

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR ADOPTION 2015 - 2016

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform and seek support from Cabinet in the delivery of the North Lincolnshire Statement of Purpose for Adoption 2015 – 2016 and the Child's and Young Person's Version.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire Council's Adoption Service provides a fully comprehensive service for both adoption and adoption support services.
- 2.2 The North Lincolnshire Adoption Team consists of qualified, experienced and skilled social workers. In 2014/15
- 16 children were adopted in 2014/15.
 - the service met its target and recruited 25 adopters/households
 - the 2011 – 2014 Adoption Scorecard for North Lincolnshire Adoption Service showed improvement and performance was better than the England Average. It is predicted that good performance will continue and this will be reflected in the 2012 - 2015 Adoption Scorecard.
 - the panel chair commented in the six monthly Adoption Business report "work undertaken in North Lincolnshire continues to be of a very high quality and much appreciated by prospective adopters"
- 2.3 North Lincolnshire works to seek permanence and match children and adopters in a timely manner, however some cases take longer due to the age and the complexity of the child's needs.
- 2.4 This statement of purpose outlines what the adoption service provides. It is available to children, adopters, birth parents and staff and is also available on the website. There is a child's and young person's version of this statement of purpose.
- 2.5 The Statement of Purpose is produced in compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003; Local Authority Adoption Services (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005; Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies and

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 That the Statement of Purpose for Adoption is supported.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Statement of Purpose is a statutory requirement. The Adoption Service will continue to fulfil its regulatory requirements and continue to aim to provide the very best service to children and adults involved in the adoption process.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 The Adoption Service works to the financial budget that has been set for adoption in order to fulfil its functions.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 An integrated impact assessment has been completed.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 Adopter children and young people contribute to the development of services and this is reflected in the revised Statement of Purpose.

7.2 There are no conflicts of interest declared.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Cabinet supports the Statement of Purpose and work of the Adoption Service

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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Date: 8/6/15

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Statement of Purpose Adoption 2015–2016
- Young Person's Statement of Purpose Adoption 2015-2016



Statement of Purpose

North Lincolnshire Council

Adoption Service

2015 - 2016



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This information in this Statement of Purpose can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please phone **01724 297024** if you need any of these or any other help to access North Lincolnshire's services.

This Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Adoption. It explains the aims, objectives and services provided by North Lincolnshire Council's Adoption Service. It is made available to staff and the general public.

1. Introduction

North Lincolnshire Council's Adoption Service provides a fully comprehensive service for both adoption services and adoption support services. This Statement of Purpose covers both areas of service delivery.

This statement can be used as a guide as to what the adoption service will provide. It is available to all members of staff, children, adopters and birth parents and is also available on our website. There is also a children's version of this statement of purpose.

This document is produced in compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003; Local Authority Adoption Services (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005; Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulation's 2011 and 2012 and the Statutory Guidance on Adoption 2013.

All information is correct as at 1st May 2015 and has been approved as required.

This document will be revised annually.

The Adoption Service is registered with **OFSTED**, who can be contacted as follows;

OFSTED

Piccadilly Street

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone 0300 123 1231

Email; enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



2. Priority Outcomes of North Lincolnshire Council

Children and Young People's Plan 2013 - 2016

The principles upon which we work together with our customers and partners are underpinned within the Children and Young People's Plan 2013 – 2016. This plan makes clear our strategic priorities and ambitions to meet the needs of children, young people and their families across North Lincolnshire. It also sets out our vision, our values and principles as well as our shared commitment to work together whereby children, young people and their families are at the centre of all that we do.

The plan is set within the context of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and informed by the Local Needs Assessment, partnership reviews and national drivers.

Our vision, values and principles

Vision

By working together we will achieve our vision of '**SAFE** Children, **SUPPORTED** Families, **TRANSFORMED** lives'.

Values

For our children and young people, we believe that they have the right;

- To feel safe and be safe
- To a stable family life
- For their individual circumstances, background and culture to be recognised, respected and valued
- To be able to discover their strengths and reach their potential
- To contribute positively to their local community
- To have services and support that meets their needs
- To be consulted on plans, interventions and services that directly affect them

As a workforce, we believe that we should be;

- Ambitious for every child and young person
- Excellent in our practice
- Committed to partnership working and people working together to improve services and outcomes
- Respected and valued as professionals

Principles;

We will work together to ensure that;

- Approaches and services are person centred and designed around the needs of the individual or family rather than an organisation
- Needs are identified early and support is delivered at the earliest point
- Services are targeted to meet assessed need and implemented locally
- We actively collaborate and engage with service users in assessment, decision making and planning
- That child and family plans are outcome focussed
- We recognise and make use of the top 10 insights from Experience Led Commissioning

Strategic Priorities

We remain committed to our strategic priorities;

- **Raise Aspirations** –so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person wants to be the best they can be and they achieve their potential
- **Children and Young People Feel Safe and Are Safe** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person feels safe and is safe wherever they are and whatever they do
- **Best Start** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child has the best start in life and parents support themselves and their families
- **Close the Gaps** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where there is equality for all and no child, young person or family is disadvantaged
- **Celebrate and Engage Children and Young People** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where children and young people’s achievements are recognised and celebrated and they are valued as part of communities
- **One vision, one workforce** – so that North Lincolnshire is a place where services are child centred and where they are acceptable, accessible and available in the right place at the right time

Safeguarding Children

We also have priorities relating to safeguarding children and young people at risk from harm, which aligns to the overarching strategic priority ‘Children and Young People Feel Safe and Are Safe’. Our safeguarding arrangements are overseen by the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) which has identified priority actions;

- Reduce harm from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Reduce harm from neglect

We have developed our approach to safeguarding and we are committed to providing early help services to support parents to raise their children, keep them safe and help them to reach their potential. The Early Help Safeguarding Strategy outlines our intent and shared practice guidance to safeguard children.

The Adoption Statement of Purpose is underpinned by these key priorities. As an Adoption Service we work with our partners to ensure that every child achieves their potential and is safe, responding appropriately to the assessed needs of all looked after children, to ensure that their life chances are maximised. First and foremost we believe that children should reside within their birth family but where this is not possible and where permanency is required we believe that adoption is a way in which to achieve legal permanence and improved outcomes for children. Adoption remains a positive and secure option for many of those children who cannot live with their birth family.

Working with our partners we play a key role within the team around the child and in achieving legal permanence for children. We work very closely with colleagues in the social work teams, our partner agencies across North Lincolnshire and within the Yorkshire and Humber Adoption Consortium.

Adoption Support Services focus on the maintenance and enhancement of secure adoptive relationships that will last through childhood and beyond, whilst supporting the fulfilment of the identify needs of adopted children which may include various forms of contact with birth family members.

The Adoption Service has highly experienced workers who promote high standards and best practice in delivering all areas of this service. We continually strive to improve our practice and increase our learning and knowledge.



3. Values and Principles of North Lincolnshire Adoption Service

North Lincolnshire Council's Adoption Service shares the values and principles that underpin the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014; the values that are contained within the Adoption Charter and the values that are reflected within the adoption reform agenda. They can be summarised as follows;

Values – Children and adoptive families

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- 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.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.
- Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of the children waiting to be adopted.
- 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 and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- 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.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential for the National Minimum Standards (NMS) to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Adoption Support Agencies.

Values – adopted adults and birth relatives

- 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 reverberate and 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 involved, 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.

We also continue to work to the values within the Adoption Charter, which was published in 2011. The Charter was one of the first developments which preceded a period in which there has been significant adoption reform. This Charter outlines what we will do to support children and young people going through adoption as well as what our expectations are from adoptive parents. It is as follows;

Children Come First

- Adoption is first and foremost a service for children and young people who cannot live with their birth family. Children and young people will be helped to understand what adoption means and will be supported throughout the adoption journey and beyond by experienced professionals.
- Adoption is a life-changing decision that affects the child, and his or her birth and adoptive families. It must be made with the child's best interests, wishes, feelings and needs at its heart and on the basis of sound evidence and high quality assessments.

North Lincolnshire Adoption Service will:

- Ensure that the children and young people are placed, with siblings wherever possible, within a timescales that is best for them and without unnecessary delay.
- Treat prospective adopters and adopters with openness, fairness and respect.

- Make prospective adopters first points of contact informative and welcoming.
- Approach adopter recruitment in the spirit of inclusiveness with a view to identifying potential and opportunity –no-one will be automatically excluded.
- Recruit prospective adopters who can meet all or most of the needs of children and young people waiting for, or likely to need, adoption and signpost prospective adopters to other agencies if there is insufficient local demand.
- Explain to prospective adopters the needs and profiles of the children and young people waiting to be adopted.
- Ensure preparation and training, the assessment and approval processes are explained and proceed efficiently.
- Regularly review progress on matching with prospective adopters, and inform them about the Adoption Register and refer them to this within required timescales.
- Provide adopters and prospective adopters with information, counselling and support, as and when needed, throughout the adoption journey and beyond.
- Provide prospective adopters with information about the Independent Review Mechanism.
- Work in partnership, and with other agencies and the Courts, to ensure that all decisions are timely and joined up.

Adoptive Parents must:

- Be aware that adoption often brings challenges as well as joy, be realistic about the needs of children and young people awaiting adoption, and accept that with support they may be able to consider adopting a child with a different profile to the child they originally envisaged adopting.
- Make the most of opportunities to develop their parenting skills, and seek support when needed at the earliest stage.
- Do all they can to enable their adopted child to feel loved and secure and to reach their full potential.

4. Aims and objectives of North Lincolnshire Adoption Service

- North Lincolnshire Council aims to deliver a high quality adoption service and adoption support service each of which meets the needs of its service users. This includes children in its area who may be or are placed for adoption; children and adults who have been adopted and their birth parents and relatives. It also includes people who may wish to adopt a child or have applied to become adoptive parents or have adopted a child.
- The welfare of any child who has been, or may become, adopted is the paramount consideration of all adoption services provided by the Council and the safeguarding of every child's welfare, safety and security is at the heart of the work of the adoption service. We will ensure that children feel safe and are safe and that they understand how to protect themselves. The safety and protection of children will be promoted and addressed through the functions of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), effective multi-agency working and clear procedures in line with 'Working Together' guidance 2014. Safer Recruitment practices and regular child protection training for staff, volunteers and adoption panel members will all be integral to safeguarding.
- Where it is not possible or safe for children to be brought up within their own family we will work with everyone concerned to help the child to move on to a permanent and stable alternative family. Adoption is seen as a positive means of providing stability and permanence for children who cannot live within their birth family. Where adoption is identified as the appropriate care plan for a child we will work together with all others involved in the child's life to ensure that this happens without delay. This is achieved through early intervention, timely decision making, and effective planning with regard to relevant timescales. Children with a plan of adoption are referred to the adoption service early to enable initial family finding which includes the consideration of early permanence.
- Our approach is underpinned by all working closely together, performance reporting and monitoring processes that review family finding activity; the assessed needs of children and identifies specific additional steps to be taken in order to secure a suitable adoptive or permanent placement. Throughout we will remain mindful of each child's stage of development and 'time in the life of the child'.
- We recognise the lifelong impact of adoption and we aim to deliver support to all parties at all stages in the process. Adoption support services will be both universal and particular to the needs of individual service users. Provision of services will reflect the assessed needs of each service user. The overall aim being to ensure that each child who receives a service from the Adoption Service is provided with the opportunity, through the care offered by their adoptive family and through the support of North Lincolnshire Children's Services and partner agencies, to develop to their full potential and achieve

positive outcomes in terms of their safety, education, health, leisure activities, and self-esteem and identity.

- We will actively promote the educational achievement of children in partnership with prospective adopters / adopters. This is achieved through the implementation of our broad education policy - 'Creating Success for Children in Care', together with our priority to raise aspirations.
- We aim to help children to develop a positive self-esteem, emotional resilience and knowledge of their background as a means of supporting and valuing their diversity and identity needs. We recognise that achieving these outcomes demand a clear focus on the specific individual needs of children coupled with an awareness of the life-long nature of adoption and being an adopted person. Some of the main elements of this are:
 1. *High quality assessments and child permanence reports, which are quality assured at a senior level.*
 2. *A commitment to the careful preparation of children through direct work and keeping children informed throughout the adoption process.*
 3. *Children with a plan of adoption will be carefully prepared for adoption, using direct work techniques and the appropriate Children's Guide. They will have a personalised record of their family and personal history to keep.*
 4. *Utilisation of the following guides;*
 - a. *A Younger Child's guide to Adoption (boy version and girl version)*
 - b. *A Child's Guide to Adoption (boy version and girl version)*
 - c. *Young People's Guide to Adoption Support Services in North Lincolnshire*
 - d. *North Lincolnshire Adoption Service After 18 Guide*
 5. *Prospective adopters will be assessed on their capacity to safely meet the needs of children for whom adoption is the plan.*
 6. *Contact plans that are based on the assessed needs of the child and which are reviewed where required, taking into account the wishes and views of all involved.*
- The voice of children in care and/or adopted is critical to achieving the best possible outcomes for them. We are therefore committed to listening to children and to taking their views, wishes and feelings into account when making decisions on their behalf. We have developed a range of consultation

and participation processes to ensure that all children are consulted, unless by virtue of their age – for example a baby or infant - and level of understanding makes ascertaining their views, wishes and feelings not possible.

- A variety of methods or approaches are used to establish children’s views including play or direct work, questionnaires, and interviews. Where children are disabled and are unable to express their views and feelings verbally or in writing we ensure that they have access to other means of communication such as IT or through a specialist professional who possesses the requisite communication skills.
- Children can also access advocacy and be given advice with regard to contacting the Children’s Rights Director and Ofsted.
- As a service we aim to recruit or locate sufficient numbers of prospective adopters to match the wide range of individual needs of North Lincolnshire children requiring adoption and the needs of those children waiting nationally.
- Where in-house adopters are not available we utilise the Yorkshire and Humber Adoption Consortium and the National Adoption Register without delay. Where this proves fruitless a variety of other publicity avenues are used such as Adoption Link, BAAF Activity Days, Profiling Events and publications such as Be My Parent, Children Who Wait and country wide circulars.
- The needs of individual children are considered as paramount and each case is considered on the basis of how individual childrens needs can best be met. No child will be left waiting indefinitely for a ‘perfect match’. Children’s needs will be accurately assessed and they will be matched with adopters who are able to provide a safe, loving and permanent home. Support will be provided to help achieve a successful and lasting placement.
- The preparation and assessment of prospective adopters covers both children’s generic or basic health needs and particular needs resulting from children’s experiences of past trauma, abuse and neglect. Implications for re-parenting children with developmental delay and attachment problems are fully explored.
- Where a family has been identified for a child the prospective adopters are provided with full and detailed information regarding the child’s health. They will also have the opportunity to meet with medical professionals. Thereafter, the child’s health needs are addressed as a key part of the adoption support plan or where there is an assessment for adoption support services post adoption. In certain cases referrals are made to the CAMHS service who,

subject to their criteria and assessments, will undertake work with adoptive children and/or their families in partnership with Children's Services.

- To work in partnership with education professionals, health professionals and other organisations to develop and deliver informed, responsive and effective support services to all parties affected by adoption. These services should reflect the lifelong implications of adoption. Within North Lincolnshire, we have an excellent partnership with the local CAMHS.
- Enquiries from all prospective adopters will be responded to promptly and without prejudice, we are committed to ensuring no one experiences discrimination in terms of personal differences such as age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, colour, religion, racial, ethnic or social origin, marital or partnership status, employment status. Each enquirer will be given clear information about recruitment processes and the preparation, assessment and approval process.
- People wishing to adopt children from overseas will be provided with relevant information and initial counselling from the Adoption Service. If enquirers wish to take their interest further, this can be obtained by receiving more detailed preparation from Yorkshire Adoption a regional Voluntary Agency. However, should applicants wish to have a full assessment carried out, this is a private arrangement and they will become responsible for the payment of a fee to the Yorkshire Adoption Agency.
- Adopted adults will be enabled to gain access to their birth records and will be given assistance in making choices about search and reunion. Services may be provided through a service level agreement between the council and a registered Adoption Support Agency or the council's own Adoption Service staff.
- The service aims to involve birth families as much as possible, treating them with openness and respect and encouraging full participation wherever possible. To help birth families maximise the contribution they can make to promoting and preserving their child's heritage and sense of identity. We recognise the specific needs of birth families in the adoption process and provide or help access services which take account of their feelings of loss and grief. Free access to independent support services will be available in all cases.
- Assistance to birth relatives regarding intermediary services will take account of the likely impact of disclosure on all parties involved and wherever possible will obtain consent before progressing to contact.
- Appropriately qualified and experienced practitioners will deliver all services.

5. Our Focus on Outcomes 2015 – 2016

As a service we have continuously shown improvement in our performance and the Adoption Annual Report 2014 – 2015 reflects this. A significant percentage of children leaving care, who cannot reside with their birth family, and who achieve permanence remains high and we have maintained this since 2012 / 13. At 50% our performance is high when compared to the 35% for England in 2013 / 14. We have also assessed and approved the 25 adoptive households 2014 – 2015 that we said we were going to.

We have embraced the changes brought about by the adoption reform agenda. This reform commenced in March 2012 when the Government published 'An Action Plan for Adoption; Tackling Delay'. This action plan set out the Government's intentions to make changes to the adoption system in England. The aim was to speed up the process for children and to overhaul the service for prospective adopters as well as strengthening local accountability for the timeliness of adoption services. Further reform was seen in 2013 and 2014 culminating in the Children and Families Act 2014, with the regulatory requirements for adoption being updated to reflect this period of reform.

A summary of some of the changes within adoption are as follows;

- To refer to the National Adoption Register, children with an adoption plan and approved adopters, within three months.
- A two stage adoption assessment planning process with a defined and reduced timescale (as well as a fast-track process for second time adopters and foster carers wishing to adopt a child already in their care).
- The National Gateway for Adoption – operating as First4Adoption – was launched in April 2013 and provides a first point of contact for anyone interested in adoption.
- Significant amounts of funding were invested into Adoption Agencies, both through the Adoption Reform Grant to Local Authorities and grants to the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies
- The prohibition on a Local Authority from referring to its Adoption Panel a decision on whether a child (who is subject to care proceedings) should be adopted.
- The establishment of a framework for 'Fostering for Adoption' and the Children and Families Act 2014 imposed a new duty on a Local Authority looking after a child to give preference to her / his placement in a 'Fostering for Adoption' placement if one is available.

- The Adoption Passport for adopters that sets out in one place the help and supports that are available to them.
- Adoption scorecards now provide a standardised means of comparing adoption service provision across Local Authorities with respect to timeliness of decision-making for children requiring adoption, assessment of prospective adopters, numbers and proportions of children being adopted and their characteristics.
- Approved adopters to have access to the Adoption Register so they can seek out their own matches with children waiting to be adopted, rather than waiting for a social worker to identify a suitable match.
- From 1st April 2015 employed adopters are entitled to the same pay and leave as birth parents. This includes those who want to consider fostering for adoption.
- Making sure children adopted from care get the attention they need at school by;
 1. Extending the Pupil Premium.
 2. Giving them priority in school admissions.
 3. Giving access to early education from age 2 to children adopted from care.
- The national launch of the £19.3 million Adoption Support Fund from the 1st May 2015 to help adoptive families access high-quality therapeutic support services.

Moving forward into 2015 – 2016 adoption continues to remain high on the agenda in North Lincolnshire and our key outcomes as a service are;

- 1. To encourage more people to adopt and in particular to consider early permanence placements and also providing placements for harder to place children.**
- 2. To reduce the time it takes for children to be placed with a loving family.**
- 3. To make sure adoptive families get the support they need.**

We will do the above by ensuring;

- Where prospective adopters have identified that they would like to parent a very young child we are now preparing them for the wait they may experience. Regionally there are now more adopters waiting for very young children than there are very young children. For those adopters who want very young children we do discuss with them early permanence whilst also being mindful that for some adopters the risks associated with this is not something they feel able to consider, which we respect. It is increasingly likely that if approved

adopters want to experience parenting a young child then this will be via an early permanence arrangement.

- We work closely with prospective adopters and approved adopters to help them understand the profiles of those children who are waiting for an adoptive family. We offer further training / activity sessions in thinking about caring for siblings and harder to place children via the Consortium and via their one to one sessions with their Adoption Social Worker. We work hard to connect our adopters with children who are waiting and a valuable resource in doing this is Adoption Link and Activity Days. By using these methods adopters waiting can visibly see and understand the needs of the children waiting and connections can be made. It also enables adopters waiting to feel more proactive in their own family finding.
- We continue to monitor the plans of children closely by way of the Adoption Cohorts and the Pre-Birth cohorts so that we can ensure that we are tracking assessments to ensure no delay and where appropriate early permanence is considered and we can seek an early permanence placement.
- The provision of universal adoption support and also timely adoption support assessments where requested / required, with referrals to the Adoption Support Fund where appropriate and where the Fund Criteria is met.
- We will continue to work closely with the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium and to take a regional approach in the provision of adoption services.

Yorkshire and Humber Consortium

North Lincolnshire has always been a lead player in respect to the Consortium and it was North Lincolnshire who developed the business contract for the Consortium. The Consortium is well supported by the Regional ADCS and has always been a forward thinking Consortium. This meant that it was well placed to add value to the National Adoption Reforms as well as individual Local Authority provision and ambition. Mick Gibbs, Assistant Director for North Lincolnshire Children's Services is also the Chair of the Consortium Executive Board. Mick directly manages Nic Haughton, who is the Yorkshire and Humber Adoption Consortium Manager.

Over 2013 - 2015 there has been significant work within the Consortium and there has been a real focus by all consortium members on recruiting more families, placing more children, improving timescales and beginning to take a more joined up approach in respect to adoption support. The current membership stands at 15 Local Authorities, 3 Voluntary Adoption Agencies and 1 Adoption Support Agency.

6. Service and Staff Profile

The Adoption Service continues to be based at Church Square House, 30 – 40 High Street, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, DN15 6NL. The office is situated in the town centre and is accessible by way of frequent public transport.

There is a strong culture within the Adoption Service amongst all staff of continuously looking at ways in which we can improve and develop the services we provide. This is reflected in our performance.

In August 2014 Ofsted visited to complete a Thematic Survey and adoption cases formed part of this survey. The outcome was the recognition that there was excellent practice taking place in North Lincolnshire and that there were excellent working relationships across the teams. Having the Adoption Team based with the Children's Social Work Services is a significant factor in good and effective working relationships.

Retention of staff is excellent within the Adoption Service. The last staff member to leave the service was in 2012 and this was due to retirement. The service is staffed by one Service Manager, six full time Adoption Social Workers and four part time Adoption Social Workers.

All the workers have varying experience and length of time in service and Adoption Social Workers undertake the following work;

- Family finding for children
- Recruiting and assessing prospective adopters
- Step parent adoption
- Facilitating Training
- Family finding for adopters
- Supporting adoptive placements
- Post Adoption Support assessments
- Support Groups
- Birth Record Counselling

We do not have separate post adoption workers / team. Our rationale for this is due to us being a smaller Local Authority. We have not wanted to limit any workers skill set in any particular area i.e. to have only one support worker and be reliant upon that person to provide post adoption support, which could also then impact upon

capacity of the support services we can provide. Instead, we have workers who are skilled in all areas of work but who also have the opportunity to take lead roles based upon their areas of interest and so for example, we have 2 senior workers who take the lead in supervising some staff; we have another worker who leads on training; a worker who leads on recruitment and two workers who lead in developing post adoption support services and a particular theme for 2015 – 2016 is the adopted child and education.

We have found that the above works well for us as a smaller authority and the benefit to the above (and also evidenced via the feedback we receive) is that we know our families in North Lincolnshire and that our families feel confident in approaching the team to request support. Our adoptive families have the opportunity to meet all of the team at the various social events we hold.

The Adoption Support Advisor (ASSA) for North Lincolnshire is Di Rees. Di is a Service Manager who fulfils the requirement of the ASSA role by having many years of experience across Children's Services and this also includes experience in adoption work. In 2015 – 2016 there will be monthly meetings between the ASSA and Service Manager for Adoption to consider any adoption support issues / developments.



NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE REGISTERED PROVIDER AND REGISTERED MANAGER

The Registered Provider	Relevant qualifications;
<p>Mrs Tracy Eaden Principal Officer (Regulatory & Support Services) North Lincolnshire Council Hewson House Station Road Brigg North Lincolnshire DN20 8XJ</p> <p>tracy.eaden@northlincs.gov.uk</p> <p>01724 297024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIPSW • PQCCA • PQ Post Graduate Certificate • Diploma Child Social Work Studies • CMI Level 7 Leadership
The Registered Manager	Relevant qualifications;
<p>Mrs Karen Everatt Service Manager (Adoption) North Lincolnshire Council Church Square Scunthorpe North Lincolnshire DN15 6NL</p> <p>karen.everatt@northlincs.gov.uk</p> <p>01724 297024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Hons (Social Policy & Criminology) • Diploma in Social Work • Masters in Social Work • Post Qualifying Award in Childcare • Diploma in Counselling • ILM Level 3 Management <p>Experience;</p> <p>Karen has been a qualified Social Worker since 1999 and she has always worked within Statutory Children’s Services.</p>

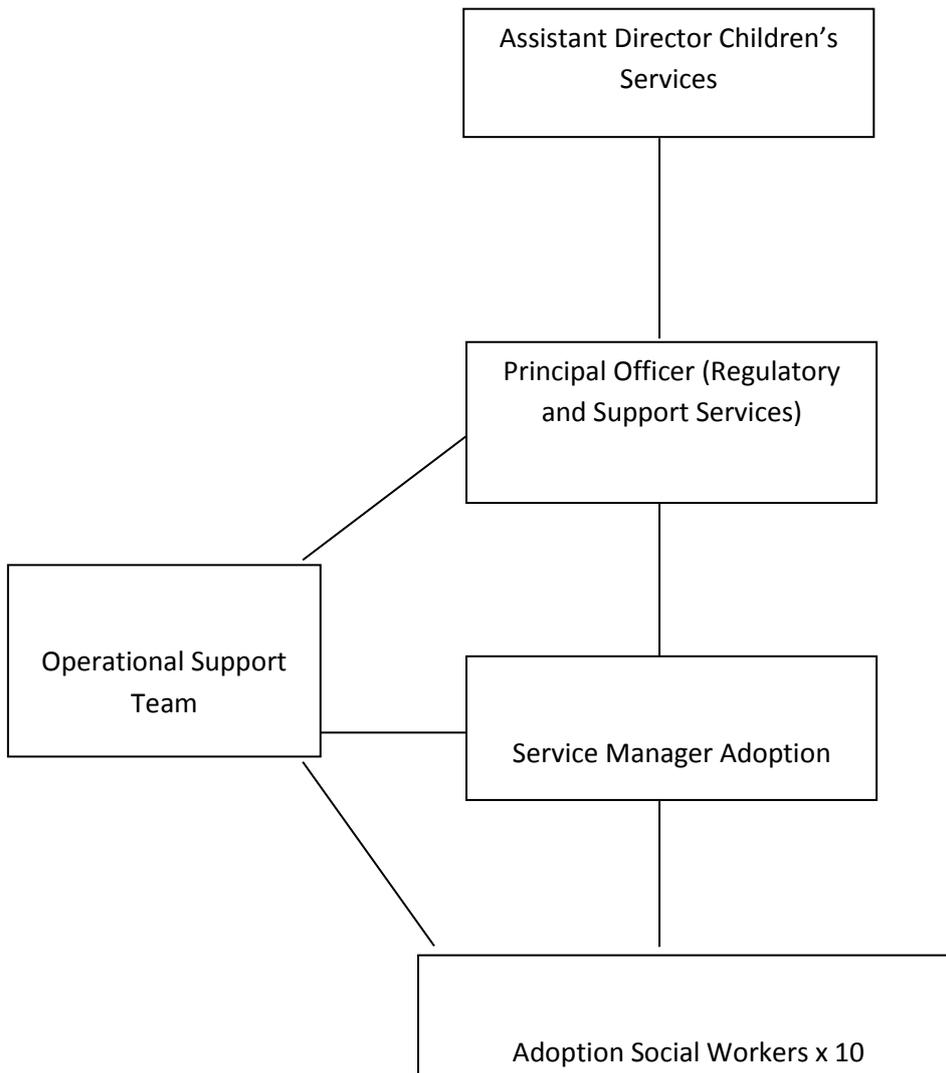
STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Post Title	Gender	Qualifications of current post holder	Experience of current post holder
Adoption Social Worker full time	Female	BA in Social Science Post Graduate Diploma in Careers Guidance Masters in Social Work	Qualified Social Worker since 2014. She moved to the Adoption Team in 2015. She had already spent time with the team as a social worker in training. She has extensive experience pre-qualifying working with young people in schools, colleges, Teenage Pregnancy Units and Pupil Referral Units.
Adoption Social Worker part time	Female	BA (Hons) Social Work	Qualified Social Worker since 2005. She moved to the Adoption Team in 2012. Since qualifying she has worked in a variety of statutory settings.
Adoption Social Worker full time	Female	BSc (Hons) Social Work	Qualified Social Worker since 2009. She moved to the Adoption Team in 2013. She has always worked in statutory services and she has previous experience in the Referral Management Team.

Post Title	Gender	Qualifications of current post holder	Experience of current post holder
Adoption Social Worker part time	Female	BA (Hons) Social Work Post Qualifying Award Children and Families	Qualified as a Social Worker in 2007. She moved to the Adoption Team in 2011 after a period of working within Children's Services Team.
Adoption Social Worker full time	Female	Diploma in Social Work Diploma in Counselling Consolidation – Learning and Professional Development Children and Families (Masters level)	She has worked within statutory services for 23 years. 15 of those years within adult services and 8 years within the Adoption Team.
Adoption Social Worker full time	Female	Diploma in Social Work	She has worked within the Adoption Team for 15 years. Prior to this she worked for statutory Children's Services as a qualified Social Worker.
Adoption Social Worker part time	Female	BA (Hons) Social Work Bsc (Hons) Psychology	Qualified Social Worker since 2007. She moved to the Adoption Team in 2013. She has worked within statutory Children's Services previously.

Post Title	Gender	Qualifications of current post holder	Experience of current post holder
Adoption Social Worker full time	Female	BA (Hons) Social Work	Qualified Social Worker since 2013. Upon qualifying she took up a permanent position with the Adoption Service. She had previously spent time with the team as a student and then as a support worker. Prior to qualifying she had experience in supporting families who had experienced domestic violence.
Adoption Social Worker part time	Female	Diploma and Masters in Social Work	Qualified Social Worker since 2010. She moved to the Adoption Team in 2014 from the Children in Care and Courts Team.
Adoption Social Worker full time	Female	Diploma in Social Work Child Care Award	Qualified Social Worker since 1997. Took up a full time role in the Adoption Service in 2006 following experience in statutory child care and fostering.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



AGENCY DECISION MAKERS

Name	Post	Decision to be made
Mrs Tracy Eaden Mrs Di Rees	Principal Officer, Regulatory Services and Support Service Manager, Practice Standards and Effectiveness	A child should be placed for adoption
Mrs Di Rees Mr Mick Gibbs Ms Ann-Marie Brierley	Service Manager, Practice Standards and Effectiveness Assistant Director, Children's Services Principal Officer, Social Work Services	Prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child or continues to be suitable to adopt a child A child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopters To disclose protected information about adults under section 61 of the Act and regulation 15 of the Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005 when determining an application

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The methods we use are as follows;

Adoption Panel

- Regular statistical and performance reports are available to the panel and timescales for children for whom adoption is the plan are monitored.
- An annual summary report is presented to the panel with managerial comments on performance.
- Quality issues raised at panel are fed back via the Panel Advisor to the relevant social work team and follow-up is reported to subsequent panel meetings where required.
- Recommendations about policy, procedures and the quality of reports are discussed at an annual feedback meeting involving the Assistant Director, the Panel Adviser and the Adoption Panel Chair.
- 6 monthly reports to the Adoption Service are completed by the Adoption Panel Chair incorporating Panel Members feedback. The feedback given includes comments on the quality of reports; the meeting of standard timescales and the meeting of the requirements of the Regulations on the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005. This information is used to identify service quality issues and to inform the annual review of the Panel Chair and business meeting with the Agency Decision Maker to plan for any required improvements.
- All panel members receive an induction and ongoing training which consists of;

Induction;

- Information about Statutory Regulations, policies and procedures
- Contact details of Panel Chair and Panel Advisor
- Meeting with Panel Chair and Panel Advisor to discuss roles and responsibility
- An opportunity to observe Panel

Then as a panel member they have the following;

- Receive panel papers 7 days before the Adoption Panel is held and should they wish they have the opportunity to discuss any issues with the Panel Advisor

- Opportunity to feedback to Panel Advisor any issues
- Monthly performance reports
- Any updates to policies and procedures
- Training
- All Panel Members also have an annual appraisal where their performance is considered by the Panel Chair and Panel Adviser. Members are asked to complete a self-assessment form prior to this meeting and at the review each panel members personal training needs are discussed.

Ongoing Training;

We facilitate Adoption Panel Workshops which Panel Members, Adoption Social Workers and Team Leaders are invited to. Decision makers are also invited to attend.

Service User consultation

The feedback we receive as a service is important and we use this feedback to develop our services. Seeking, listening to and responding to the feedback are key ways in which the Adoption Service works with service users.

We collect feedback and consult via the following methods;

- The annual Ofsted Questionnaires. We ensure that the information in respect to these questionnaires and how to complete is sent out to adopters, young people, birth families, partner agencies and professionals. The closing date for this year's questionnaires was the 1st May 2015. We will receive feedback from Ofsted if there are issues that we need to follow up.
- We have established an Adopted Young Person's Group called 'Superkidz's and the young people who attend are always eager to give their views verbally and to help us think about how best to support them / what they would like us to do.
- Collecting verbal feedback that is given to us via support groups and social events that we hold.
- All approved adoptive parents give written comments about their assessment and preparation and the quality of their prospective adopters report, which then is presented to the Adoption Panel within their prospective adopters report.

- Adoptive parents and their social workers who attend the Adoption Panel are invited to complete a questionnaire about their experience of attending the panel.
- Preparation Groups and training events are evaluated using feedback forms completed after each training event.
- North Lincolnshire Approved Adopters are asked to complete a questionnaire about the quality of their experiences following the granting of an Adoption Order. An action for 2015 – 2016 is to ensure that this is done robustly and that we follow up forms that have not been completed and received back. We also need to ensure that this includes adopters who have had a North Lincolnshire child placed with them.
- Service users accessing PAC -UK (with After Adoption) are asked to complete a service user form by PAC - UK.
- Service users are asked to complete a questionnaire following the point of closure.
- We ascertain birth families views via the birth parent support group which is held four times a year.
- In March 2015 we consulted with all those involved in Letter Box Contact arrangements facilitated by North Lincolnshire.
- We also hold an annual consultation event 'Celebrating Adoption'. The last event was held in November 2014. This is a way for us to capture the views of those adoptive families who do not have active involvement with us. We use this feedback to develop our post adoption support.
- Adoption Feedback Forms (on Carefirst) have been developed and we are currently embedding these into adoption practice. The form asks 5 questions which includes ensuring that service users understand the plan and the work taking place.
- We ensure that we have a presence at the Council Marketplace Events and Children's Service Events and actively encourage those we work with to give feedback about our service.
- We also ensure that those who are working with us are aware of who the Adoption Services Advisor is for North Lincolnshire Council and that they are aware that they can make contact with the ASSA should they want to seek advice about an adoption support matter.
- North Lincolnshire Council also has a robust formal complaints procedure and it is available to those who may wish to complain about any aspect of the service.

Any lessons are picked up throughout the year on receipt of responses. Points for improvement are noted and shared with relevant professionals, in adoption team meetings and raised at panel training days.

Overall, the feedback for 2014 – 2015 tells us that service users in the main are happy with the services that we provide and that they feel supported. Some of the comments received over 2014 – 2015 are;

- *We received excellent Information.*
- *It was a good preparation Course.*
- *We always feel supported.*
- *Professional approach from the whole of the team.*
- *The Adoption Service responds quickly to request for support.*
- *The service does everything well.*
- *It's been a wonderful Celebrating Adoption Event*
- *We always receive full support given and they are always at the end of the phone.*
- *The social meetings and trips are always good.*
- *There are a great range of events throughout the year.*
- *My kids loved the Ladybird and Frogs Breathtaking Speech workshops.*
- *The support and training we have had this year as a family has helped us as a family unit.*
- *The team can't do enough for you.*

There have been no formal complaints via the Council's formal complaints procedure during 2014 - 2015.

Supervision and Management

- Staff supervision takes place on a monthly basis as well as informally; quality checks on the work produced take place at regular points in the process including before presentation to Panel of all cases.
- Staff training and professional development has a high focus in the service and is monitored on an annual basis by the appraisal process.

- Case files are randomly audited on a monthly basis. Actions arising are followed up and lessons for improvement are shared with the social work teams.

Performance Management

- Time scales for children and prospective adopters assessments being presented to panel are monitored by the Service Manager and the Adoption Panel and also via the Adoption Cohorts Meetings.
- Progress of children who are waiting to be placed with adoptive parents is monitored regularly within the Adoption Cohorts Meetings.
- Monthly reports performance reports are circulated to Senior Management, Staff and Adoption Panel.
- Team days are used to track progress and development and also include feedback on quality assurance issues which have arisen.
- Annual and half – yearly adoption service reports are presented to Senior Managers and the executive side of the Council. These reports highlight the range of relevant statistics and comment on performance measures. In the year-end report there is also a narrative report on the service across the year.



8. Recruitment Strategy

Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015 – 2017

North Lincolnshire's Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015 – 2017 sets out clearly and briefly the strategic intentions of North Lincolnshire Children's Services in fulfilling our sufficiency duty (Children Act 1989 s22G) towards children in care. This strategy should be considered alongside the North Lincolnshire Multi Agency Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2015 – 2017.

The Adoption Service works within the scope of the above and we play a key role in the ambition of securing permanence at the earliest point for those children who enter care. Our role as a service is to ensure we have adoptive families available to offer placement choice and permanency to children.

There are clear goals within the Placement Sufficiency Strategy and by 2017 our success will be evidenced by;

Further reductions in the Looked After population as a result of;

- **Early effective intervention**
- **Increased use of Adoption and Special Guardianship**
- **Permanence in families where they are independent of the Local Authority**

Recruitment Strategy 2015 – 2016

The Adoption Service Recruitment Strategy for 2015 – 2016, underpinned by the above, has been updated and recruitment remains high on the agenda. We continue to identify earlier matches where we can and the recruitment strategy is based around understanding the profile of those children who are likely to require an adoptive placement and targeting recruitment. By targeting our recruitment accordingly we can look to recruit and assess adopters that we can place North Lincolnshire children with. However, we are also aware of the children that are waiting nationally and so our recruitment is also focused upon seeking adopters who can consider early permanence and harder to place children.

We use the Adoption Cohorts and Pre Birth Meetings to monitor the children where assessments are ongoing and children who have twin track and adoption plans. The information from these meetings is very helpful in us being able to predict what adoptive placements may be needed.

We have a recruitment timetable for 2015 – 2016 which includes attending local community events and advertising. We hold information events where those interested in adoption can come along and find out more. We currently have outdoor banners on display and have updated our posters and made use of the various council wide communications methods.

Our recruitment focuses on the message **‘If not you...then who?’** and we also encourage people to **‘spread the word’** that North Lincolnshire are looking for adopters. We are looking for people with a range of experiences and from a wide range of backgrounds, with varied personal circumstances, taking into account the differing needs of children waiting for adoption.

In our recruitment we aim to use our adopter networks as we know that **‘word of mouth’** is one of the most powerful things there is when it comes to potential adopters choosing which agency they would like to work with.

Over 2014 – 2015 we have worked closely with the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium and been part of the ‘Being Family’ campaign. The campaign established a regional brand and included a television advert, publicity materials, roadshows and press coverage to highlight the need for more adopters. North Lincolnshire adopters took part in the Being Family Campaign as ‘case studies’. We are now moving into the next phase of the campaign where there will be more focus on the sub regional needs and recruiting adopters for harder to place children.

Adoption and Fostering Ambassadors

This initiative is to encourage employees of the council to become ambassadors and to promote fostering and adoption within their workplaces. They will be required to complete an e learning package about fostering and adoption, which then culminates in a short test. They will then be issued with their badges proclaiming them as ambassadors and will be able to signpost those interested in fostering and adoption to us. This is another way in which we are using those we work with to **‘spread the word’**.



9. Description of Services for Children

Preparation for Adoption

North Lincolnshire Council recognises the importance of sensitive and age appropriate preparation for children to enable them to successfully move on to their adoptive placement. The primary responsibility for preparing a child for adoption rests with the child's social worker. However, foster carers, health service professionals, fostering social workers, adoption social workers and birth family members can assist the social worker in this task.

Family Finding & Matching

Children referred for adoption are allocated an adoption social worker to act as a family finder. The family finder has a number of key responsibilities in respect of the child;

- To consider the specific needs of the child, so that an appropriate family can be sought which most closely matches those needs.
- To offer support, advice and assistance to the social worker, and significant others, including foster carers and birth family members, in preparing the child and supporting them throughout the adoption process.
- To speedily identify a suitable adoptive family through a range of family finding activities which are carried out concurrently and include the use of the regional consortium for Yorkshire and Humber as well as the national adoption register and publicity.
- To work alongside the child's social worker in carrying out thoroughly all the preparatory tasks prior to presenting any proposed match to the North Lincolnshire's Adoption Panel.
- To take a lead role in the planning of introductions of the child to prospective adopters to ensure a successful transition.
- To review, with others, the placement.
- To work with the child's social worker to prepare a report for Court in relation to the Adoption hearing.
- To consider the support needs of any adoptive placement made and in particular, the support that a child placed for adoption may require. This can include completion of adoption support assessments and support plans and the chairing of support meetings.

Whilst North Lincolnshire Council will seek, where appropriate to place children with adoptive families approved by the Council, family finding activity will be vigorous and designed to minimise delay in placement.

Where suitable adoptive placements are unavailable either locally or through the consortium, North Lincolnshire Council will consider possible families generated by the National Adoption Register, BAAF's 'Be My Parent', 'Children Who Wait' and make use of a wide variety of family finding methods and mediums. These include the circulation of profiles via secure email, BAAF Activity Days, Adoption Link, telephone contact with other local authorities and VAA's and exchange days across the country.

Information and Support

North Lincolnshire Council is committed to ensuring that children are provided with information and support throughout the adoption process.

All children, taking into account age and understanding, are provided with a copy of the Children's Guide, once a decision has been taken that adoption is the plan or when appropriate.

Children will also be given information about prospective adopters who have been identified for them. This information will take the form of photograph albums, or DVD recordings.

After the placement has been made, if appropriate, the child may receive indirect information from their birth family, via the council's Adoption Contact Letterbox Service. All letterbox arrangements are child focused and must be in the child's best interests. The system, which is administered by the Adoption Service, passes information between birth family members and children (or adopters acting on behalf of children). The type of information passed on, together with the frequency of exchange, are set out in a written agreement which all parties sign and are expected to adhere to.

The child's needs for adoption support services are assessed at different stages of the adoption process. These are as follows;

- Where North Lincolnshire Council is considering adoption for the child.
- Where it is proposed that a child be placed with particular prospective adopters.

- When a child is matched with an adoptive family support plans are put in place.
- Where a child's placement for adoption is being reviewed.

Examples of adoption support services provided for children include;

- Information, advice and counselling.
- Therapeutic services.
- Support for contact arrangements between adoptive children and birth relatives.
- Financial support.
- Social Events for Adoptive families.
- Group meetings for adopted children.
- Newsletters.

Where children are being provided with adoption support they are provided with a copy of the 'Children's Guide to Adoption Support' appropriate to their age. This guide is also available to other adopted children who may wish to seek adoption support at any time.

The support needs of any child placed for adoption by North Lincolnshire will also be assessed following a request from the child or the adoptive parent(s) for up to three years after the making of an Adoption Order. For adopted children who live within North Lincolnshire, adoption support assessments will be made upon request at any point unless their placing authority continues to be responsible for three years after the making of an Adoption Order.

Any support plan may make reference to other services such as those provided by education or health professionals. These services will, therefore, be consulted in the preparation of the plan.

The primary goal of the provision of adoption support services is to ensure the continuance or success of adoptive placements.

10. Description of Services for Prospective Adopters

Prospective adopters in North Lincolnshire will receive a service that responds to their interest in adoption promptly, fairly, openly and with respect.

The framework for assessing prospective adopters is as follows;

Pre-Assessment Information Stage

The Adoption Services receives enquiries by telephone, email or by web enquiries.

A Duty Officer is available during normal office hours (Monday to Friday) to respond to any enquiries.

Enquiries will be followed up within 24 hours via telephone contact and with the information booklet being sent the same day either by email or post.

Follow up contact will be made within 5 working days and where enquirers request further information this will progress to a referral and an initial visit. A Registration of Interest form will be completed and submitted to the Adoption Service. Within 5 working days of receipt of the registration of interest form the decision will be made by the Adoption Service as to whether it proceeds or not. A letter will be sent notifying of the decision.

Upon decision being made to proceed then an Adoption Social Worker will be allocated and prospective adopter begins Stage One.

Where the Adoption Service declines registration a written explanation is provided and will give contact information for other agencies where appropriate.

Stage One – Initial Preparation / Training Prospective Adopter-led

Stage One begins when the agency accepts a prospective adopter's registration of interest. This stage should take no longer than 2 months but where longer than 2 months is required an explanation for this will be clearly recorded within case records. At Stage One the Adoption Service and prospective adopter will produce a written agreement which will set out the responsibilities of them both.

Within Stage One, police and health checks will be undertaken. The prospective adopters will need to give names of three referees, two of whom cannot be related to them. The Adoption Service will interview each referee and make a written report of the interviews with them.

During Stage One 'Self Learning Packs' will be given to support the adopter-led learning. Workshops are held and the allocated worker will book the prospective adopters onto the workshops. There will also be the opportunity to learn from experienced adopters and adoptees. More information will be given about the children waiting for adoptive placements.

Within the above the allocated worker will explore with the prospective adopter the preparation and learning style most suited to them and support / adaptations can be made.

The Adoption Service will inform the prospective adopter of their decision at the end of Stage One and explain that they must tell the Agency if they wish to proceed to Stage Two within 6 months of the decision. A prospective adopter is able to take a break of up to 6 months between Stage One and Two.

Stage Two – Agency-led Intensive Training / preparation and assessment

Stage Two of the Adoption Process will not begin until a prospective adopter has completed Stage One and have notified the Adoption Service that they want to proceed to Stage Two.

Stage Two should take 4 months and is about intensive training and assessment. Should more than 4 months be required then an explanation for this will be clearly recorded within case records. The Adoption Service and prospective adopter need to create an assessment plan; this will detail for example, the assessment process, dates of meetings / visits and agreed training. The allocated worker will guide prospective adopters through this process.

The Adoption Service will provide the prospective adopter with a copy of the report and invite them to send observations on the report within 5 working days. The report then goes before the Adoption Panel. Once the Panel have met the Agency Decision Maker will make the decision.

Agency Decision

Suitable to adopt: Where the prospective adopter is approved the agency should inform them about the role of the adoption register and refer them as soon as possible, no later than 3 months.

Unsuitable to adopt: The prospective adopter has the right to request an independent review. The agency must provide a letter detailing their full reasons. The prospective adopter has 40 days to make representation to the agency.

Stage Two ends when the decision is made about whether a prospective adopter is suitable to adopt.

Information about North Lincolnshire Adoption Panel

The Adoption Panel has three key functions in relation to children and families, it must consider:

- From 1st September 2012 - children where a Placement Order will be required are no longer being presented to the Adoption Panel and will, instead, be presented directly to the Agency Decision Maker.
- The case of the prospective adopter referred to it by North Lincolnshire, and make a recommendation as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt.
- The proposed placement referred to it by North Lincolnshire, and make a recommendation as to whether the child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopter(s).

The recommendation of the panel is then passed to the identified Agency Decision Maker for a final decision to be made.

The panel is made up of professional and lay people, who have knowledge or experience of adoption through their work or their personal lives. The Panel is chaired by an independent chair who has extensive experience of chairing both adoption and fostering panels.

Inter Country Adoption

A regional inter country Adoption Service has been established via the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium. The Yorkshire Adoption Agency is now undertaking inter country adoption work on our behalf and the service includes post adoption support and reporting work where required as well as the preparation of adopters who want to adopt by way of inter country. There will be financial costs to prospective adopters who chose this route and The Yorkshire Adoption Agency will discuss this directly with those interested.

Foster Carers who wish to adopt their fostered child.

Foster carers who make a formal application to adopt children that are in their care are entitled to the same information and preparation as other prospective adopters.

Where foster carers are accepted as potentially suitable to adopt a child in their care, they can be expected to be assessed in the same way as other prospective adopters. The assessment can be fast tracked. The assessment will focus on the specific long-term needs of the child in question and will consider the following;

- The quality of the attachment between the child and the Foster Carers.
- The wishes and feelings of the child.
- The assessed ability of the foster carers to provide permanent care for the child through adoption.
- The impact on the child now, and for the rest of their lives, of being adopted by these particular carers.

11. Description of Services for Approved Adopters

Following approval, prospective adopters will receive clear information about how a child will be matched with them using local resources, consortium arrangements, Adoption Link, publications, Activity Days and the Adoption Register.

Regular contact will be made to ensure that adopters' circumstances remain updated and that discussions on potential children for placement are held regularly. We also pay for approved adopters to have a one year membership to Adoption UK.

Approved adopters are reviewed annually if a match has not occurred.

When a potential match is identified, prospective adopters are given full written information about the child, which includes their emotional, developmental and health needs. The prospective adopters will also be provided with clear and detailed information about any areas of uncertainty regarding the child's future development and the possible implications of these for the child and themselves. Prospective adopters will have the opportunity to attend a Child Appreciation day. This will enable them to meet and hear from different professionals who have been involved with the child. At the same time, the meeting serves to convey a sense of the child's journey.

Preparation work prior to placement focuses on not only the prospective adopters but also other members of the household. North Lincolnshire Council makes every effort to prepare and protect all those involved.

Prospective adopters will be given ten days to consider the placement report which will cover areas such as contact plans, and support plans as well as the reasons for believing the family will meet the child's assessed needs over time.

Adopters will be invited to the placing authority's (the area in which the child resides) Adoption Panel when the placement is considered. Once a decision has been made, the adopters will be invited to a Planning Meeting to arrange their introductions to their child and plan for the administrative and formal information sharing.

Adopters may be supported financially to meet basic safety needs at the point of placement and any costs associated with the introductions. This will be a consideration during the matching process.

Approved adopters are supported by regular contact, advice and visits by the adoption social worker and the child's social worker from the point that the child is introduced to them through to the making of the Adoption Order.

A new initiative for 2015 – 2016 is that upon a placement being made with North Lincolnshire Adopters then their allocated adoption worker will immediately book in ten sessions with the adopters. The purpose of this is to carry out the ***Enhancing Adoptive Parenting - A parenting programme for use with new adopters of challenging children*** (published by BAAF). This is a programme specifically designed to be undertaken on a one to one basis with adopters. This programme will be carried out with all our adopters upon a child being placed with them as we want to ensure that adopters continue to be given support and training throughout the adoption journey. This training could well stand them in greater stead in later years and further develops their understanding of parenting a child by way of adoption.

12. Adoption Support - General

After the making of the Adoption Order, support may also be provided if a support plan is in operation or it is decided to provide services as a result of an assessment of needs. North Lincolnshire retains responsibility for any North Lincolnshire Child for three years following the making of the Adoption Order. A child placed in North Lincolnshire from another area remains the placing authority's responsibility for three years following the making of the Adoption Order.

Adoptive parents, adopted children or any member of the household including any other children of the adopters, are entitled at any time to request an assessment of their needs for Adoption Support Services under the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005.

Adoption support services are accessed via a formal assessment of need where the request will involve on going provision of services. Where one off support is the likely outcome, this will be provided without a formal assessment.

Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was launched nationally on the 1st May 2015. The aim of the fund is to reduce the gap between adoptive children needing therapeutic services and receiving them (ultimately to improve outcomes for young people and families).

The fund will be available for children up to and including the age of 18 (or 25 with a SEND statement). The fund will support services after the Adoption Order.

Examples of therapeutic support that the ASF will pay for includes; play therapy, adult psychotherapy and theraplay.

As a service we will still remain responsible for core support and assessments of need but we will be able to apply to the fund when therapeutic services are needed.

We have an adoption support guide for 2015 - 2016 which summarises the support available to adoptive families in North Lincolnshire.

Currently, a broad range of adoption support is provided within the framework set out within the Adoption Agency regulations. A significant amount of support to adoptive families is provided in house. However, where it is assessed to be required referrals are made to our local CAMHS Service or to other therapeutic providers.

We have a good working relationship with our local CAMHS Service. The lead Clinical Psychologist is an Adoption Panel member and there are also monthly meetings with CAMHS to consider service provision.

Support Services

Examples of the support services that we provide in house are as follows;

Flamingoland

Every year we take adoptive families to Flamingoland. The purpose of this is to promote fun, family time and it is a way in which we can keep in touch with adoptive families.

Annual Fun Day

The annual fun day for foster families and adoptive families was held on the 13th September 2014 and was attended by the Mayor of North Lincolnshire. The feedback received was very positive. The next event is to be held in September 2015.

Celebrating Adoption Event

Every year we hold an annual 'Celebrating Adoption' Event and this is always during National Adoption Week. The event was last held on the 9th November 2014. The day was very well received and in attendance were 53 adopters and 40 children. We use this event to consult with our adoptive families and some productive thoughts were shared by adopters about what they would like to see from the service in 2015. This is reflected in the feedback report.

The next event will be held in November 2015.

Christmas Party

In the run up to Christmas we also hold the annual Christmas party for foster families and adoptive families. The next Christmas Party will be held in December 2015.

Christmas Pantomime

Every year we provide tickets for our adoptive families to attend the Christmas Pantomime. Again, this is very well received.

All of the above events are very important as they allow families to keep in touch and provide a wonderful opportunity to enjoy family time and also to keep in touch with staff. This helps us identify early on if there are any support needs and to provide services prior to issues becoming more serious.

Support Groups for adopters

Every school holiday we hold a support group for adopters and their children. It tends to be parents and young children that attend and so in 2015 (responding to feedback we have received from adopters) we have arranged support groups that take place in an evening for adopters only.

Support Groups for Young People

In August 2014 we successfully established our adopted young person's group. The young people have named the group 'Superkidz's.

This group is held monthly and we have some exciting plans for 2015 and they include;

- Learning ways in which to relax
- Learning about First Aid
- Learning about food hygiene (this is due to baking being a regular activity that the young people enjoy)
- Working with the CSE Support Team to help us understand healthy relationships and keeping safe

We will also be planning the popular Forest Day which will take place during one of the school holidays. The last Forest Day was held on the 11th October 2014. This day enabled the young people to experience den building; forest safety and to learn other bush craft skills. All the activities are risk assessed as being safe and led by a Back to Nature Trainer. Last year it was an absolute pleasure to watch the 10 young people who attended learn how to cook their own sausages on a stick. The pride they felt in making their own lunch successfully was so very clear to see and we got through a fair amount of hotdogs!

Two of the young people from the group have gone on to be trained as 'Young Inspectors' for North Lincolnshire Council and one of the young people is our regional representative at the Young Person's Forum.

Our young person has been involved from the start with the regional group and on the 4th November 2014 she gave a speech at the launch of the web forum and she was also interviewed by the press. This led to a further interview with BBC news breakfast. Her feedback is very positive about adoption and the support that she receives from us.

Related by Adoption Group

We will also be running a group for those who are related by adoption. The aim of this group will be to develop relatives understanding of the issues that adopted children and their parents face and how best they can provide support. This is in recognition that families are one of the most reliable sources of support for adopters but that extended family relationships can also be a source of stress due to a lack of

understanding about a child's behaviour and strategies that adoptive parents may be using.

Support Group for birth parents

We also hold a support group for birth parents and this is four times a year. Whilst the membership is small it is still felt that this is an important support service to offer and we will continue to promote this amongst our birth families. It is clear from those that attend that they value the support that is provided. One of the birth parent's who attends the group recently felt able to speak at some training the Adoption Service was facilitating to staff members. She was able to share what adoption meant to her and how valuable the support of the Adoption Service was.

Support to Social Workers

The service is facilitating a number of workshops about adoption over April and May 2015 and dates have been set to run these workshops again in September / October 2015. The workshops are;

Workshop 1 Early Permanence

Workshop 2 Life Story Work

Workshop 3 Overview of the Adoption Process

Workshop 4 Lifelong Implications of Adoption on all involved

Workshop 5 Life Appreciation Days

Workshop 6 Supporting Adoptive Families – Messages from Disruption Research and how to get support right from point of initial contact.

We are running the workshops again later in the year to take into account new staff within social work services and any Children's Services Staff that have not been able to attend the initial workshops. We will also open the workshops up to other staff in health, education and also Panel Members.

Education and the Adopted Child

A key area to further develop in 2015 is the links we have with education and how best to support the adopted child in education. An Education Policy around the Pupil Premium is currently being prepared jointly by the Looked After Children Education Team and Adoption. Also, involved in this is the School Improvement Officer, Narrowing the Gaps.

We are also developing our links with the Lead Educational Psychologist and a staff member from the Primary Behaviour Support Team to look at joint training and support.

The Humber and Yorkshire Consortium is holding their annual conference on the 12th May 2015 and the theme is Education. Adopters have been invited to this.

Training

As a service we continuously review and develop the training we provide to our adoptive families based upon need and feedback received.

Our adoptive families are able to access the Local Authority Training Plans but in addition here is a sample of the other training that we provide;

- On the 19th September 2014 we arranged for Helen Oakwater author of 'Bubbled Wrapped Children' to speak in respect to 'Trauma Triggered Behaviour'. This Conference was extremely successful and there were over 200 attendees which were a mix of adopters, foster carers and professionals. Helen has since visited again to speak on the 15th April 2015. Due to the success of this Conference the Adoption and Fostering Services are looking to collaborate again and to host a further Conference in 2015 with the topic being Child to Parent Violence.
- Following feedback from adopters it was arranged for BAAF to undertake the two day Secure Base training to assist adopters and staff to meet some of the challenges in parenting children with more complex needs. This training was held in October 2014 and then again in January 2015. The October training was held during the week and the January training was held on Saturdays. The reason for this was due to feedback we had received that for some adopters attending training in the working week was difficult. The training was well received and so we have made the decision to run it again for adopters in October 2015. However, we will be making a request to the ASF to fund this as it is an attachment based parenting course for adopters and so therefore should come under the fund remit.
- In 2014 we held the successful Frogs Breathtaking Speech and Ladybird Relaxation Workshops. They were back by popular demand (having held them in 2013) and we continue to receive requests for these workshops and so further workshops have been arranged for June and July 2015. The aim of the workshops are to teach a way in which children can relax, using a story, which adoptive parents can then continue to use with their child as a method

for helping their child regulate their emotions. These workshops were developed in collaboration with Early Years.

- Working with the Looked After Children's Nurse we are again running the Parentcraft training for approved adopters and adopters. This training covers the practical tasks of parenting and talks about the role of health visitors and school nurses.
- We are running the Building Relationships through Play workshop again in 2015 and the aim of this is to give adopters the strategies in which they can use play to develop a relationship with their child. Those that attend receive a 'kit bag' which has some of the things needed to play some of the games at home with their child along with an information leaflet.
- We are also holding the annual 'Explaining Adoption' workshop.
- Working collaboratively with the CSE Support Team we are providing training for adopters and adopted young people. The training will focus on exploitation, vulnerabilities, internet safety and healthy relationships.
- We continue to offer the 'Really Useful Box' to professionals, prospective adopters, approved adopters and adoptive families. These are boxes with a number of different resources that can be used to help explain adoption but also to help understand the adoption journey.
- Via the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium we will be enabling adopters to access the Kate Cairns online e learning packages.
- As part of the adoption support we can offer adopters are given access to the Local Authority Children Service's Library Resources which they can view online, book and then collect. There are a number of resources in respect to adoption.
- Training events are provided by CAMHS on Attachment and Development and Mental Health and Resilience.

PAC-UK

We commission PAC-UK (formerly After Adoption) to provide some services for us in respect to birth families and adopted adults, for example, birth records counselling; independent counselling.

Bespoke Training Packages

We welcome being approached from all those working with adopted children / young people and their families, in respect to discussing any bespoke training they would like the Adoption Service to provide. For example, we are happy to go into schools to provide training around attachment and understanding the needs of the adopted child. There may be some occasions where there has to be a charge for this training. This depends upon the costs incurred by the Adoption Service, but this is something that would be discussed alongside any conversation regarding a bespoke package of training.

Yorkshire and Humber Consortium

As part of the Consortium we also have access to a range of events and training, for example; preparing for children to move in courses and second time adopters courses. As these different events are advertised we will ensure that North Lincolnshire Adopters are given the information and are encouraged to attend.

Post Adoption Contact

North Lincolnshire manages the post adoption contact arrangements for every North Lincolnshire child, placed in their adoptive placement and following the making of the Adoption Order.

It is our belief that any contact arrangements (indirect or direct) must always be for the benefit of the child, not the parents or other relatives.

It may serve on or all of the following functions;

- To maintain a child's identity. Consolidating the new with the old.
- Provide reassurance for the child.
- Provide on-going source of information for the child.
- To give the child continuing permission to live with an adoptive family.
- To minimise sense of loss.
- To assist with the process of tracing.
- To give adopters a secure sense of the right to parent.

The letterbox facilitates the indirect contact between children, adoptive families and birth families throughout the adopted child's childhood. There are currently 163 on-going arrangements in operation. Arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis but can be reviewed at any time in accordance with the child's needs.

Birth relatives may request an assessment in relation to support for contact arrangements with their birth children.

The adoption social worker's role is to act as intermediary between all parties. Acknowledgment is given that all children's needs may change and it is the adoption social worker's role to mediate between everyone involved.

Birth relatives may need assistance in writing letters and responding to news received through the letter box and this is provided by the adoption social workers

Financial Support

Adopters can be assessed for a means tested allowance based on the needs of the children placed. This allowance is discretionary and is reviewed annually in respect of the needs of each placement and the child.

Additional financial support to adoptive parents or special guardians will be considered only in the circumstances prescribed in the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 and the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005

In order to comply with principles of a base rate applying to all types of substitute parenting which involve council funding, the base rate is the same whichever route is chosen so that there is no financial incentive or disincentive for a carer to opt for one route rather than another.

A means test is used to determine the amount of finance which is received.

Discretionary additional financial support may be given due to the needs of the children placed with adoptive parents or under special guardianship. Where carers are able to claim disability and/or other allowances for the child, these are deducted from any enhancement prior to placement.

ASSA

Adoptive families or others affected by adoption may choose to seek advice and assistance through North Lincolnshire's Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA).

The role of the ASSA is to act as a single point of contact and respond quickly to provide advice, resolve problems, or to help to arrange, where appropriate, for services to be provided. The ASSA also works closely with other departments such as health and education to help develop and improve services.

The ASSA may be contacted by writing to:

The Adoption Support Services Advisor
North Lincolnshire Council
Hewson House,
Station Road
Brigg,
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ

Further information regarding Adoption Support including the legal framework can be obtained on request.

13. Description of Services for Birth Families

North Lincolnshire Council will value and respect the wishes and feelings of birth families and will take account of their views when planning for their child's adoption.

North Lincolnshire Council will work with birth families to help them maximise the contribution they can make to promoting and preserving their child's heritage and sense of identity.

North Lincolnshire Council recognises that adoption is an evolving, life-long process for all those involved and will provide support to birth families at all stages of the process, both during adoption, and throughout life.

A birth families group has been established and this will take place four times a year. The group will help develop services for birth families.

Those birth families working with the Adoption Service will be invited to give feedback in respect to the Service they feel they have received and this will also influence service development.

Birth families are able to obtain independent support through After Adoption Yorkshire, a specialist service for people involved in adoption. North Lincolnshire

has a Service Level Agreement with ***After Adoption Yorkshire***, which includes the provision of intermediary services.

Counselling

It is the role of the child's family finder to offer and provide adoption counselling to birth family members. This can be accessed at any time during the adoption process, including after the child has been adopted. This service may also be provided by After Adoption Yorkshire should the birth family wish.

This is a delicate and sensitive role and there is an acknowledgement for the birth families experience of grief and loss. Birth family members often access this support, which is seen as independent from the childcare team.

The Adoption Service can support birth families by helping them to produce materials which give an account of their circumstances and feelings surrounding the loss of their children and which may contribute to Life Story books.

We also carry out work with birth parents enabling them to create their own memory books. These books can have benefits not only for the birth parents themselves but also their adopted children as they grow up.

Other Intermediary Activities

Birth families are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption for them. North Lincolnshire Council provides services to respond to this need. This may include;

- Information about other resources or adoption support agencies.
- Assistance to write letters to place on an adopted child's file.
- Information about the Adoption Contact Register.
- The provision of intermediary services in relation to birth family members who wish to seek information about adopted children who have reached adulthood, with or without a view to establishing direct contact. In these circumstances the formal consent of the subject is required before information can be disclosed.

14. Description of Services for Adopted Adults

Birth Records Counselling and Information

This service is provided to adults who were adopted before 30 December 2005 to enable them to access their original birth record details and to consider the likely implications and meaning for them of exploring their birth family of origin.

The purpose of counselling is to ensure that the adopted person has considered the possible emotional impact of any enquiries, both on himself/herself and on others as well as uncertainties surrounding any searching or possible reunions.

Adopted adults will be supported and may pursue their enquiry via obtaining an original birth certificate, requesting access to information in their adoption file or requesting help to locate birth relatives with a view to meeting.

File access and information sharing is provided in line with government guidance. It is imperative that the information sought, is provided in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

A Service Level Agreement is in place with After Adoption Yorkshire to provide Schedule II birth record counselling when required.

Intermediary Services and Vetoes

Adopted adults who were adopted before 30 December 2005 are also able to request that there is an absolute or qualified veto placed on their records and on the Adoption Contact Register should they wish for no contact or no contact with specified people.

Adopted adults can request Intermediary services to provide for mediated contact with birth relatives. This service can be provided by the Adoption Service or through a registered adoption support agency After Adoption Yorkshire.



15. Description of other Permanency Options

The following list provides options when considering the most appropriate permanent care for a child. Permanence with family should be sought as the first choice for a child if it is in their best interests, only when this cannot be achieved should alternatives be sought. The list should not be seen as a ladder of options. Good assessment and planning should help determine which of the priorities is the most appropriate for the individual.

- Staying at Home
- Placement with Family or Friends/Connected Persons
- Adoption
- Early Permanence which includes consideration of Fostering for Adoption / Concurrency placement
- Child Arrangement Order/Special Guardianship Order
- Long Term Fostering
- Residential Care

Staying at Home

The first stage in permanence planning is work with families and children in need to support them staying together.

This involves the provision of to ensure that the child's placement with his or her family does not breakdown or, where it does, that the child is restored to his/her natural family as quickly as is safely possible.

Placement with Family or Friends/Connected Persons

If the assessment concludes that a child cannot safely remain at home, every effort must be made to secure a placement with a family member or Friend/Connected Person as their carer. This will either be as part of a work plan to return the child home, or as a preferred option of permanency if a return home is not in the child's interests.

It is vitally important to establish at an early stage which relatives or friends might be available to care for the child, in order to comply with court proceedings and avoid delay for a child.

Permanence with Family or Friends/Connected Persons should be considered if:

- There are no significant risks to the child with the birth family/friends or connected person.

- There is a high likelihood of achieving permanence with birth family/friend or connected person.
- There is wider family support
- Agencies are able to provide sufficient long-term help to support the family/friend/connected person to maintain the child's stability and wellbeing throughout their childhood.
- There is a low risk of further harm or disruption by the parents.
- It meets the wishes and feelings of the child.

Adoption

Adoption transfers Parental Responsibility for the child from the birth parents and others who have parental responsibility, including the Local Authority, permanently and solely to the adopter(s).

The child is deemed to be the child of the adopter(s) as if he or she had been born to them. The child's birth certificate is changed to an adoption certificate showing the adopter(s) to be the child's parent(s). A child who is not already a citizen of the UK acquires British citizenship if adopted in the UK by a citizen of the UK.

Research indicates adoption as a primary consideration and as a main factor to contributing to the stability of children, especially for those under four years of age who cannot be reunified with their birth or extended family.

Fostering for Adoption

A child for whom adoption is thought to be a likely outcome may be placed with prospective adopters who have been given temporary approval as foster carers. This can be where the child's plan is likely to become adoption, but other options have not yet been ruled out for that child.

Approved prospective adopters can be given temporary approval as foster carers under Section 25A of the Care Planning and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. This temporary foster carer approval planning process can be carried out at the same time as the adopter approval process.

The local authority should consider placing a child with dual approved foster carers whenever it is considering adoption; or where the decision has been made that the

child ought to be placed for adoption, but where the agency does not yet have authority to place the child for adoption through either a placement order or parental consent.

Special Guardianship

Special Guardianship addresses the needs of a specific group of children, who need a sense of security, stability within a placement away from their parents, but without the absolute legal break, associated with adoption.

Child Arrangements Order

This is an order that dictates with whom the child concerned is to live; this person acquires Parental Responsibility via the order. The Order can also outline arrangements regarding contact with the child. It may be used to increase the degree of legal permanence in a placement with family or friends/connected persons, or a long-term foster placement where this would be in the child's best interests.

Long-term Fostering

Long-term foster care can be an option that is in the best interests of children who retain strong links with their birth family, and whose wishes and feelings indicate they do not want or need the formality of adoption. It is also used when the carers wish for continued involvement of the Local Authority, with shared parental responsibility.

Residential Care

Residential living is only likely to be considered in very few cases when the criteria for permanence is met and it is not possible, or appropriate to provide a fostering placement.

The needs of the young person may be such that they cannot be met within a family placement or it may be the wishes and feelings of the young person not to live within a family.

Final Note;

For children whom adoption is not appropriate, each case will need to be considered on its merits. The decision between the options will depend on the individual needs of the child set alongside the advantages and disadvantages of each legal route.

16. Complaints and Representations

At times, adopters, children, birth families and other people affected by adoption may feel unhappy about the services they receive. The Adoption Service works within North Lincolnshire Council's complaints procedures.

If you have a complaint we encourage you to contact the service directly in the first instance. Staff there will do all they can to put things right and resolve the issue for you. If you feel the matter is still unresolved or you wish to complain formally, please report your complaint to;

**The Complaints Representations Manager
North Lincolnshire Council
People Directorate
Hewson House
Station Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ**

Telephone Number 01724 296487

If you remain unsatisfied with our response you may wish to contact the **Local Government Ombudsman on 0300 061 0614.**

17. Allegations

Approved Adopters can sometimes be the subject of allegations in respect of the care of the children or young people they are looking after. If this occurs the allegation will be investigated in line with North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures. All allegations are managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer.

In addition to the role of the supervising social worker, adopters can have access to an independent social worker who can offer practical and emotional support.

All allegations and other matters listed in the Regulations are monitored by the manager who ensures that the appropriate notifications to Ofsted and other agencies are carried out.

There were no allegations in respect of any approved adopters in 2014 - 2015.

18. Other Useful Contact;

The Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner for England promotes and protects children's rights in England. The Commissioner does this by listening to what children and young people say about what matters to them and making sure adults in charge take their views and interests into account. Contact details are;

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk





Young Person's Statement of Purpose

North Lincolnshire Council

Adoption Service

2015 - 2016



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The address of your local Adoption Service is;

North Lincolnshire Adoption Service
Church Square House
30 – 40 High Street
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN15 6NL

Telephone: 01724 297024

If you would like some help going through this Statement of Purpose then please ring us (or ask your parents to) on **01724 297024** and we will sort this out for you. Ask to speak to the Duty Adoption Social Worker.

The person who put this together is called **Karen Everatt** and she is in charge of the Adoption Service. She is always interested to hear about what you think and to answer any questions you might have. You can contact her on **01724 297024** or by email karen.everatt@northlincs.gov.uk

1. For Starters

Every Adoption Service has to write a Statement of Purpose. This is so that everyone knows what the Adoption Service does and also the rules that it has to follow.

Some of the rules that we have to follow are in these important papers;

- **National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014**
- **Statutory Guidance on Adoption 2013**

You should have a chance to see this Statement of Purpose. So, we make sure it is on the Council's webpages www.northlincs.gov.uk and we also give it to every adopted young person that we are working with.

Every year we update this so that you can see what we will be doing and what we want to achieve.

The people who check we are doing what we need to do are from **Ofsted** and their details are;

OFSTED
Piccadilly Street
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone 0300 123 1231
Email; enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



2. What Adopted Young People say we should do

Every month we run an adopted young person's group for young people aged nearly 7 years old and all the way up to 18 years old.

The young people who come to this group have called the group '**Superkidz's**'.

Here are some of the things that they said the Adoption Service should do;

- Help with any troubles
- Give information
- Give support
- Help answer questions about birth families
- Be friendly
- Listen to young people
- Be nice to people
- Treat people fairly
- Help children find a family
- Keep arranging the trips to Flamingoland
- To keep arranging for adopted young people to meet



3. What the Adoption Service will do

We will do all of the above and...

- You are all different and have your own opinions so we will listen to you in how best to support you and your family.
- We will ask you what you think about the Adoption Service. This helps us find out the best way we can help.
- We will ask you for any ideas about things we can do.
- What you say is always important to us.
- We will be respectful.
- We will always be available to help with troubles.
- We will give information about the support and services we provide. We will make sure that we do this by talking and also by writing things down.
- We will try and answer all your questions. Sometimes the answer may be difficult to hear and so we will always be around to support you and to help you work it out.
- It's important that you are safe and that you are given every chance to succeed and this means having a goal for your future. We will do whatever we can to help with this.



Examples of Services we will provide for you;

- We can give you a Children's Guide to Adoption.
- We can give you a guide to Adoption Support Services in North Lincolnshire.
- We also have an After 18 guide to Adoption.
- We can help with collecting memories and in collecting information for your life story book.
- We can try and help sort out things to do with contact.
- Sometimes you may need to talk to someone else, like a therapist. This can be the case when things feel very complicated and space and time is needed to work some things out. A therapist can sometimes help to do this. Or, it could be that an Adoption Social worker is the best person to help you do this. Either way, we will help you find someone you can talk to on a one to one.
- We will make sure you have the dates for the monthly group. We have some exciting plans for 2015 and they include;
 - ✓ Learning ways in which to relax
 - ✓ Learning about First Aid
 - ✓ Learning about food hygiene (this is due to baking being a regular activity)
 - ✓ Working with a specialist Support Team to help us understand healthy relationships and keeping safe
- We will also be planning the popular Forest Day which will take place during one of the school holidays. The last Forest Day was held on the 11th October 2014. This day enabled the young people who attended to experience den building; forest safety and to learn other bush craft skills. All the activities are risk assessed as being safe and led by a Back to Nature Trainer. Last year it was an absolute pleasure to watch the 10 young people who attended learn how to cook their own sausages on a stick. We got through a fair amount of hotdogs!
- Two of the young people from the group have gone on to be trained as 'Young Inspectors' for North Lincolnshire Council and one of the young people is our regional representative at the Young Person's Forum.

- We can arrange different training, for example, we can help schools understand a little more about what it is like to be adopted. Or, you might want to learn about something in particular and if you let us know then we might be able to arrange it.
- Every year we will invite you to a;
 - ✓ Summer Fun Day
 - ✓ Christmas Party
 - ✓ Celebrating Adoption Event
 - ✓ Christmas Pantomime trip
 - ✓ Flamingoland Trip

4. Useful Information

In North Lincolnshire we have someone who can give advice about adoption support. This person is called an Adoption Support Services Advisor and she is called Di Rees. You can contact Di at di.rees@northlincs.gov.uk or write to her at the below address.

**The Adoption Support Services Advisor
North Lincolnshire Council
Hewson House,
Station Road
Brigg,
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ**

Or, you can speak to an Adoption Duty Worker on **01724 297024** and ask that they tell Di that you want to speak to her.



Making a Complaint

If you are really unhappy with the Adoption Service and you have tried to tell us but you don't think that it has been sorted then you can contact the Complaints Person and she is called Julie Pointon. Contact details are;

**The Complaints Representations Manager
North Lincolnshire Council
People Directorate
Hewson House
Station Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XJ**

Telephone Number 01724 296487

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