



Appendix D

# Adoption Service Statement of Purpose

May 2014



## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Principles and values
3. The Aims of the Agency
4. Objectives of the Agency
5. Recruiting, assessing and approving adopters
  - 5.1 Enquiries and Initial Contact
  - 5.2 Initial Home Visit
  - 5.3 Stage 1 Assessment
  - 5.4 Preparation Groups
  - 5.5 Stage 2 Assessment
  - 5.6 Approval and Adoption Panel
6. Post approval
7. Annual reviews of prospective adopters
8. Post placement support
9. Contact and the information exchange service
10. Adoption Support
11. Management of the Service
12. Numbers, qualifications and experience of staff
13. Monitoring and performance
14. The Complaints Procedure
15. Details of registration authority

## **1. Introduction**

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that an adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide a comprehensive adoption service.

This statement can be used by children and young people and families as a guide to what they should expect a service to provide and to do. It is available to all members of staff, children and birth parents and is available on our website. A copy of this statement is also lodged with Ofsted. The information contained in it is amended annually and formally approved by the Council's Executive.

The Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2005, the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005, the Adoption Agencies & Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011. The Adoption Agency is inspected against these standards by Ofsted.

## **2. Principles and values**

The Adoption Service is part of an integrated Fostering, Adoption and Family Placement Service within Leeds City Council Children's Social Work Services. The requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 underpin the principles and values of our service:-

### **Values: Children**

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Children who are looked after are actively consulted regarding their wishes and feelings in regard to all aspects of their care within the adoption process
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and where possible this should be within their own family
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life
- The child's welfare safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted
- The particular needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made
- Children should be allowed to live with brothers and sisters unless this will not meet their individual needs. People applying to adopt are expected to understand the importance of maintaining these relationships

- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many organisations, professionals and individuals who have to work together to deliver the best outcomes for children
- Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family
- Children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected

### **Values: Adopted adults and birth relatives**

- Birth parents and birth families are entitled to a service that recognises the lifelong implications of adoption. They will be treated fairly
- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved – adopted adults, and birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual's life
- Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life
- Agencies have a duty to provide services that considers the welfare of all parties involved and should consider the implications of decisions and actions for everyone involved
- Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties, taking account of their views and wishes in decision-making
- Agencies should acknowledge differences in people's circumstances and establish policies that provide non-discriminatory services
- Adopted adults have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members

### **3. The Aims of the Agency**

The agency is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 by ensuring the provision of comprehensive and high quality adoption service which guarantees the best possible standards for care, safety and protection for children or young people who are looked after and who need adoptive placements. It also aims to ensure that all those whose lives have been affected by adoption are helped to identify and receive appropriate services. We are committed to working in partnership with other agencies and to ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles and good practice and works within the principles of Best Value for the council.

### **4. Objectives of the agency**

- To recruit, assess and provide adopters that meet the needs of the children to be placed for adoption within the timescales laid down by National Adoption Standards
- To provide information on the process to applicants interested in becoming adopters and on the children requiring adoption

- To ensure that adopters receive appropriate preparation, training, support and advice to enable them to offer the best possible standards of parenting, safety and protection for children or young people in their care
- To provide information on the services available to all those affected by adoption recognising that as adoption has lifelong implications for all those involved, their needs will change over time
- To provide a range of adoption support services to birth relatives, adopted adults, adopters and their children in partnership with other agencies
- To provide information on the Service that is available to those wishing to adopt from abroad
- To provide a service for non-agency adoption. For example, partner and step- parent adoptions
- To ensure that all practice promotes equal opportunities for all and values diversity of both children / young people, birth families and adopters regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, age, religious beliefs, disability or marital status
- To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair, any concerns are addressed and information about the complaints procedure is made available to all
- That the organisation regularly reviews the services it provides, consults with, and learns from, those in receipt of their services through compliments and complaints

### **5.1 Enquiries and First Contact**

Enquirers can access information on adopting with Leeds via the adoption website ([www.adopt4leeds.co.uk](http://www.adopt4leeds.co.uk)) where the latest information is provided. Alternatively, an Information Pack can be requested from the Adoption Duty Advice line. Packs are forwarded to enquirers normally the same working day and no later than 3 working days following receipt of the request. If enquirers have any interpreting requirements on information provided they can be advised about available assistance. Enquirers are invited to an Information evening held every three weeks. Details of these are provided on the website pages and in the information pack. Enquirers may attend any meeting of their choice. The Information meeting is a presentation by experienced adoption staff and adopters and includes opportunities for enquirers to ask questions and explore individual queries, including those on eligibility criteria. If enquirers then wish to progress their interest, initial enquiry/home visit request forms are made available at the end of the meeting for prospective adopters to take away for completion.

### **5.2 Initial Home Visit**

The initial enquiry home visit request can be submitted at any point during the twelve month period following the information meeting being attended, and a standard letter is sent acknowledging receipt. Following attendance at the information meeting and at the request of the prospective adopter/s, the initial home visit is undertaken and a positive recommendation to proceed agreed by the Adoption Advisor/Adoption Social Worker and endorsed by the Adoption Team Manager before the registration of interest form is accepted. Enquirers wishing to be considered for adoption and wanting to proceed to stage one of the approval process, will then return their completed registration of interest form. The DBS forms will also be verified and collected at the home visit.

The DBS form will be processed once the registration of interest has been accepted, and applicants are then asked to return a copy of the DBS check when received, to the agency. Once the copy is received, appropriate details are taken and the copy is then returned or destroyed.

**Where it is clear at the visit that the enquiry will not be progressing to stage 1, the DBS will not be completed and the registration of interest form will not be left for completion.**

Arrangements for initial visits are made by the Adoption Advisor via a telephone call and subsequent letter. The initial visit report is written up and forwarded to the Adoption Team Manager. The completed Stage One Agreement is then returned to the prospective adopters for them to sign, along with the registration of interest acceptance letter.

Where significant issues of concern are raised at the initial visit and a recommendation not to proceed is endorsed by the Adoption Team Manager, a letter is sent confirming this and giving clear reasons. Other potential options will be outlined to the prospective adopter/s in the letter.

The Adoption Advisor/Adoption Social Worker will always be clear with the prospective adopter/s at the visit, about any concerns identified. Where there is awareness that the DBS will raise issues of concern, the check will be obtained and a risk assessment undertaken before proceeding further. Past convictions will not necessarily preclude applicants, but applicants will be encouraged to share anything that might come up openly, and made aware of the risk assessment requirement.

Where health issues are identified, completion of Stage One may take longer whilst specialist information and advice is obtained. The agency will decide within five working days from receipt of a registration of interest whether to accept this, unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean that longer is needed.

### **5.3 Stage 1 Assessment**

Stage One begins when the agency accepts the registration of interest in adoption and should normally take no more than two months to complete. It is during this stage that the prospective adopter/s will be given the opportunity to explore the extent of their interest in and capacity for adoption, prior to a firmer decision on whether to proceed to Stage Two. For this reason, Stage One will focus on initial training and preparation, and on ascertaining, through prescribed checks and references, whether there is any absolute reason why the prospective adopter should not proceed further.

The prospective adopter/s will be closely involved in the Stage One process and the agency will take into account fully their wishes on how they want to work through Stage One. All prescribed checks and references are carried out during Stage One in parallel with initial training and preparation.

Where it is clear that Stage One will take longer than two months, the agency may delay making their pre-assessment decision. In this case detailed reasons for the extended timescale will be recorded on the prospective adopter's case record, along with supporting evidence.

Where the agency decides that a prospective adopter is not suitable to adopt during or at the end of Stage One, it will inform the prospective adopter of the decision and provide them with a clear written explanation of the reasons why they will not be able to proceed to Stage Two.

Prospective adopters who wish to complain about this decision may make a complaint using the agency's complaints procedure, and a complaints leaflet will be enclosed with the letter. They can also raise general concerns about the process with the National Gateway for Adoption. The Independent Review Mechanism is not available for decisions made during Stage One.

If a prospective adopter wishes to take a break between Stage One and Stage Two, or the agency recommends such a break, this will be subject to a maximum time limit of six months. Where this break is longer than six months the prospective adopters will need to re-start Stage One. The Stage One plan will take into account activities undertaken previously.

The Adoption Advisor remains the link person with the prospective adopters throughout the stage one process and will provide contact details at the initial visit for this purpose. At the end of stage one the information gathered will be reviewed and a clear recommendation made to the team manager about how to proceed.

Where the agency considers that a prospective adopter might be suitable to adopt a child, the agency will notify them of its decision and explain that they must notify the agency if they wish to proceed to Stage Two within six months of the date of the agency's notification. Stage One ends with the agency's pre assessment decision about whether the prospective adopter might be suitable to adopt

#### **5.4 Preparation Groups**

Prospective applicants will be invited to attend preparation groups as soon as possible and dates will be provided at the initial visit and confirmed in the Stage One agreement. The process will be delayed if applicants are unable to attend initial preparation, and a clear indication of their availability will be ascertained. They will also be encouraged to access e-learning components on the First4Adoption website.

Where for operational reasons we are unable to offer, or prospective adopters are unavailable to attend preparation groups within stage one, they may exceptionally attend in stage two.

The material used in preparation training is designed to provide prospective adopters with information about the adoption process, issues to consider in adopting a child and information regarding the needs of adopted children.

Preparation groups for first time adopters usually run 8 times per year. Second or subsequent adopter training is provided by the regional consortium at regular intervals, as is foster carer adoption preparation group training

#### **5.5 Stage 2 Assessment**

Based on the information gathered the agency will make a decision on whether to proceed to [the assessment \(Stage Two\)](#) stage and invite an application. This decision will be made by the Adoption Team Manager and confirmed in writing. The letter will also confirm that additional checks including school, nursery, ex-partner, employers and adult children may be undertaken, and formal referees will also be visited. The letter will have a chronology attached which applicants will be asked to complete.

**Prospective adopters are not able to commence Stage Two of the process until they have successfully completed Stage One. Stage Two will generally be completed with the same agency as Stage One.**

Once prospective adopters have notified the agency that they wish to proceed to assessment (within six months of the agency decision) the allocated Adoption Social Worker will visit to complete the Stage Two plan, agreeing arrangements for the assessment process and provisional panel dates. This marks the beginning of Stage Two which is a 4-month long process during which a home assessment is undertaken

leading to a panel recommendation and agency decision about suitability to adopt. The main part of the assessment remains a series of home visits undertaken by the Adoption Social Worker and utilising a variety of assessment tools. The completed process should usually take six months in total and stage two should be four months from date of application to date of agency decision.

Where the agency considers that more time is needed or a prospective adopter wants more than four months to complete Stage Two, the decision on the suitability of the prospective adopter will be delayed. If the decision is delayed the agency must detail the reasons for the extended timescale on the prospective adopter's case record, along with supporting evidence.

Applicants continue to have up to five working days to comment on their completed assessment report before it [goes to panel](#) if they wish. Once approved, they should be informed about the role of [the adoption register](#) and with their permission, referred as soon as possible and no later than three months after approval.

Adopters not approved can appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism at this stage.

Applicants working for Leeds Children's Social Work Service will be welcomed and considered carefully and may be advised to approach another agency to be assessed as prospective adopters where a potential conflict of interest is identified.

## **5.6 Approval and Adoption Panel**

The main purpose of the Adoption Panel is to consider and make recommendations to the Adoption agency on the following:-

- people are approved as adoptive parents
- whether an assessment to approve adopters should continue following a brief report to panel
- approve the match of a child/ren to adopters
- The placement of children for adoption where their birth parents desire adoption to be the plan

There are four Adoption Panels in Leeds. They meet monthly and have an Independent Chair. Where necessary an additional panel will be convened if circumstances demand this. Membership of the panels meets the statutory regulations and takes its members from a central list. Members include those who have personal experience of adoption and others with relevant skills and experience. All applicants are invited to attend the Adoption Panel. The Panel makes recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker who will make their decision following careful consideration of the recommendations and all of the information presented at panel. The Decision Maker must make their decision within 7 working days of the recommendation of the panel. The child's parents or guardian and prospective adopters will be informed orally of the agency decision within 2 working days and the decision will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days.

Since September 2012, the placement of children for adoption as a result of statutory intervention has been considered directly by the Agency Decision Maker in a weekly meeting. Social workers have the opportunity to present their information to the decision maker, who will generally make a decision at the meeting if all the necessary information is available. The child's parents or guardian will be informed orally of the agency decision within two working days, and the decision will be confirmed in writing within five working days.



## **6. Post Approval**

Adoptive parents are offered an additional training day once they are approved in order to help them prepare for placement. Topics covered include introductions, moving children into new families, making good connections and contact. Adoption Social Workers also ensure that adopters have access to local support networks and specialist national organisations, e.g., British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), and adopters are provided with 1 year's free subscription to Adoption UK. Related by Adoption is a 1 day training course available for grandparents or other relatives who are supporting the adopters and wish to have more in depth information regarding adoption.

Once adopters are approved, the Adoption Social Worker will work with adopters and social workers to identify suitable matches to a child/ren and will provide support and guidance throughout the whole process. All prospective adopters are referred to the regional consortium and the National Adoption Register at three months, with their agreement, if no match has been identified locally.

In order to make an informed decision about a child, the prospective adopters are given full information regarding a child (the Child Permanence Report) as well as any other additional reports about the child's needs and requirements. All children have a full adoption medical and adopters are provided with this and other health information. Adopters will meet with the social worker for the child and other relevant professionals e.g. medical adviser, nursery staff and child's foster carers to ensure they receive all the available and known information about a child. A life appreciation day will often be arranged depending on the child's age and circumstances

The proposals for the placement will be then set out in the Adoption Placement Report which will be seen by the prospective adopters before panel and will include an Adoption Support Plan based on needs identified in both the assessment of the child and adoptive household. The adopters have an opportunity to comment on the report and their views are recorded and included in the report for panel.

The child's social worker, the prospective adopters and their Adoption Social Worker will attend the Adoption Panel. The process for panel is the same as for approval with recommendations being made to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the decision on whether the adopters are suitable for a particular child. Once the matching decision has been made, a placement planning meeting is arranged to plan for the introduction and placement of the child. Good practice guidance on placements called "Flying Start" is used to guide the meeting. The planning meeting will involve the foster carer for the child, the prospective adopters, and the relevant social workers. The meeting will draw up a timetable and process for the introductions, monitoring and support, and the division of parental responsibility will be clearly outlined and confirmed.

## **7. Annual Reviews of Prospective adopters**

The Adoption Team Manager will review the adopters' approval at least annually by means of a report from the adoption social worker, together with any comments on the report from the prospective adopters.

The review should consider the prospective adopter's family circumstances: health, economic circumstances, work commitments, and whether police and medical checks are still up to date. Where the DBS checks are more than two years old, these should be renewed. The prospective adopter/s will also be asked whether their health remains unchanged since the previous medical checks arranged by the agency. Advice on whether these should be renewed should be sought from the agency's medical adviser.

Where the agency completes its review and considers that the prospective adopter remains suitable to adopt, it need only inform the prospective adopter and record its view on the prospective adopter's case record.

Where the information gathered in the review suggest to the agency that the prospective adopter may no longer be suitable to adopt, adoption regulations set out the steps that the agency must take. As with the original approval process, the report that the agency presents to panel in these circumstances must be shared with the prospective adopter so that they may make comments. The rest of the process, including the rights of the prospective adopter in the event of an unfavourable outcome, is the same as for the original approval process.

In some cases the prospective adopter/s circumstances may have changed significantly so that they are no longer suitable to adopt, or no longer wish to go ahead. The agency should note this on the prospective adopter's case record and ensure that the panel is informed that the prospective adopter no longer wishes to adopt.

## **8. Post placement support**

Planning and provision of post placement support to all parties should help secure the placement and prevent disruption. Prospective adopters are given information about local and national support services. The period between placement and legal adoption can be a stressful time for all parties and regular support is important. The child concerned continues to be a 'looked after' child and as such is subject to statutory requirements.

Once the child has been placed for adoption, visits by both the child's social worker and the family's adoption social worker will take place. The status of the child as a 'looked after' child will continue until such time as an Adoption Order is made. The child must be visited during the first week of placement by his/her social worker followed by at least one of the workers visiting weekly up to the child's first statutory review at 4 weeks post placement where the pattern of visiting will be discussed and agreed at that Review but will not be less than six weekly.

The Child's review will determine when an application to adopt may be made and advice will be given by the worker for the prospective adopters. The Annexe A Report for Court will be prepared by both the family's and child's social workers.

Life story material will be provided for the child by the child's social worker and given to the adopters for safe keeping for the child in the future. The child's social worker is responsible for ensuring that a "later life letter" is completed before the Adoption Order is made, which will give an account of the circumstances of the adoption.

## **9. Contact and the Information Exchange Service**

Assistance and support with contact arrangements between adopted children and their birth families is provided by the agency. All contact arrangements will be reached having taken account of what is in the best interests of the child, and will be specified in the Adoption Support Plan before a child is placed. Contact may include letter-box contact or face-to-face meetings between the child and members of his/her

family, including parents, siblings, or extended family members. These arrangements are usually made through agreement by all involved, though some may be the subject of a Contact Order. All forms of contact are more successful if the parties have met together before arrangements start; therefore a meeting between birth parents and adopters before the child is placed will be encouraged and supported by social workers, where this is appropriate.

An Information exchange arrangement (letterbox scheme) may be set up between the adoptive parents on behalf of the child and a birth parent or any other relative or with any other person the agency considers relevant. Support and supervision of direct contact may be arranged where necessary.

## **10. Adoption Support**

Leeds has a comprehensive adoption support service for all those affected by adoption. This service is provided in partnership with After Adoption Yorkshire who provide an independent service and with other agencies, including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

### **Adoptive Families:**

- Advice line, confidential counselling service
- Safe Base training for adopters
- ADOPT training programme for Adopters
- Support groups
- Assessment of needs
- Stay and play groups
- Theraplay technique groups
- Access to therapeutic support and educational support
- Assistance and review of contact arrangements between adopters and birth relatives
- Newsletter
- A celebrate adoption day event for adoptive families
- Training and workshops
- Flexible respite support

### **Adopted children & young people:**

- Social groups and activities
- Offering advice and training for schools to help teachers understand why school can be difficult sometimes for adopted children
- Listening and helping them to understand their feelings and background history in conjunction with adoptive parents
- Providing information about other organisations that are designed to help adopted children
- Information about registering a veto

**Birth relatives:**

- A confidential and independent advice and counselling service via After Adoption Yorkshire
- Support regarding contact arrangements
- Enabling parents to record on their child’s file whether or not they wish to have contact with their child from the age of 18

**For Adopted Adults:**

- Discussion and advice about wishes around contact with and from birth relatives
- Counselling and assistance in accessing and understanding information about their history
- Counselling /advice about the implications of tracing and making contact
- Intermediary service between adopted adults and birth relatives, support groups and workshops via After Adoption Yorkshire

**11. Management of Service**

<b>Director of Children’s Services</b> Nigel Richardson			
<b>Deputy Director Specialist and Safeguarding</b> Steve Walker			
<b>Head of Children’s Social Work</b> Saleem Tariq			
<b>Head of Service for Looked After Children</b> Robert Murray			
<b>Assistant Head of Service Looked After Children &amp; Registered Manager of Adoption Agency</b> Sarah Johal			
<b>Service Delivery Manager</b> John Roche			
<b>Deputy Service Delivery Manager</b> Val Hales			
<b>Team Manager</b> Mandy Prout	<b>Team Manager</b> Margaret Orchard	<b>Team Manager</b> Judith Matthews	<b>Team Manager</b> Lynn Buckle (adoption support)
<b>Business Support Manager</b> Pat McGreavy			

The City Council appoints elected members to oversee the work of Children’s Social work service and delegates certain responsibilities to Steven Walker who has overall responsibility for the financial management, proper management systems and the safe care of children. He is the nominated agency decision maker and Adoption Support Service Advisor (ASSA). The Department has an appointed registered manager for Adoption, Sarah Johal.

The Adoption service currently consists of 4 adoption teams. The teams work cooperatively with each other in order to provide a seamless service for children and their adoptive families. One team leads on adoption

support, providing a comprehensive range of services in partnership with other agencies. The second team leads on family finding for the children needing adoptive families using a wide variety of methods to ensure

all avenues are fully explored to identify suitable adoptive families. The third team leads on adoption recruitment and is currently involved in a number of projects with the communications team in raising the profile of adoption in the area. The fourth team leads on assessment and development.

The Adoption service is based within

Leeds Children's Social Work Service  
Merrion House  
110 Merrion Centre  
LEEDS  
LS2 8QB

Information about our Adoption Services can be accessed via our Adoption Advice Line Telephone number **0113 395 2072**, website [www.leeds.gov.uk/adoption](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/adoption) ; or e-mail [ss.fostering.and.adoption@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:ss.fostering.and.adoption@leeds.gov.uk).

## **12. Numbers, Qualifications and experience of staff**

The Registered Manager, Sarah Johal has the following qualifications: CQSW 1990 (Newcastle Upon Tyne Polytechnic); MA Social Work and Social Care Sept 2001 (Bradford University); Advanced Award in Social Work April 2002 (General Social Care Council); Post Graduate Certificate in Applied Social Work Management 2007 (Leeds Metropolitan University). She has over 23 years post qualification experience in child care, including 15 years in Adoption and Fostering. She has been a manager for 14 years within both statutory child care and adoption and fostering services.

The Service Delivery Manager for Adoption, John Roche, qualified as a social worker in 1981 and has worked in a variety of settings within Children and Families Services. John has extensive knowledge and experience in the areas of child protection and work with children with disabilities. John has previously worked as a Service Delivery Manager for a number of years within our looked after service.

There are 26 qualified social workers working within the adoption service. There are also 3 adoption advisors, this role does not require a social work qualification but extensive relevant experience is required for this role. Each of the 3 adoption teams has an adoption advisor and they lead on the initial home visits. There is one additional specialist post within the Adoption Support Team, a Family Advisor, which does not require a social work qualification. Instead, a broader professional base is required and the current post holder is a teacher with personal adoption experience. Administrative support is given by 10 FTE admin support workers including the Adoption Archivist.

## **13. Monitoring and Performance**

The Adoption Agency is monitored by external inspections carried out by Ofsted. The last inspection was in December 2010 and the report is available from the Ofsted website or the registration address as below or direct from this Service upon request. This judgement was good with outstanding features, particularly "Enjoy and Achieve" which showcases the adoption support provision for adoptive families.

Regular feedback is received from the Adoption Panels and twice yearly meetings are held between the Management team, Panel Chairs and Agency Decision Maker. The Adoption Panel chairs provide twice

yearly reports to tie in with the 6 monthly reports, providing useful feedback from their work on the panels. Statistical data is kept and the service provides an annual report to the Senior Leadership Team, members and the Executive side of the council. Activity in the adoption service is measured against national targets on a regular basis and the introduction of Adoption Scorecards by the Department for Education will provide further measurements of the activity undertaken. The service also provides data to OFSTED through the quarterly voluntary adoption return and the national dataset. Issues arising from complaints are discussed

and recommendations following complaints are implemented. A robust quality assurance framework is in place with regular auditing of files, plus evaluation feedback from adoptive parents and other service users. This is held centrally and is undertaken at key points in the adoption process.

#### **14 The Complaints Procedure**

All prospective adopters engaging with the Agency and all birth parents of child for whom the Agency is planning adoption are provided with written information about Complaints Procedures, including contact details for the Complaints Officer. All young people, for whom there is an adoption plan and who are of an appropriate age and understanding are likewise informed of the Complaints Procedures and also informed of the role of the Children's Rights Service.

#### **15 Details of the Registration Authority**

##### **OFSTED CONTACT DETAILS**

Ofsted

NBU, 3rd Floor

Royal Exchange Buildings

St Ann's Square

Manchester

M2 7LA

Telephone: 08456 404040

Fax: 08456 404049

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

Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Telephone 0845 6404040

Matters of concern about this adoption service can be referred to OFSTED who will decide what action to take.