter

City Services

Councillor Steve Smith

Neighbourhoods and Housing

Councillor John Leslie Carter

Leisure

Councillor John Procter

Children's Services (Support)

Councillor Richard Harker

Children's Services (Lead)

Councillor R Brett

Social Care and Health

Councillor Peter Harrand

Leader of the Green Group

Councillor David Blackburn

Leader of the Labour Group

Councillor Keith Wakefield

Advisory Member

Councillor Judith Blake

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor M Harris in the Chair

Councillors A Carter, R Harker, D Blackburn,
R Brett, J L Carter, P Harrand, J Procter,
S Smith and K Wakefield

Councillor J Blake – non-voting advisory member

20 Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of appendices 1 and 2 to the report referred to in minute 30.

21 Declaration of Interests

Councillor A Carter declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to Abbey Mills and St Ann's Mills (Minute 32) on the basis that, in the event that the mill buildings were offered for sale on the open market then a client of his company may make an offer to purchase. He also requested that it be recorded that he declared that he was supporting officers in a complaint to the Standards Board with regard to an individual member and he wished to avoid any perception that consideration of this report may be influenced by that fact.

Councillors Wakefield and Smith declared personal interests in the item relating to the Commissioning Plan for Learning Disability Day Services (Minute 24) as non-executive directors of the East and South Leeds PCTs respectively.

Councillor Brett declared a personal interest in the item relating to the future of Leeds ALMOs (Minute 30) as a board member of South East Leeds Homes.

22 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2006 be approved.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

23 Improving Corporate Parenting in Leeds

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report outlining proposals for the Council's arrangements to fulfil its responsibility as the Corporate Parent of all Looked After Children in Leeds, including a Looked After Children's guarantee and a proposed review/monitoring process.

RESOLVED – That the proposals contained in the report, and the resource implications arising from them, be approved.

Minutes approved at the meeting
held on Wednesday, 16th August, 2006

ADULT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

24 Commissioning Plan for Learning Disability Day Services

The Chief Social Services Officer submitted a report on the need to modernise learning disability day service provision in Leeds and presented the plan developed by the Joint Commissioning Service setting out proposals for further detailed consideration to develop day care services for learning disability.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That approval be given to the plan for day services as outlined in the report and to the development of a capital and revenue business plan to modernise day service provision for adults with learning disability in line with the principles outlined in the report and the Commissioning Strategy for Day Services.
- (b) That a programme of intensive local consultations with stakeholders and Ward Members be undertaken to ensure local plans reflect their concerns.
- (c) That further reports be brought to this Board as the change programme is rolled out.

(Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.5 Councillor Wakefield required it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on this matter).

CENTRAL AND CORPORATE

25 The Council Plan 2006/07

Further to minute 5 of the meeting held on 14th June 2006, the Chief Officer (Executive Support) submitted a report presenting the completed Council Plan back to the Board as a final document.

RESOLVED – That the final Council Plan, as published by the statutory deadline of 30th June 2006, be received and endorsed.

26 Annual Efficiency Statement 2005/06

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report on the Council's proposed Backward Looking Annual Efficiency Statement for submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government by 6th July 2006.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted together with the decision of the Leader, the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services to approve the Annual Efficiency Statement – Backward Look 2005/06 for submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government by 6th July 2006.

27 Treasury Management Annual Report 2005/06

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report on Treasury Management for 2005/06, as required under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

RESOLVED – That the outturn position for 2005/06 be noted.

CITY SERVICES

28 Development of Primary School Catering Counter and Service Provision

The Director of City Services submitted a report on a proposal to refurbish primary school dining counter and service facilities run by the Catering Services.

RESOLVED – That the Project Brief be approved as presented, that approval be given to the injection of £500,000 into the Capital Programme and expenditure in the same amount be authorised.

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING

29 The Use of Final and Initial Demolition Notices

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report on the purpose of Initial and Final Demolition Notices as introduced by the Housing Act 2004 and their potential to assist in relation to the management of regeneration initiatives and development opportunities and to prevent abuses of the existing right to buy legislation.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to issue Initial and Final Demolition Notices.

30 The Future of Arms Length Management Organisations for Housing in Leeds

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report on the conclusions of the review of ALMOs in Leeds, detailing the background to the review and assessing the options of one ALMO, two ALMOs or one of two combinations of three ALMO's.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the preferred options for the future of ALMOs in Leeds are the one ALMO option and the three ALMO option which would bring together, Leeds North East and East (to include all of EASEL), Leeds South East and South and Leeds West and North West, both options to have local panels.
- (b) That these options be put to tenants in a city wide ballot of all tenants.
- (c) That the preference of this Board is for the 3 ALMO option.

Minutes approved at the meeting held on Wednesday, 16th August, 2006

- (d) That the principle of local panels be agreed and that officers bring a further report on the detailed workings of local panels and governance arrangements for the main Board(s).

31 EASEL: Outcome of Phase 1 Strategic Development Agreement Negotiations

Further to minute 174 of the meeting of the Board held on 14th December 2005, the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing and the Director of Development submitted a joint report on the results of the negotiation period with Bellway PLC, with particular reference to the Phase 1 Strategic Development Agreement and on proposed next steps in the EASEL procurement process.

Following consideration of appendices 1 and 2 to the report, designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) it was:

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the EASEL Project Board, through the Deputy Chief Executive, and the Directors for Neighbourhoods and Housing and Development be authorised :-
 - (i) To accept, subject to contract and the resolution of the outstanding cost items, the commercial terms offered by Bellway PLC for the EASEL Phase 1 sites as described in the submitted report.
 - (ii) To delegate the award of the contract to Bellway PLC for the Phase 1 sites, only when progress has been made on the Joint Venture arrangements, as specified in the Preferred Bidder letter.
- (b) That a further report on progress of negotiations on the Joint Venture arrangements be brought to the September meeting of this Board.
- (c) That in the event of any significant change in the commercial offer from Bellway to the detriment of the Council, a further report on the options for the next steps in the procurement process be brought back to this Board for further consideration.

32 Abbey Mills and St Ann's Mills, Kirkstall

Referring to minute 147 of the meeting of the Board held on 15th December 2004, the Director of Development submitted a report on further work undertaken on the option preferred by the Board under that minute. The report identified a forecast increased cost in delivering the preferred option but indicated that it was still deliverable. The report also introduced an alternative option, as sponsored by a ward member, for the long term use of St Ann's Mills for leisure/community purposes in connection with Kirkstall Valley Park and the West Leeds Country Park, with short to medium term use as a community punishment centre and for the retention of Abbey Mills in Council ownership as a possible mixed use development following minor repairs.

Minutes approved at the meeting held on Wednesday, 16th August, 2006

The report presented the available options as being:-

- (i) Do nothing/minimum investment option on both sites. This option might facilitate the proposal put forward by the Ward Member but would not address the significant deterioration in the buildings or the need for quality employment units in Kirkstall. It would not, therefore meet the key objectives of the Council.
- (ii) Sell both sites. This option would provide significant funding to support the Capital Programme and would, over time, through third party investment, restore the buildings to their former glory. It would not, however, guarantee that employment units were retained in Kirkstall. Notwithstanding this a lease to a third party or partner could satisfy this requirement (see option (v) and (vi) below).
- (iii) Identify the required capital from the Mainline Capital Programme to deliver the original preferred option. Given other pressures this was not felt to be likely.
- (iv) Await the outcome of the bid to Yorkshire Forward for £3m of funding. If successful, such a sum of money combined with a capital receipt from the disposal of Abbey Mills, would enable a scheme to be delivered at St Ann's Mills.
- (v) Seek to formalise a partnership with one of the private sector providers of incubator units. Early discussions with these providers suggest that they have the capital to invest in St Ann's Mills subject to them receiving a satisfactory share of rental income. Within such a partnership the influence of the Council over lettings policy and management of the units may be restricted.
- (vi) Include one or both of Abbey/St Ann's Mills in the greater small industrial unit portfolio for which a partner is currently being sought. If the two sites are not seen by the prospective partners as sufficiently attractive in their own right then incorporation into the greater small industrial unit portfolio for discussion with potential partners might be more appropriate.

The report noted that none of the above options precluded the Council from also pursuing the service objectives as set down by the Ward Member, albeit that under some options the specific use of the St Ann's Mills building would not be possible.

The Ward Member attended the meeting and presented the alternative option sponsored by him as a ward member and answered questions put by Members of the Board.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the key objectives of the exercise as previously approved by the Board and as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the submitted report be endorsed.
- (b) That the outcome of the bid to Yorkshire Forward for capital funding for St Ann's Mills be awaited. If this is successful, then officers be required to bring back a further report to this Board outlining the details of any proposal.
- (c) That should the bid to Yorkshire Forward be unsuccessful then officers be instructed to formally seek a private sector partner for the proposals and to then report back to this Board.
- (d) That should no suitable private sector partner be identified for this specific proposal, St Ann's Mills be included in the greater small industrial unit portfolio for which a private sector partner is currently being sought.
- (e) That the revised planning brief for Abbey Mills attached at Appendix J to the report be approved.
- (f) That Abbey Mills be marketed so as to determine its value more accurately for use in a future, more detailed project justification.
- (g) That the service aspirations outlined by the Ward Member in Appendix F and summarised in section 6 of the report be noted and that the possibility of them being delivered, other than through the use of the St Ann's Mills building, be the subject of further discussions and investigations.

(Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter Councillor A Carter left the meeting during consideration of this matter).

DATE OF PUBLICATION 7th July 2006

LAST DATE FOR CALL IN 14th July 2006

(Scrutiny Support will notify relevant Directors of any items Called In by 12.00 noon on 17th July 2006

EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 16TH AUGUST, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor M Harris in the Chair

Councillors D Blackburn, R Brett, A Carter,
J L Carter, R Harker, J Procter and
K Wakefield

33 Substitute Member

Under the terms of Executive Procedure 2.3 Councillor R Lewis was invited to attend the meeting on behalf of Councillor Blake.

34 Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 1 to the report referred to in minute 37 and Appendix 1 to the report referred to in minute 50 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information or confidential information, defined in Access to Information Rules as indicated in the minute.

35 Declaration of Interests

Councillor J L Carter declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to Adel Primary School (minute 38) as a governor of the school.

Councillors D Blackburn, J L Carter and Harker declared personal interests in the item relating to Leeds Grand Theatre (minute 45) as members of its board of management.

36 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6th July 2006 be approved and that those of the Access to Information Appeals Committee held on 19th and 20th June 2006 be noted.

DEVELOPMENT

37 Deputation to Council - Disposal of Drighlington Old School and Land

The Director of Development submitted a report in response to the deputation to Council by the Drighlington Conservation Group regarding lack of consultation on the disposal of Drighlington Old School and land.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the report designated exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and circulated at the meeting, it was

RESOLVED – That the Board notes:

- (a) the concerns expressed in the deputation from Drighlington Conservation Group
- (b) the consultation which has taken place to date
- (c) that the petition from Drighlington residents did receive due consideration from officers and the Executive Member for Development, but that on balance the view was taken that it was necessary to progress the disposal in order to deliver the Primary School Review programme
- (d) that representatives of Drighlington Parish Council will have a further formal opportunity to submit any objections on the development of the school upon submission of a planning application by the successful purchaser of the site
- (e) that discussions are underway to secure the rebuilding of the clock tower, the clock face and mechanism, and the weather vane in appropriate locations within the community
- (f) that the Council is the legal owner of the site and buildings and therefore does have the right to dispose of them
- (g) that Development Department will continue to progress the disposal of the school to meet the targets of the Primary School Review, and maintain an ongoing dialogue with Local Ward Members.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

38 Deputation to Council - Adel Primary School

The Chief Executive of Education Leeds submitted a report in response to the comments made by the deputation to Council by parents of pupils at Adel Primary School with regard to building works at the school.

RESOLVED – That the Board supports the recommendations which Education Leeds have made to the school as follows:

- (a) That the modified project be completed.
- (b) That the school review the success of the scheme during the next academic year and prioritise any potential alterations, to be funded by the school, through a premises development plan.
- (c) That the school fully consult staff, pupils, parents and the local community prior to any future projects.
- (d) That the authority use the issues raised by this project as a case study to highlight the importance of stakeholder consultation on Capital schemes to other schools.

(Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest Councillor J L Carter left the meeting during consideration of this matter)

39 Deputation to Council - Proposals for Meanwood Primary Planning Area

The Chief Executive of Education Leeds submitted a report in response to the deputation to Council about the Executive Board's decision to publish statutory notices proposing the amalgamation of Miles Hill Primary and

Potternewton Primary with a new primary school occupying the Potternewton site.

RESOLVED – That the concerns expressed by the deputation and the next steps in the process, as described in the report, be noted.

40 School Clothing Allowances

The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report on action taken following a Council decision to increase the School Clothing Allowance budget.

RESOLVED – That the action taken as a result of the Council decision to increase the School Clothing Allowance budget by £400,000 be noted.

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING

41 Office Accommodation - Neighbourhoods and Housing Department

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report highlighting the outcomes of the Option Appraisal and business case for the demolition and disposal of South Point and the consequent relocation of Neighbourhoods and Housing staff into alternative accommodation within the Departmental Portfolio.

The report outlined the following options:

- 1 Remain in existing site with basic remedial works and essential maintenance only
- 2 Major refurbishment of South Point
- 3 Demolish and rebuild at South Point
- 4 Dispose of South Point and purchase alternative accommodation
- 5 Dispose of South Point and lease alternative accommodation
- 6 Dispose of South Point and new build on alternative sites
- 7 Dispose of South Point and refurbish one of two existing Council properties

The report detailed alternative courses of action in pursuit of the preferred Option 5.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That approval be given to the disposal of the site at South Point
- (b) That staff from South Point be decanted into existing sites within the Neighbourhoods and Housing Departmental portfolio (Housing Services, Environmental Health and Community Safety), involving the overall rationalisation of Neighbourhoods and Housing Departmental office accommodation portfolio and the best placing of staff to deliver services to their client groups.
- (c) That a new site be leased which will allow for all of the current Property Management Service to occupy one ‘fit for purpose’ site –the site identified for potential relocation being at View Point in Bramley

- (d) That the early negotiations for heads of terms in respect of View Point at Bramley and, as a fall back position, Temple Point at Colton be noted

42 Former Royal Park Primary School

Further to minute 152 of the meeting held on 12th November 2003 the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing and the Director of Development submitted a joint report seeking approval for the marketing of the Royal Park property for refurbishment or redevelopment as a mixed use development with the Council retaining an operational presence in the form of a library and some community space and retaining the freehold in the property but with no restriction as to the make up of the scheme other than would be required through the planning process.

The report outlined the following options:

- 1 To seek approval for a further £904,000 in mainline Capital Programme funding for the original scheme.
- 2 The retention of the building by the Council and its preservation and protection until such time as a sufficient range of Council and community uses and funding streams can be identified
- 3 To dispose of the building for refurbishment, through the grant of a long leasehold interest, with the Council retaining the freehold interest and having the use of a library and some community space.
- 4 To market the site for refurbishment or redevelopment, with the retention of Council interest through the freehold of the land, with guidance as to the general form of redevelopment required, including the incorporation of a library and other community space.

The report concluded that best consideration would be achieved through option 4 with any other option being likely to represent a less than best disposal.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work undertaken to test the viability of implementing the proposals considered at the November 2003 Executive Board meeting be noted.
- (b) That the decision made at the meeting of 12th November 2003 be rescinded.
- (c) That the property be marketed in accordance with option 3 above.
- (d) That the Board notes that the pursuance of any proposal resulting from this decision will require the Council to use its powers under the 2003 General Consent to dispose of the property at less than best consideration.

43 The Golden Triangle Partnership - Private Equity Model

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a report on proposed expenditure of £1,000,000 in 2006/07 in respect of a scheme to assist local people who are first time buyers, low income workers and households in need

to purchase properties in the area defined as the Golden Triangle in the Leeds, Harrogate and York districts.

RESOLVED – That authority be given for the injection into the Capital Programme of £1,000,000 fully funded by Regional Housing Board grant and that expenditure in the same amount be authorised.

44 Ombudsman's Report - Adaptations to a Council House

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing submitted a joint report on a recent finding of maladministration and injustice by the Local Government Ombudsman with regard to a complaint about adaptations to a Council house to meet the needs of the disabled tenant.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Ombudsman's report and findings be received and noted.
- (b) That the fundamental changes to procedure and policy instituted as a result of the case be noted.
- (c) That the Council's response to the Ombudsman as set out in paragraph 4 of the report be approved.

LEISURE

45 Leeds Grand Theatre Refurbishment Works

The Directors of Learning and Leisure and Development submitted a joint report on the latest position in respect of phase 1 of the Leeds Grand Theatre refurbishment scheme, proposals for phase 2 of the scheme and the proposed heads of terms for the lease of the theatre to the Leeds Grand Theatre Company.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That authority be given for an injection of £193,566 into the Capital Programme to be funded by £150,000 from Opera North Trust and £43,566 from Leeds Grand Theatre.
- (b) That the bringing forward of the £300,000 Arts Council England grant from phase 2 works into phase 1 be authorised subject to the ACE formal approval currently being sought.
- (c) That £1,294,881 of Leeds City Council funding be brought forward from phase 2 into phase 1.
- (d) That authority be given to incur additional expenditure of £1,788,447 on costs associated with the phase 1 refurbishment works at Leeds Grand Theatre (Capital Scheme Number 03611/PH1/000).
- (e) That the Board notes expenditure of £175,000 on fees on phase 2 of the Grand Theatre (Capital Scheme Number 03611/PH2/000) for the preparation and submission of applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England for grant aid towards the phase 2 works involving the selective refurbishment of the Grand Theatre and the restoration of the Assembly Rooms.
- (f) That the potential funding of £9.124m as outlined in detail within paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 of the report be noted, and that a further report

be brought to this Board when both costs and funding have been subject to further determination.

- (g) That approval be given to the Heads of Terms that have been provisionally agreed with the Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House Ltd for their lease of the Leeds Grand Theatre.

46 Deputation to Council - Swimming Pool Horsforth

The Director of Learning and Leisure submitted a report in response to the comments made by the deputation to Council by local residents for the provision of a swimming pool in north west Leeds.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the request to support a feasibility study into the provision of a new swimming pool in Horsforth be part supported by the City Council up to a maximum of £2,500.
- (b) That recognised, bona fide consultants be engaged to undertake the feasibility study should match funding be found, and that the consultants' brief be drawn up in consultation with the Director of Learning and Leisure.

ADULT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

47 Commissioning Plan for Mental Health Day Services

The Director of Adult Services submitted a report setting out proposals for the modernisation of mental health day services, based on a more person centred service model meeting an individual's assessed needs flexibly, in their local communities and wherever possible, within mainstream services rather than in settings catering only for people with mental health problems.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the plan for day services as outlined in the report be approved.
- (b) That the implementation of the agreed service model within the time scales contained in the report be agreed.
- (c) That further reports be brought to this Board as the new service is implemented and further briefings be offered to Members through the course of the project.

CENTRAL AND CORPORATE

48 Capital Programme Monitoring Update

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report providing quarterly monitoring information on the Capital Programme and highlighting the continuing investment made by the Council in the city, explaining the pressures on future schemes and providing details on the latest resources and expenditure estimates for the capital programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and endorsement given to the measures being taken by the Director of Corporate Services, in liaison with the other directors to ensure the affordability and sustainability of the Capital Programme.

DEVELOPMENT

49 Deputation to Council - Withdrawal of Bus Services from Wetherby to Tadcaster via Boston Spa

The Director of Development submitted a report in response to the deputation received by Council at the meeting on the 21st June 2006 in connection with the withdrawal of the 780 bus service between Wetherby and Tadcaster via Boston Spa.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Development write to North Yorkshire County Council and Metro informing them of this Council's support for the retention of this bus service.

50 Deputation to Council - Former Blackgates School at Tingley

The Director of Development submitted a report in response to the deputation to Council by local residents against the sale, demolition and redevelopment of the redundant Blackgates School at Tingley.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the report designated exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1), and circulated at the meeting, it was

RESOLVED – That the concerns of the deputation be noted but that the disposal of the former Blackgates Infants School, Bradford Road, Tingley be progressed as detailed in the submitted report.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18TH AUGUST 2006
LAST DATE FOR CALL IN : 25TH AUGUST 2006

(Scrutiny Support will notify relevant Directors of any items called in by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 30th August 2006)

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