

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET MEMBER**

#### **REVISION TO THE ADOPTION SERVICE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

##### **1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1. To inform Children's Services Cabinet Member of the annual revisions to the Statement of Purpose for Adoption in North Lincolnshire

##### **2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Adoption Service is required by The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards (Adoption) to have in place a Statement of Purpose that is reviewed on a regular basis and updated as appropriate.
- 2.2 The Statement of Purpose is an integral component of the three yearly inspections of the service undertaken by OfSTED. The next inspection of the service is due to happen this year.

##### **3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Following the yearly review of the Statement of Purpose for the adoption service, revisions have been made which ensure they reflect current practice. These include; the current level of financial support to adoptive carers, the numbers of children placed for adoption and the revised adoption support groups.

##### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Adoption Agency Regulations require that the Adoption Service Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually and updated to reflect any changes in staffing, practice or procedures.
- 4.2 If the Statement of Purpose is not updated and approved as above, the service will not meet it's regulatory requirements
- 4.3 To meet these requirements, the Statement of Purpose may be accepted without changes, or amendments as deemed appropriate by the cabinet member will be included in the Statement of Purpose.

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

5.1 Financial

None

5.2 Staffing

None

5.3 Property

None

5.4 IT

None

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 The Statement of Purpose is a requirement under the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005.

**7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 Children and adoptive carers are regularly consulted in the delivery of the service. Their views are thus reflected in the Statement of Purpose. Examples include:

7.2 Feedback from carers on training for prospective adopters was that they wanted less role-plays and more group-work. The revised preparation course is reflected in the Statement of Purpose

7.3 Adoptive families were consulted on how they would like the adoption support groups to run. The group was named A.D.O.P.T (Adoption, Discussion, Opportunity, Participation & Together) by the adopters. From their feedback the service now run alternative evening (adults only) and morning (parent and child) groups. This is also reflected in the Statement of Purpose.

7.4 The Children's Guide for children who are in the adoption process is based on the Statement of Purpose and produced in consultation with adopted children.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Children's Services Cabinet Member approves the revised Adoption Service Statement of Purpose.

### **SERVICE DIRECTOR CHILDREN, STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Hewson House  
Station Road  
Brigg  
DN20 8LD

Author: Paul Cowling

Date: 06/03/2009

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- The North Lincolnshire Adoption Service Statement of Purpose

# Adoption Service



Children and Family Services

## Statement Of Purpose 2009 - 2010

**The Adoption Service is registered with;**  
Ofsted National Business Unit  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Anne's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

Telephone 08456 404040  
Email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)



This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please phone 01652 656005 if you need any of these or any other help to access North Lincolnshire's services.

# **CONTENTS**

- 1. Aims and Objectives**
- 2. Services for Children**
- 3. Services for Prospective Adopters**
- 4. Services for Approved Adopters**
- 5. Services for Birth Families**
- 6. Services for Adopted Adults**

**Appendix 1  
Financial Support**

**Appendix 2  
Staffing Qualifications and Experience**

**Appendix 3  
Organisational Structures**

**Appendix 4  
Complaints and Representations**

The Adoption Team is a highly experienced Team who promote high standards and best practice in delivering all areas of this highly complex and specialist service. As a Team we continually strive to improve our practice and increase our learning and knowledge. We support one another to ensure that we are able to utilize the Team's wide range of skills and abilities to provide the best service we can for children and families affected by adoption.

North Lincolnshire has agreed with its partners a vision for all children and young people living in North Lincolnshire, which reflects the Every Child Matters five outcomes for children. This is the framework for North Lincolnshire's aspirations for children and young people in care and who are adopted. The vision is expressed through North Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Plan.

## 1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- North Lincolnshire Council is committed to delivering a range of high quality adoption services. These services will recognise the life-long impact of adoption for all parties concerned and will meet the needs of children, birth families, prospective adopters, adoptive families, adopted adults *and significant others affected by adoption*.
- North Lincolnshire Council will ensure that where possible, and safe, children will be brought up within their own family and community and we will work in partnership with all concerned to enable children to live safe and stable lives with their own families.
- Where this is not possible 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. We will act decisively to provide stability and permanence for children without delay.

### The objectives of the services are:

- 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, through the support of North Lincolnshire Children's Services, through health care, education and social and leisure activities, to develop to their full potential and achieve the five key outcomes of ***staying safe, being healthy, enjoying life and achieving their aspirations, enjoying economic well-being and making a positive contribution to society***.
- To place the welfare, safety and needs of children at the centre of the adoption process. To ensure that the child's needs take precedence over those of anyone else in the process.
- To ensure that for children where adoption is identified as the appropriate care plan we will work together with all others involved in the child's life to ensure that this happens without delay.

- To respect and promote the child's specific needs arising from ethnic origin, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion, language and disability.
- To listen to children and to take their wishes and feelings into account when making decisions on their behalf.
- To ensure that children are properly prepared for adoption and kept informed at all stages of the adoption process.
- To recruit or locate sufficient numbers of prospective adopters to match the wide range of individual needs of North Lincolnshire children requiring adoption. *North Lincolnshire Council celebrates diversity and will not act in a discriminatory manner in relation to issues of age, gender, sexuality, disability, race or religion. The needs of individual children are considered as paramount and each case will be considered on the basis of how individual children's needs can be met.*
- To ensure that all enquiries concerning adoption are dealt with promptly. Prospective adopters will be welcomed and treated with respect. They will be provided with clear written information and good quality preparation training. They will be assessed fairly and thoroughly against their ability to provide safe and appropriate care and commitment to a child for life.
- To 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. To value and respect birth families wishes and feelings and to take account of their views when planning for their child's adoption. To help birth families maximise the contribution they can make to promoting and preserving their child's heritage and sense of identity.
- To value and respect the role of adoptive parents by maintaining informal links and helping to deliver a range of appropriate support services in response to assessed needs.
- 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.

## **2 SERVICES FOR CHILDREN**

### **Preparation for Adoption**

North Lincolnshire Council recognises the importance of age appropriate preparation for children and has developed procedures and practice guidance around appropriate preparation and life-story work.

The primary responsibility for preparing a child for adoption rests with the child's social worker. Foster carers, health service professionals' Family Placement Officers and birth family members often assist the social worker in this task.

North Lincolnshire Council's Adoption and Fostering Team also supports the work of the social worker and other people involved in the planning and preparation through: -

- Training around direct work and life story work with children
- Advice and guidance on the adoption process.

### **Family Finding & Matching**

Children referred for adoption, or subject to 'twin tracking', 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 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 identify as many potential suitable matches as possible.
- To work alongside the child's social worker in presenting any proposed match to the North Lincolnshire's Independent Adoption Panel.
- To participate in the planning of introductions of the child to prospective adopters.
- 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.

Where it is in the child's best interests North Lincolnshire Council will place children with adoptive families within its boundaries. However, due to safety considerations, it is often not appropriate to place children for adoption within North Lincolnshire's boundaries. In these instances an adoptive placement will be sought outside of North Lincolnshire.

North Lincolnshire Council is a member of the Yorkshire Adoption Consortium. This body is comprised of 17 Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies within the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Its primary objective is to facilitate the making of inter agency adoptive placements in cases where councils are not able to find suitable placements within their own areas. At the same time the consortium serves to increase placement choice.

Agreed protocols are in place within consortia to govern effective working procedures and ensure equity between member authorities.

Where suitable adoptive placements are unavailable either locally or through the consortium, North Lincolnshire Council will consider possible matches generated by the National Adoption Register, BAAF Be My Parent, Children Who Wait and make use of a wide variety of family finding methods and mediums.



## Information and Support

North Lincolnshire Council believes that children have a right to information and support throughout the adoption process.

All children, allowing for 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. This guide summarises the stages of the adoption process and provides information regarding making complaints as well as how to access an independent advocate.

Children will also be given information about prospective adopters who have been identified for them. This information will take the form of photograph albums, DVD or video 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 System. All letterbox arrangements are child focused and must be in the child's best interests. The system, which is administered by the Adoption and Fostering Team, 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.
- Where a child's placement for adoption is being reviewed.
- The child's needs will also be assessed following a request from the child or the adoptive parent(s) at any point following the making of an adoption order.
- Where support services are agreed a support plan will be prepared.
- The plan will 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.

Examples of adoption support services for children include: -

- Information, advice and counselling
- Therapeutic services
- Support for contact arrangements between adoptive children and birth relatives.
- Financial support

### 3. SERVICES FOR PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

#### Recruitment

- *North Lincolnshire Council believes that no person has an automatic right to become approved as an adopter. It is recognised, however, that people from a wide range of backgrounds, with varied personal circumstances, can be effective and loving adoptive parents*
- The Council will not act in a discriminatory manner in relation to issues of gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion, marital or employment status. Applicants will not be excluded on the grounds of age, health or other factors except for certain criminal convictions.
- All applicants will be assessed on their ability to care for children, through adoption, safely, effectively and in a way that will enable them to develop to their full potential and achieve the five key outcomes of ***staying safe, being healthy, enjoying life and achieving their aspirations, enjoying economic well-being and making a positive contribution to society.***
- North Lincolnshire Council reserves the right to prioritise, at certain times those applicants most likely to match the specific needs of children in need of adoption in North Lincolnshire and nationally. For example, prospective adopters who will consider sibling groups, older children, or children with disabilities, may be prioritised over applicants who will only consider healthy babies.

An ongoing recruitment strategy and programme of events is in place for the recruitment of prospective adopters to meet the needs of children who require adoption. Some of the methods used are publicity within local newspapers and the Council 'Direct' magazine, displays and posters in public places and presentations to community organizations.

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

Prospective adopters will be supplied with high quality written information about adoption within twenty-four hours of their enquiry. Leaflets cover the following areas:

- North Lincolnshire's eligibility criteria.
- The sorts of children in need of adoption, both locally and nationally including a description of a range of experiences, behaviours and needs of these children.
- The nature of adoption
- The process involved in becoming approved as an adoptive parent.
- The Adoption Panel

- Intercountry Adoption
- Adoption Support
- Financial matters

Prospective adopters will be invited to an informal information evening where they will have the opportunity to meet the members of staff from the Adoption and Fostering Team and also people who are already approved as adopters.

If, following this evening, they wish to continue with their application they will be allocated an Adoption Social Worker to undertake an initial home visit to explore further their wish to become adoptive parents and answer any questions about the process.

The prospective adopters will then be invited to submit a formal application to be assessed as adoptive parents.

On receipt of this application the local authority will undertake certain checks and references including:

- CRB (Criminal Records Bureau)
- Probation
- Social Services
- Personal References
- NSPCC
- Education
- Medical

The purpose of these checks and enquiries is to reassure North Lincolnshire Council that there are no factors that prevent someone from adopting, for example – having a criminal offence against children.

A full medical is required for anyone who wants to adopt. Prospective adopters need not be in perfect health, but do need to be medically fit enough to parent a child through to adulthood.

## **Preparation**

North Lincolnshire Council provides prospective adopters with a comprehensive preparation course. This is delivered in partnership with a neighboring local Authority. The programme utilises materials and exercises from 'Preparing to Adopt' - a course devised by BAAF (British Association of Adoption & Fostering). Prospective adopters are also given the opportunity to meet with approved adopters in order to learn from their experiences.

The aim of the course is to equip prospective adopters with an understanding of the complexities that are often associated with adoption. The preparation course is a vital part of the process of raising awareness and informing prospective adopters of the challenges and difficulties as well as the rewards of adoption. In this way prospective adopters are helped to make informed decisions about whether they can make the life long commitment of adoption.

- Prospective adopters are expected to attend the whole course.
- Courses are regularly evaluated and reviewed incorporating feedback from participants.
- Preparation courses are currently offered three times a year. In addition North Lincolnshire Council has developed a 'Core Preparation Training Programme' in partnership with several nearby authorities. This allows prospective adopters to choose to attend a preparation course in a local authority other than their home one. They can then go on to be assessed in their own local authority. The main benefit of the Core Training Programme is that prospective adopters are not waiting for a preparation course in their home area, which can help to reduce the time from enquiry to approval.

### **Home Study Assessment**

Following completion of the Preparation to Adopt course applicants will be allocated an Adoption Social Worker to work with them on the Home Study Assessment.

The home study consists of a series of interviews usually carried out in the home of the applicants. North Lincolnshire Council uses the BAAF Prospective Adopter's Report format and guidance for gathering a range of information about applicants, their lifestyle and their capacity to adopt. Applicants are invited to contribute by providing evidence of their own knowledge and skills. The assessment is evidence based and is about ensuring that applicants are equipped to meet the needs of children through adoption. Among the issues under assessment are: -

- The applicants' ability to build and sustain close relationships with a child.
- The ability to acknowledge and understand how past events or experiences have impacted on the child and the actual or likely implications for parenting.
- The applicants' ability to acknowledge and understand how a child's feelings towards being adopted may change over time.
- The applicant's ability to acknowledge and value the child's birth heritage.
- How the applicants own personalities, past experiences and relationships have shaped their personality and attitudes and the implications of these for adoptive parenting.

Further information on the elements or purpose of the home study is available on request.



## Approval

Following the home study, the Adoption Social Worker writes a detailed report outlining the applicant's strengths and areas for development and makes recommendations about their suitability to adopt and the kinds of children whom they are most likely to be able to meet the needs of.

Applicants will receive a copy of the assessment report before it is presented to the Adoption Panel and are invited to provide their own comments in writing on the contents of the report.

Applicants are invited to attend the Adoption Panel, along with their Adoption Social Worker, to answer questions about their application.

## The Adoption Panel

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

The case of every child referred to it by North Lincolnshire and make a recommendation as to whether the child should be placed for adoption.

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 'decision-maker' for a final decision to be made. In North Lincolnshire this is the Service Director, Children, Strategy & Partnerships.

The panel is made up of professional and lay people, who have detailed knowledge or experience of adoption through their work or their personal lives. The Panel is chaired by an independent expert advisor from BAAF (The British Agency for Adoption and Fostering)

**Further information on the membership of North Lincolnshire's Adoption Panel and its specific functions in relation to prospective adopters and children is available on request.**

Prospective adopters should be aware that at any time North Lincolnshire Council may decide that it is unable to support an application to be approved. In such cases, enquirers or applicants can expect full verbal and written explanations regarding the reasons for this although confidential information will not be disclosed.

Where, following either a full or brief report presented to the adoption panel the Council decides to make a 'qualifying determination' not to approve, applicants may choose to make representations **or** apply to have their case reviewed by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). Further information on the role of the IRM is available on request.

Approved and prospective adopters are asked, at different stages, for their opinion on the services they have received.

- **North Lincolnshire Council will undertake to ensure that the whole process from an applicant submitting their formal application, to becoming approved as an adopter, should take no longer than 32 weeks.**

## **Intercountry Adoption**

North Lincolnshire Council offers a service to people who would like to adopt a child from abroad.

Prospective adopters for intercountry adoption undergo the same basic preparation training as domestic adopters; however, additional information is given regarding cultural issues and the law in relation to intercountry adoption. Prospective adopters are also informed about any relevant criteria or procedures applicable in different countries.

North Lincolnshire Council has access to a consultant experienced in the field of intercountry adoption and who can advise and support its work with prospective adopters.

A fee will be charged to inter-country adopters for these services. Typically this is between £3,000 and £5,000 depending on the country in question and the complexity of the assessment.

## **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.

Foster carers can be expected to be assessed in the same way as other prospective adopters. However, the assessment will also focus on the specific long-term needs of the child in question. Here some of the primary considerations will be to do with: -

- 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.

Foster carers making a formal application to adopt a child in their care will be assessed and presented to the Adoption Panel within four months of their application.

## **4. SERVICES FOR APPROVED ADOPTERS**

Following approval, adopters will receive written notification from the Agency Decision Maker within 7 working days of the Panel recommendation. They will be contacted by their Adoption Social Worker, who will provide clear information about how a child will be matched with them using local resources, consortium arrangements or the Adoption Register. Regular contact will be made to ensure that adopters are kept informed of the efforts that are being made.

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 adopters will also be provided with clear and detailed information about any behavioural issues and the implications and demands that may be placed on their family.

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.

Approved adopters will be supported from the point that the child is introduced to them through to the making of the adoption order.

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.

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.

The sorts of services that may be provided fall into two categories a) universal and b) services specific to adoption. Examples of universal and primary services are: -

- Educational support e.g. from the schoolteacher, educational psychologist or specialist provision.
- Therapeutic support.
- Physical health care support via a GP, health visitor or hospital
- Social worker or family support
- Connexions
- Day care e.g. nursery or child minder
- Benefits advice

Examples of services specific to adoption are: -

- Regular training events throughout the year, e.g workshops are available on 'Explaining Adoption', 'Promoting Attachment', and 'Building resilience and managing behaviour.
- Therapeutic support from a dedicated CAMH's worker.
- A mentoring scheme where experienced adopters help to support other adoptive parents.
- Additional support with contact arrangements.
- Informal social events throughout the year for adopters and children.
- Loan of the Adoption and Fostering Team's library materials
- A dedicated web site
- Financial support – subject to an assessment.
- Membership of Adoption UK (paid up to 1 year after the placement)
- Counselling advice and information.
- Adoption Support Group

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 Mr Dave Basker, Hewson House, Station Road, Brigg, North Lincolnshire.

Further information regarding Adoption Support including the legal framework can be obtained on request. This can be provided either verbally or in leaflet form.

## **5. 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.

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 facilitation of birth parent support groups.

### **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 & Fostering Team 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.

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

North Lincolnshire Council recognises that in some circumstances birth families will prefer to access support through services that have no direct link to the adoption agency. In these circumstances we are able to access services for families through such organisations as 'After Adoption'

In addition North Lincolnshire Council is a member of The Natural Parents Network, giving birth parents a further opportunity to access independent support and advice.

### **Adoption Contact Letterbox**

The letterbox facilitates the indirect contact between children, adoptive families and birth families throughout the adopted child's childhood. There are currently in excess of 150 ongoing 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 Workers role to liaise with everyone involved.

### **Other Intermediary Activities**

Birth families are entitled to services that recognise the life long implications of adoption for them. North Lincolnshire Council provides services to respond to this need. These include: -

- Initial enquiries from birth family members will be allocated to a Adoption Social Worker and support and counselling will be provided to discuss what services may be available:

This may include:

- Information about other resources or adoption support agencies e.g. After Adoption or the Natural Parents Network
- 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.

The purpose of counselling is to ensure that the birth family member has considered the possible effect of any enquiries, both on himself/herself and on others. It is imperative that the information sought, is provided in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

## **6. SERVICES FOR ADOPTED ADULTS**

### **Birth Records Counselling**

This is provided to adopted adults to enable them to: -

- ◆ Obtain a birth certificate.
- ◆ Locate their adoption file.
- ◆ Request Intermediary services to provide for contact with birth relatives subject to the latter having given formal consent to information being disclosed.
- ◆ Take no further action after the counselling.

The purpose of counselling is to ensure that the adopted person has considered the possible effect of any enquiries, both on himself/herself and on others. 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.

### **Permanency Planning, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders:**

In addition to providing the range of adoption services as outlined above the Adoption and Fostering Team also plays a key role in the permanency planning for all children in care.

It is the aim of North Lincolnshire Council to ensure that children who are admitted to our care are returned to their own family and community networks at the earliest opportunity, whenever it is safe to do so

Where this is not in the child's best interests, we will endeavor to work with everyone concerned to help the child move on to become part of a stable and permanent, alternative family. This may be an adoptive family but in some cases where this is not in the child's best interests a Special Guardianship Order or a Residence Order may be the most appropriate alternative.

### **Special Guardianship**

North Lincolnshire Council has a commitment to supporting families who have obtained a Special Guardianship Order in respect of a child who was in care after immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order, and to supporting the birth families of such children.

Support available includes

- Counselling, advice and information
- Financial support in some circumstances
- Assistance, including mediation services, in relation to contact between the child and their birth parents or any other people with whom contact will be in the child's best interests.
- Therapeutic services for the child and family.

- ◆ ***Special Guardianship Support Services should not be seen in isolation from mainstream services and children and families involved in Special Guardianship should be assisted to access mainstream services where appropriate.***

## **Residence Orders**

North Lincolnshire Council has a commitment to supporting families who have obtained a Residence Order in respect of a child who was looked after immediately prior to the making of a Residence Order and to supporting the birth families of such children.

Support available includes

- Counselling, advice and information
  - Financial support in some circumstances
  - Assistance, including mediation services, in relation to contact between the child and their birth parents or any other people with whom contact will be in the child's best interests.
  - Therapeutic services for the child and family.
- 
- ◆ ***Residence Order Support Services should not be seen in isolation from mainstream services and children and families involved in Special Guardianship should be assisted to access mainstream services where appropriate.***

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Financial Support to Adoption and Special Guardianship**

The Council follows the DCSF Recommended National Minimum Rate (NMR) as the base for financial support. This will ensure that there is no prejudice to the child in the type of order made.

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.

The DCSF means test is used to determine the amount of finance which adoptive parents, special guardians and holders of residence orders receive.

| <b>Age Group</b>                | <b>North Lincs Base Rate<br/>National Minimum Rates (NMR)<br/>2009-2010</b> |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Babies and Pre Primary<br>(0-4) | £108.00   |
| Primary<br>(5-10)               | £119.00   |
| Secondary<br>(11-15)            | £137.00   |
| Secondary<br>(16+)              | £159.00   |

In order to comply with principles of a base rate applying to all types of substitute parenting which involve council funding additional financial support to adoptive parents or special guardians will be in the circumstances prescribed in the Adoption and Children Act 2005.

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 will be deducted from any enhancement prior to placement.

Any enhancements and financial support will always need to have sufficient flexibility to deal with the most extreme cases of need.

## Appendix 2

### **NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE REGISTERED PROVIDER AND REGISTERED MANAGER**

|   |
|---|
| The Registered Provider   |
| Mr Mick Gibbs<br>Head of Children & Family Services<br>North Lincolnshire Council<br>Children and Family Services<br>Hewson House,<br>Station Road<br>Brigg,<br>North Lincs<br>DN20 8XJ |
| The Registered Manager  |
| Ms Jill Slade<br>The Grove<br>38 West Street<br>Scawby<br>Nr Brigg<br>North Lincs<br>DN20 9AN   |

### **RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS**

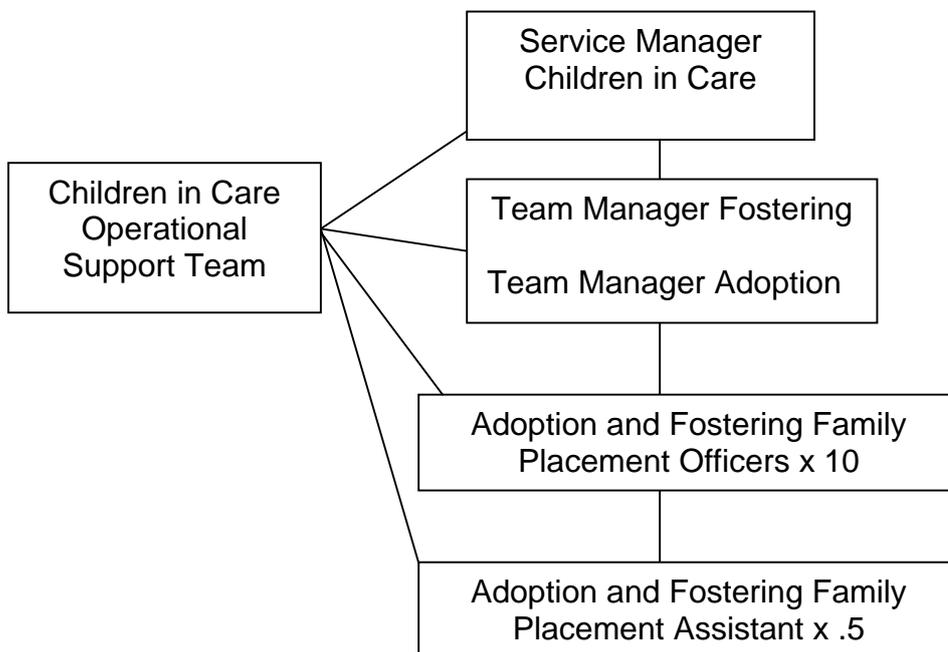
|  |
|--|
| <b>Registered Provider</b>   |
| Certificate in Social Services<br>Management Diploma (Health & Social Care)                          |
| <b>Registered Manager:</b>   |
| Associate Diploma in Social Welfare<br>BA Social Work<br>ILM Level 7 Executive Diploma in Management |

Staffing Qualifications and experience

| <b>Post Title</b>          | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Qualifications of Current Post holder</b>   | <b>Experience of current Post holder</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Team Manager               | Male          | Certificate in Social Services<br>ILM Diploma in Management  | 32 years                                 |
| Team Manager               | Female        | Associate Diploma in Social Welfare<br>BA Social Work<br>ILM 7 Executive Diploma in Management   | 17 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work<br>Certificate in Counselling   | 21 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work   | 12 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work<br>Preliminary Certificate in Social Care<br>PQ Award 1<br>PQ Good Practice in Family Placement 2-5<br>PQ 6 award | 12 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work<br>Preliminary Certificate in Social Care<br>PQ Award 1<br>PQ Good Practice in Family Placement 2-5<br>PQ 6 award | 21 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Male          | Diploma in Social Work<br>PQ Award 1<br>Diploma in Health and Social Welfare OU  | 13 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work<br>Btec Special Educational Needs   | 19 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work<br>NVQ Level 4 in Care  | 13 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Work<br>Certificate in Counselling<br>NNEBS Introductory Course in Management<br>IN Service Social Care Course         | 20 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | Diploma in Social Care<br>Diploma in Counselling   | 17 years                                 |
| Family Placement Officer   | Female        | BA Honors degree in Social Work  | 9 years                                  |
| Family Placement Assistant | Female        |  | 7 years                                  |

### Appendix 3

#### *Organisational Structures*



## **Appendix 4**

### **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. In the first instance it is hoped that the adoption service would attempt to deal with any complaint or representation, however if this is felt inappropriate all adopters and children, subject to their age and level of understanding, have complaints information and leaflets that show how to complain and how complaints are dealt with.

The independent complaints officer is  
Julie Pointon  
Hewson House  
Station Road  
Brigg  
North Lincolnshire  
Telephone Number 01724 296487

### **Children's Rights Director for England**

In addition to the North Lincolnshire complaints and representation procedures children, or adults acting on their behalf, have access to the Children's Rights Director for England.

The Office of the Children's Rights Director, St Nicholas Building, St Nicholas Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1NB.  
Free phone 0800 5280731  
e mail: [theteam.rights4me@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:theteam.rights4me@ofsted.gov.uk)

[www.rights4me.org.uk](http://www.rights4me.org.uk)

### **OFSTED**

The contact point for all questions, queries and complaints to Ofsted is the NBU via the central number, or you can email them.

**Ofsted National Business Unit  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Anne's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA**

**Telephone 08456 404040  
Email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)**

# Talking to your 'Corporate Parents'

Children and Family Services



As a child or young person in care you have a number of 'corporate parents'. These are people who are responsible for your welfare, want to help you make the most of your life and are interested in hearing your views.

Please feel free to get in touch with any of them to tell them your views about: your life, the help you get and what you think about things. You can email, write or telephone them.

You can write to your councillors and Richard Stiff at North Lincolnshire, Pittwood House, Ashby Road, Scunthorpe DN16 1AB

Or Denise, Mick and Dave can be reached at Hewson House, Station Road, Brigg DN20 8LD.



Richard Stiff is the Deputy Chief Executive for North Lincolnshire Council. He looks after all things to do with Children and Young people. You can email him with any issues: [richard.stiff@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:richard.stiff@northlincs.gov.uk) or call him on 01724 296002



Councillor Tony Gosling. Tony is the Children's Services Cabinet Member. This means that he makes important decisions about services for children and young people. [cllr.tonygosling@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.tonygosling@northlincs.gov.uk) or call 01724 296357



Denise Hyde is Service Director for Children, Strategy and Partnerships. Denise makes the important decisions that affect children in care and care leavers. [denise.hyde@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:denise.hyde@northlincs.gov.uk) or call 01724 296495



Councillor Linda Cawsey. Linda is working with Tony and Margaret to support children and young people in North Lincolnshire. [cllr.LindaCawsey@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.LindaCawsey@northlincs.gov.uk) or call 01724 296357



Mick Gibbs is Head of Children and Family Services. Mick manages the services that look after children in care and care leavers. [mick.gibbs@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:mick.gibbs@northlincs.gov.uk) or call 01724 296495



Councillor Margaret Simpson. Margaret is working with Tony and Linda to support children and young people in North Lincolnshire. Call 01724 296357



Dave Basker is Head of Safeguarding and Practice. Dave looks after your reviews and makes sure they happen on time and in the way you want them to. He also makes sure you are involved in important decisions that affect you. Need to tell Dave some information? why not email him at: [dave.basker@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:dave.basker@northlincs.gov.uk) or call 01724 296495

