

**Adoption Barnardo's
Yorkshire**

Adoption Agency

Statement of Purpose

2005/2006

Barnardo's Adoption Agency has a national Statement of Purpose. In addition to this, individual branches of the Agency each have a Statement of Purpose that sets out clearly their aims and objectives.

National Statement of Purpose

Individual Branches will vary in the scope of their work but the overall purpose of all work in Barnardo's as an adoption agency is encompassed in the following statement:

- To obtain family placements for referred children - this may include restoration to birth families where appropriate;
- To seek to place with a permanent family, children of any age and especially those with severe learning disabilities, physical disabilities or with emotional/behavioral problems;
- To consider prospective placement families on the basis of their capability to meet the needs of the identified target group of children. Considerable attention is given to matching, having regard to the needs of the children arising from their race, culture, religion and language. The interests of the children and young people are given first consideration and, where appropriate (having regard to their age and ability), their personal wishes are taken into account;
- To seek to provide a high level of emotional, practical and legal support to children and families as long as may be necessary.

Barnardo's is committed to the importance of racial and cultural identity in its family placement work and vigorously aims to achieve placements which are of the same race and culturally compatible with the children to be placed.

Particular and continuing attention will be given to the recruitment of placement families to meet this objective. Similarly, composition of staff teams and Panels should reflect the importance given to race and awareness of race issues should be enhanced amongst staff and Panel members.

Where exceptionally the need for a transracial placement arises, special consideration will be given to the assessment, approval, and subsequent ability of the family to support, nurture and sustain the language, religion and culture of the child.

This overall statement of purpose is augmented by the statements of purpose of the Branches operating in Barnardo's, which reflect local service arrangements and priorities.

Ethos

Barnardo's believes that every child is entitled to six "building blocks" that enable them to develop their maximum potential regardless of past adversity.

They are entitled

- to a family;
- to be safe;
- to have access to good health care;
- to go to school;
- to be heard and to be a full member of their community.

We believe that, where children cannot live with their birth family, adoption should be considered for them. We recognize that the children we seek to place are among the most vulnerable in our society.

Children placed with Barnardo's have access to a complaints procedure and their concerns are thus addressed.

Barnardo's believes that good parents come from many different backgrounds and are as varied as the children we seek to place. All applicants to Barnardo's are considered by us and asked to demonstrate that they can safely parent a child to independence.

All applicants have access to Barnardo's complaints procedure and, as prospective adopters, have access to the Independent Review Mechanism.

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Structure of Barnardo's Adoption Agency

Barnardo's Council, by way of the Adoption Committee, governs Barnardo's Adoption Agency.

The Adoption Committee is a committee of the Council and meets up to four times a year. The Adoption Committee is the management committee of the Adoption Agency.

It is made up of individual representatives from regional Adoption Panels (Committee Management Representatives), council members and Agency Decision Makers. The committee is supported in its work by the Responsible Individual and the Adoption Agency Manager. The committee advises Council on compliance and the effectiveness of its work as an Adoption Agency. It is made up of individual representatives of regional adoption panels, council members, the Responsible Individual, the Agency Manager.

The Responsible Individual is the Strategic Performance Co-ordinator who supervises the Agency Manager. This post holder is Julie Wilkes. The Adoption Agency Manager is Maura O'Reilly and both can be contacted at Barnardo's Head Office, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex, IG6 1QG.

There are seven branches (or Adoption Services) that place children for adoption and three branches offering dedicated adoption support services. A Children's Services Manager manages each branch.

The placing adoption services are:

- Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire
- New Families Colchester
- New Families Midlands
- New Families North Wales
- New Families North East
- Derwent New Families
- Jigsaw London

The adoption support services are:

- Family Connections, Barkingside
- Link Colchester
- Scottish Adoption Advice

What we do - Barnardo's Adoption Agency

- Recruits and assesses applicants who wish to become adoptive parents;
- Offers adoption preparation groups and additional training;
- Presents applicants to a properly constituted adoption panel;
- Undertakes linking and matching with children for whom adoption is the plan;
- Supervises and supports placements;
- Offers an adoption support service after placement and after the Adoption Order is made;
- Offers support and counselling to adults who have been affected by adoption;
- Offers an intermediary service to adults for whom Barnardo's is the relevant adoption agency.

Financial Management

Barnardo's Adoption Agency is part of the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies and has agreed to charge their inter-agency fee for adoption placements. This is reviewed annually.

In addition Barnardo's currently subsidises the cost of the work of the Adoption Agency with voluntary income to support the additional work done by Services to place children with very complex needs.

Barnardo's accounts are audited and published annually in Barnardo's annual report. The Adoption Agency accounts are published annually in the Adoption Agency report, having been approved by the Adoption Committee.

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Constitution

Barnardo's is a company limited by guarantee (registered in England under number 61625). It was also registered as a trust corporation on 16th December 1926. Its governing instrument is the Memorandum and Articles of Association as amended and adopted by special resolutions passed on 4th December 1997, 10th November 1999 and 17th July 2001.

It is a Registered Adoption Agency with the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The Agency is inspected tri-annually by C.S.C.I. It is a non profit making voluntary adoption agency and has been since 1947.

The objects of Barnardo's as defined by the Memorandum of Association are:

- The relief and assistance of children and young people in need;
- The promotion of the education of children and young people;
- The promotion among children of the knowledge of the Christian faith or the faith in which they were brought up;
- The relief of the poor, sick, handicapped and aged.

Further Details

Registered Provider:

Barnardo's, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex, IG6 1QG.

Telephone: 020 8550 8822

Responsible Individual: Julie Wilkes – at above address

Adoption Agency Manager: Maura O'Reilly – at above address

Conditions of Registration:-

The Barnardo's Adoption Agency is registered for Domestic Adoption Service and Adoption Support Services to Children and Adults.

BARNARDO'S YORKSHIRE REGION

Barnardo's has extensive experience in providing good quality childcare services in the Yorkshire Region.

We have well qualified employees who have developed specialist skills in their areas of expertise.

Our Regional Management Team is experienced in developing new initiatives and encouraging strong relationships with other agencies.

Partnerships

Barnardo's has found that partnership arrangements with Local Authorities, central government and other agencies offer mutual benefits. To partnership arrangements we bring:

- Flexibility;
- Human resources;
- Analysis of need;
- Advisory groups;
- Forward planning;
- Evaluation procedures;
- Accountability.

Policies and Procedures

All our child care work is supported by a range of policies and procedures which are reviewed regularly. These include the following:

- Race Equality Strategy;
- Complaints Procedures;
- Equal Opportunity Policy;
- Staff Recruitment and Selection;
- Processes;
- Care and Control Policies;
- Training and Development Policy.

Clear Direction

A rolling three year business plan ensures appropriate service planning and delivery. Our Service is required to have a clear statement of aims and objectives, which include performance indicators and targets. Quality assurance and evaluation are therefore built into our service delivery and management systems.

A Consultative Approach

We regularly evaluate our service provision with service users, partners, professional advisory groups and staff.

Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire Service

Working in partnership with children and families of all backgrounds.

Challenging discrimination and disadvantage.

Creating positive opportunities.

Barnardo's Basis and Values

Barnardo's is an organisation whose inspiration and values derive from the Christian faith. These values, enriched and shared by many people of other faiths and philosophies, provide the basis of our work with children and young people, their families and communities.

Barnardo's wishes to:

- Respect the unique worth of every person;
- Encourage people to fulfil their potential;
- Work with hope;
- Exercise responsible stewardship.

These aspirations are reflected in our Equal Opportunities Policies and our efforts to ensure that our practice challenges oppression in all its forms.

We are committed to meeting the religious, racial, linguistic and cultural needs of our users.

The Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire Service is one of over 45 Barnardo's services in the Yorkshire region. It is one of 10 services nationally working with children and adoptive families.

These services provide a range of fostering and adoption services. Families are recruited who can meet the short break, bridging and permanent placement needs of children and young people who have disabilities, are older, are from Black and minority ethnic groups or have had disrupted lives so far.

Post placement and adoption support and counselling for adults, young people and children adopted through Barnardo's is available.

Other areas of work in the Yorkshire region include:

- Work with families with young children;
- Work with and on behalf of disabled children and young people;
- Community development work;
- Work with disadvantaged young people;
- Work with children and young people with educational needs.

Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire Statement of Purpose

Structure of New Families Yorkshire

The **Children's Service Manager** has overall responsibility for the smooth operation of the Service. She directly supervises the Deputy Children's Service Manager. The current manager is Dot Jarvis and she has been in post since July 2003. She holds a Diploma in Youth and Community Work (Bradford University), Diploma in Social Work (Bradford University), and a Certificate in Management (Institute of Leadership and Management). She is a member of the Institute of Leadership and Management and is currently studying for NVQ 4 in Management. She has worked in the field of children and families since 1993 and managed a Children's Therapeutic Unit before her move to Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire.

A Deputy Children's Service Manager, currently Ruth Parker, assists the Children's Service Manager in the day to day running of the Service, takes responsibility for the Service in the absence of the Children's Service Manager and supervises a number of staff in the Service. She holds a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (University of Huddersfield), an Academic Diploma in Social Work (University of Huddersfield), an NVQ 4 in Management, a Certificate in Management (Institute of Leadership and Management) and is a member of the Institute of Leadership and Management. She has 20 years experience in childcare social work, 12 years of these in the field of adoption.

The Service has three **Senior Practitioner** posts, all of which are for qualified social workers. The workloads of social workers cover all aspects of the adoption work.

Social workers hold either the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work or the Diploma in Social Work. All either hold, or are working towards, Post Qualifying awards.

The Service has two **Service Administrators**, one of whom is part-time, and both share responsibilities for the administrative functions of the Service. One of these Service Administrators works part of her job as an **Adoption Recruitment Worker**, taking enquiries from and giving advice and information to callers interested in adoption.

The Service has one part-time **Outreach Development Worker**, who deals with advertising and recruitment.

The Service also has a part-time **Domestic Worker**.

All staff have undertaken a wide range of in-service training courses. All staff attend annual Child Protection training and have individual learning and development plans. All staff have IT skills.

What we do – Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire

- Recruit and assess applicants who wish to become adoptive parents;
- Offers preparation training workshops and post approval training;
- Presents applicants to a properly constituted adoption panel;
- Undertakes linking and matching with children for whom adoption is sought;
- Supervises and supports placements;
- Provides access to post placement support through their link worker and other agencies;
- Provide access to ongoing training opportunities for adoptive parents;
- Provides access to adoption support through the Service.

Other services include:

- **Black Emphasis**

Recruitment initiatives, aiming to recruit Black families to adopt by forging links with Black communities locally and highlighting the need for more Black families to consider adoption to meet the needs of children in the care system.

Aims

- To facilitate co-operative planning for the future care of children and young people;
- To offer services which enable the provision and maintenance of a safe and secure home for children through adoption.

Objectives

Children

- Children will have a stable home in which they feel safe and secure;
- The Service will provide opportunities for children to express their views;
- The child will feel listened to and feel that their point of view has been heard and taken into account;
- Services provided will be tailored to the individual child's needs over time;
- The child will feel that, in time of stress or difficulty, he or she can look to Service, staff and carers for advice and support;
- The child will have perceived adults to be working co-operatively for him or her;
- The child will have established a relationship of trust with Service staff and carers;
- The child will feel to be nurtured, encouraged and cared for physically and emotionally;
- The child will be able to capitalize on opportunities provided to develop their skills and talents;
- The child will have a network of supports, which stay with him/her when moving into independence.

Birth Family Members

- Birth family members will, if appropriate, have had the opportunity to meet with staff and adopters and feel that they have played a part in formulating a plan for their child's future care. They will feel that Service staff and adopters listened to and value their point of view and their relationship to the child;
- They will perceive Service staff and adopters as being encouraging of links between them and their child, whether direct or indirect, and will have a contact agreement;
- Birth parents and birth family members will have a sense that they can approach the Service for advice and support on contact issues when they need to do so.

Adopters

- Adopters will have identified Service staff as being respectful towards them as individuals and as working in partnership with them;
- Adopters will have basic and ongoing training, giving them understanding of the task they are undertaking and assisting them in exploring the implications for them and for their family;
- Adopters will have felt enabled to work with the emotional, behavioural and developmental needs of the children placed with them. They will have developed supportive relationships with staff and other carers, on which they feel they can rely.

Recruitment of Prospective Adopters

Adoption Barnardo's aim to recruit prospective adopters who can meet the needs of the children that they seek to place. These children are:

- **Children of White Western European heritage** - Single children of school age (aged 5 years and older), groups of brothers and sisters where children need to be placed together. Where there are two siblings, one child would usually be aged 5 years or older however larger sibling groups of 3 or more children may be of all ages from babies to school age.
- **Children of Asian heritage** - Single children aged 3 years and older and groups of brothers and sisters where at least one child is aged 4 years or older. Many of these children may have mixed heritage where one parent is of Asian heritage and the other White European, Black African or Black African Caribbean heritage.
- **Children of Black African/Black African Caribbean heritage** - Children of all ages from babies to school age. These children may be single children or need to be placed in sibling groups or two or more. Many of these children may have mixed heritage where one parent is Black African or Black African Caribbean and the other is of a different heritage.
- **Children of other Ethnic Minority Communities of all ages** - We are increasingly aware of children in need of adoptive placements whose heritage is, for example, Middle Eastern or Eastern European.
- **Disabled children of all ages** – Aged from babies upwards, who have a range of extra needs. These children may be physically disabled, learning disabled, have special health needs or specific emotional needs.

Recruitment is achieved in a number of ways; by promoting the service through the distribution of posters and leaflets; by promotional events such as the Great Yorkshire Show; by press advertising and publicity; by advertisements in directories such as Yellow Pages; by presentations which are given by staff to the general public. Many prospective adopters are recruited by recommendation from existing service users and some are second and third time adopters.

All applications are treated equally and considered on their merit regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, marital status, social class or disability. We value diversity, individuality and experience.

Preparation and Training

The Aims

- To help prospective adopters for prepare for placement of a child traumatised by abuse, loss and separation;
- To make a decision on whether applicants are ready, and feel able, to assume the responsibility of the task for which they are applying;
- To identify the experience, knowledge, skills and abilities applicants bring to the task ahead and where there are gaps;
- To prepare reports for presentation to the Adoption Panel.

The Process

- We require prospective adopters to take control of their own learning by arranging their attendance at training sessions; taking time off to see their Service worker; motivating themselves in completing questionnaires; undertaking essential reading and setting the pace for their learning;
- Encourages applicants to focus on the tasks ahead as much as on preparing their application for approval. This is to reinforce that, whilst approval is an important crossroads on the 'road to placement', it is a successful and emotionally satisfying placement for themselves and the child/children, which is the ultimate goal;
- Seeks to empower applicants to assess for themselves whether they wish to proceed rather than feeling totally at the mercy of the agency's decision making. Applicants receive a detailed task description and person profile enabling them to consider the issues for themselves in the way they would normally look at the pros and cons of making a decision of this importance;
- Makes explicit the criteria on which the Service is assessing an applicant's suitability. By sharing this from the outset with applicants they can begin to gather this evidence themselves. As applicants do bring experience and skills to their application, this way of working seeks to avoid the de-skilling which applicants can otherwise experience at the outset of an 'assessment'. It also helps applicants to focus on gaps in their experience, etc. In this way they and the Service can look at ways to address these weak areas in their application and judge together if and how they affect proceeding with the application;
- Enables applicants to see what will be included in the report to the Adoption Panel. The work applicants complete in their own time and in sessions with their Service worker contributes directly to this report;

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- Enables prospective adopters to see what will be included in the report to the Adoption Panel. Prospective adopters complete work in their own time, as well as contributing through assessment sessions with their allocated Service worker, and have the opportunity to comment on the completed report before it is presented to the Adoption Panel;
- Enables prospective adopters to attend the Adoption Panel, supported by their Service worker. This gives prospective adopters opportunity to respond to questions asked by Panel for the purpose of clarification or gaining further information. It is also an opportunity for the applicants to ask questions of, or give further information to, Panel;
- Gives prospective adopters, who are not recommended by Panel, options either to accept the proposed decision, make representation to the Agency Decision Maker or apply to the Independent Review Mechanism. In the event of such a situation occurring, the Service worker will assist the prospective adopters to fully explore these options;
- Ensures that approved prospective adopters are fully involved in the family finding and linking process by having regular contact with their link worker and discussion about children who are a potential link;
- Ensures that adopters are fully supported by the Service worker throughout the process from the start of the assessment up to the making of an Adoption Order on a child placed. During the assessment process this is achieved by being clear about expectations and having an open and honest approach to the process. We ensure that prospective adopters are kept informed and involved during the family finding process and their Service worker supports them in their decision making. Once a child is placed, the Service worker will visit weekly until the first Child Care Review, fortnightly for the next three months and monthly thereafter. However, we recognize that sometimes this is not enough and we aim to provide the level of support that is required by our adopters, either by additional visits or telephone contact between visits. Continuity is provided by having the same link worker, whenever possible, throughout the process. Post adoption support is provided to families until the child becomes an adult.

Training Workshops

The preparation sessions aim to inform applicants on the issues they need to address in preparing to adopt.

Core training programme

- Introductory meeting;
- The Adoption Circle – issues of loss/separation for child, birth family, adopters;
- The importance of attachment and early bonding;
- Values and working with differences;
- Child's identity, openness and contact issues;
- Behaviour and development;
- Protecting children;
- Openness and contact;
- What happens next.

Applications and Approvals 2005/6

180 households made an enquiry about adoption. 16 initial interviews were undertaken and there were 9 new applications to adopt. Of the 9 households involved in preparation and training for adoption in the year 3 had applied before 31st March 2005.

9 households were approved. Of these, 2 households had placements in the year. Of the 2 households approved and awaiting placement on 1st April 2005 both had placements during the year.

Children Placed 2005/6

Adoption Orders were made in respect of 6 children, with 5 having been in placement for 6-12 months and 1 in placement for 12-24 months at the time the orders were made.

During the year 2005/6 there were 11 children placed for adoption and a total of 20 children being supported in adoption placements.

The origins of the children newly placed were 6 of White British origin, 3 of White British/Asian origin, 1 of White British/African Caribbean origin and 1 of White/Asian/African Caribbean.

The average age of the children at the time of placement was 2 years 11 months as compared with 4/5 years old in 2004/5, 3 years old in 2003/4 and 2/3 years old in 2002/3. The eldest was 5 years and 5 months and the youngest 8 months. There were 5 girls and 6 boys.

Quality Monitoring

Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire take pride in the quality of the service that they provide to both service users and local authorities. Monitoring of the Service is carried out in a number of ways:

- Prospective adopters are sent monitoring forms at each stage of the adoption process and the feedback from these is analysed and used to inform future practice. Local authority workers who have placed children with New Families adopters are also sent monitoring forms at the end of the adoption process and their feedback is analysed and used to inform future practice.
- Barnardo's Corporate Audit and Inspection Service regularly inspects the Service, monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the Service. The Corporate Audit and Inspection Service report back to the Adoption Agency Council.
- The Service Manager prepares quarterly reports for the Assistant Director, Children's Services who monitors the performance of the Service.
- Annual Reports are prepared and submitted to the Adoption Agency Manager.
- Reports are made to the Adoption Committee through the Committee Management Representative and the Regional Decision Maker.

Complaints

We have an active commitment to addressing complaints and concerns, attempting to learn from them and allowing them to inform our practice. We seek to ensure that families are familiar with a range of staff and feel comfortable in expressing their points of view in the knowledge that we will listen and take on board dissatisfaction.

We view an accessible and responsive complaints process as a key element in our Child Protection strategy. Complaints leaflets are provided to adult enquirers in an application packs sent out to prospective adopters. Service users are encouraged to discuss their complaints with their social worker and/or a Service Manager.

Dot Jarvis, Children's Service Manager, and Ruth Parker, Deputy Children's Service Manager, ensure that one of them meets all applicants at the mid stage during the assessment process to ensure that any issues of dissatisfaction can be addressed at an early stage.

If, following an Adoption Panel recommendation, the Agency Decision Maker proposes not to approve an application, the prospective adopters will have the option either to accept the decision, make written representation to the Agency Decision Maker or have their application heard by the Independent Review Mechanism. These options are encompassed by our Panel Representation Procedures and will be clearly explained and discussed with prospective adopters.

During the year 2005/6 one couple were not recommended and approved by the Adoption Decision Maker and asked for their application to be reviewed by the IRM. The recommendation was upheld. Another couple whose application was not recommended by the Service's Adoption Panel made representation to the Agency Decision Maker. Their application was reviewed by the same Adoption Panel and they were recommended and subsequently approved. Barnardo's encourages the local resolution of concerns and complaints at the earliest opportunity but has a formal complaints procedure as required by the Children Act 1989.

Making a Complaint

Children and adults can complain directly to their Service worker, the Children's Service Manager or the Deputy Children's Service Manager.

Alternatively children and adults can speak directly with Rachel Holden Rowley, Complaints Co-ordinator at Barnardo's Regional Office, Four Gables, Clarence Road, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 4LB. Tel no: 0113 393 3200.

Where the complaint is about the Children's Service Manager, they should be addressed to Rachel Holden Rowley, Complaints Co-ordinator at Barnardo's Regional Office, or to Ron Oliver, Assistant Director Children's Services. Ron Oliver can be contacted at Barnardo's East Yorkshire Office, Village Farm Business Centre, East Street, Holme on the Wolds, East Yorkshire, HU17 7GA. Tel. no. 01430 810003.

Complaints can also be made to the **Commission for Social Care Inspection**, 11th Floor, West Point, 501 Chester Road, Old Trafford, Manchester. M16 9HU
Telephone: 0161 876 2410 E mail: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Copies of this Statement are routinely given to people using the services provided by the Adoption Barnardo's Yorkshire Agency.

Additional copies can be obtained from the Service Office.

A Children's Guide to our services is also

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