



BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADOPTION SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**Social Services
Bridgend County Borough Council
Sunnyside
Bridgend
CF31 4AR**

Tel: 643643

(Last Reviewed March 2013)

This Statement of Purpose for

Adoption Services

has been approved by the

**Responsible Individual
Colin Turner**

Signed:

Date:

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Our mission is to achieve a comprehensive Adoption Service for children, providing culturally appropriate and sensitive services, within appropriate timescales, either directly or through arrangements with other agencies. The Adoption Service will also provide for the long-term needs of all those involved in adoption.

The Adoption Service will:

- ensure that adoption is considered for all children needing a permanent alternative family
- where the plan for children is adoption, assess their placement requirements, and achieve the closest match possible with prospective adopters making all reasonable efforts to enable sibling groups to be placed together where this is in their best interests
- recruit, prepare and approve prospective adopters who offer the greatest potential for the adoption of looked after children. This will also include foster carers seeking to adopt a child in their care, if this is considered to be an appropriate plan
- respond to the immediate and long-term needs of birth parents, siblings and other birth relatives involved in adoption
- provide information, advice and support across the range of interests and needs of those involved in adoption, including 'non-agency' (e.g. step-parent adoption) and inter-country adoption
- offer post placement and post adoption support to all adoptive families, including families where a child has been adopted by a step-parent or relative, or adopted from overseas
- meet the needs of adopted adults seeking information about their adoption history, and of others seeking information about, and searching for, their relatives who have been adopted

RANGE AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Children's Directorate has responsibility for the provision of a comprehensive adoption service for people in the area administered by Bridgend County Borough Council. Every effort is made to ensure that services comply with the requirements of the National Minimum Standards.

A consultancy service is provided to social workers working with families for whom adoption is relevant. Where appropriate, services are provided directly, or commissioned, from other adoption agencies, and include the following:

- advice and information for birth parents, adopted children, and adoptive parents
- counselling for birth parents relinquishing their child for adoption
- assessment, advice and support by a social worker for birth families and children subject to proceedings where a permanent alternative family will be required

- access to practical and therapeutic services to assist with the assessment and preparation of children subject to adoption plans
- access to support for birth parents whose children are subject to care proceedings and for whom an adoption plan is proposed
- recruitment, assessment, preparation and support of prospective adopters, including those who are interested in inter-country adoption
- provision of a family finding service for children with adoption plans, by participating in the local adoption consortium, the Adoption Register for England & Wales and a tailored approach for children waiting for adoption to maximise opportunities
- financial assistance to adoptive families to assist with costs arising from matching, introductions, placement for adoption
- a range of financial support services to eligible applicants in line with the Adoption Allowances Regulations 1991 (for existing placements) and the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2005.
- a specialist adoption support service for all new adoptive families, providing access to individual support from a named adoption worker including confidential telephone information, advice and support, support groups and special groups for children; access to information resources and other support networks and a newsletter and mailing list service
- counselling and support for adopted people making application for original birth record information under the provisions of the Adoption & Children Act 2002. (formerly S51 Adoption Act 1976)
- information, advice and support for birth relatives of children who were placed for adoption by Bridgend County Borough
- intermediary services for adopted people and their birth relatives, as appropriate
- adoption website to enable information to be accessed on-line, and a 'public' email address for general adoption enquiries and information requests
- adoption records archive for the safekeeping and rapid retrieval of adoption records. Records relating to adoptions by the Borough before April 1974 are in the care of the Glamorgan Records Office but are readily accessible
- assessment advice and support by a social worker to families involved in 'non-agency' adoption placements e.g. adoption by step-parent, or by a relative, and children brought into the UK to be adopted
- 'Adoption Mailbox Service' for the confidential exchange of information between adopted children and their birth relatives as appropriate
- facilitation of direct contact between adopted children, their siblings and birth relatives where there is a 'direct contact' agreement

2. THE NAME & ADDRESS OF THE MANAGER

Karen Williams – Adoption Team Manager
Sunnyside Offices, Sunnyside, Bridgend, CF31 4AR

3. THE RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE OF THE MANAGER

- (a) **Qualifications** DIPSW - 1999
FEATC - 1994
BTEC NNEB - 1992
NVQ Management Level 4 -2010
Diploma in Business Management (year 1-2 of MSC) 2012 and working toward completion in April 2013.
- (b) **Experience** The Manager is a qualified and registered Social Worker with 13 years' post qualifying experience as a Child Care Practitioner. In 2003 was appointed as a Senior Practitioner with specific responsibilities for Adoption Support Services, and in May 2006 was appointed as the Adoption Service Manager. Prior to qualifying had 5½ years' experience of registration and inspection of Day Care Services. In addition has worked as a further education trainer in three settings delivering to childcare workers NVQ, play work, Early Years Foundation Degree delivering course subjects including children's rights and law. Also has ten years experience in paid and voluntary childcare settings including Nursery age provision, childminding and as a youth worker

4. THE NUMBER, RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE OF THE STAFF EMPLOYED BY THE AUTHORITY FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE AUTHORITY'S ADOPTION SERVICE.

➤ **Senior Practitioner (1)**

- (a) **Qualifications** BSC in Social Care Studies – 2001
City and Guilds in Social Care Practice – 2001
Diploma in Social Work - 2005
- (b) **Experience** Adoption Team Senior Practitioner is qualified and registered. Has 8 years' post qualifying experience and 4 years unqualified experience within children services. Previous experience of working with children with disabilities and adults with disabilities

➤ **Senior Practitioner (2)**

- (a) **Qualifications** Access to HE -2002 Psychology, Sociology, Counselling
Diploma in Social Work - 2004
Certificate of Higher education in Child Protection 2008
- (b) **Experience** Registered social worker with 9 years' post qualifying experience including working with adults with physical and learning disability and dual diagnosis.

➤ **Social Worker (1)**

(a) Qualifications

BSc in Sociology
Diploma in Social Work 2001

(b) Experience

Adoption Team Social Worker is a qualified and registered social worker with 11 years experience. This included working with adults with learning disabilities and dual diagnosis. Has also had experience working with children with disabilities

Fluent Welsh Speaker

➤ **Social Worker (2)**

(a) Qualifications

BA (Hons) Social Work 2009s, History & English Literature
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Studies – 1999
Diploma in Social Work - 1999

(b) Experience

Social Worker with almost four years' experience. Prior to qualifying placements include working with adults with mental health issues in both a statutory and voluntary setting, and in BCBC Looked After Children Team. After qualifying worked in BCBC Looked After Children Team and North Safeguarding Team. Furthermore experience of working in generic childcare teams in NPT and Carmarthenshire. Work has included working with CIN, CP, LAC, Court and Adoption

➤ **Social Worker (3)**

(a) Qualifications

BA (Hons) Social Work 2009

(b) Experience

Joined BCBC in 2001 as a family aid, working to support Families on a range of issues from parenting to home conditions. In 2005 took up post as day-care support worker working primarily with Looked After Children. Qualified as a social worker in 2009, returning to the Looked After Children Team until commencing an assessing social workers post in Bridgend Foster Care and Joining the Adoption Service in November 2011.

➤ **Social Worker (3)**

(a) Qualifications

Diploma in Special Work 2005
Access to Health
HND Health and Social Care
HE Child Protection
PQ Award

(b) Experience

Joined BCBC in 2005 as a social worker in the looked after children's team..

In 2009 joined NPTCBC as a deputy Manager of a generic children's team.

In 2010 joined a private fostering agency as a senior social worker assessing and supporting foster carers, delivering training whilst also undertaking recruitment and marketing.

In 2012 I returned to BCBC as a social worker in the LAC project with the aim of reducing the number of LAC through a range of permanence options. In October 2012 appointed to a social worker in the adoption service.

➤ **Administrative Assistant (1) Level 2**

- (a) **Qualifications** RSA Typing Stages 1 & 2
OCN Counselling Skills
NVQ Level 2 Health and Social Care
- (b) **Experience** 5 years experience in the field of Business Support with two of these in local authority.
8 years experience as a making database analyst
10 years experience in the field of communications
6 years experience as junior support to media executive

Administrative Assistant (2) Level 1

- (a) **Qualifications** HNC in Public Administration
OND in Business & Finance
Typing Stages I, II & III
City & Guilds Desktop Publishing Level I & II
- (b) **Experience** 23 years experience of working in the Public Sector as Senior Management PA including 10 years with Her Majesty's Court Service. Experience in Higher Education, Local Authority and the NSPCC
- Experience of working with Senior Management and users of public sector organisations, including all aspects of office management, training and supervision
- Fluent Welsh speaker

5. THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services is organised in two Directorates, one of which is the Children's Directorate. Within the Children's Directorate services for children are provided through the Safeguarding and Family Support Service which includes assessment/care management, family support, aftercare for adolescent care leavers, fostering, (encompassing short stay provision for children with disabilities), supported lodgings for teenagers moving to independence, an adolescent and remand fostering scheme in partnership with neighbouring local Authorities, residential services and adoption.

In the latter half of 2006 the organisation of the adoption service was restructured to enable the assessments of adopters and post approval support to be joined with the adoption agency

function and managed by one team manager. The Safeguarding Teams continue to have primary responsibility for identifying and preparing children for adoption, with the support of the adoption service.

6. SYSTEM FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE ADOPTION SERVICE.

Monitoring of the adoption service is multifaceted.

- **Staff**

Social work staff receive monthly supervision.

Level one administrative staff receive six-weekly supervision, and level two staff receive monthly supervision.

In line with Directorate Policy and Procedures the Adoption Manager will also carry out annual appraisals with all staff members.

There is on-going training of staff in work-related fields. This encourages staff to participate in their individual Continuous Professional Development and in post qualifying training and development.

There is awareness through the induction and supervision process of appropriate policies and procedures relating to staff safety and conduct.

- **Policy and Procedures**

Corporate policies are implemented where applicable.

Policies and procedures are updated in line with National Minimum Standards and relevant regulations.

Effective practices already established need to be embodied in written policies and procedures, and aligned with National Minimum Standards and regulations.

When completed, these policies and procedures will be reviewed annually.

- **Partnerships**

The Group Manager (Service Provision) is the Chair of the South Wales Adoption Agencies Consortium Management Board.

There is collaborative practice as a member of the consortium, utilising shared professional expertise.

7. PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITING, PREPARING, ASSESSING, APPROVING AND SUPPORTING PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

- The initial contact, at whatever point it is made with the Local Authority, is directed to the manager of adoption agency
- The enquirer is sent written information about adoption and invited to register their interest and give basic personal information in a standard pro forma and is offered the

opportunity to attend a briefing evening and if interested in proceeding an introductory interview

- Following the briefing evening and /or the interview, and if the applicants express (in writing) a wish to proceed, a pre-assessment screening form will be sent to them which, when completed & returned, will facilitate preliminary statutory checks, and identify applicants where legal or health issues would preclude pursuing an application or successful conclusion.
- A decision is made by the Adoption Manager regarding appropriateness of proceeding
- The application is the requested, and if received the assessment allocated to social worker according to team workload
- If this worker is not a permanent member of the team, i.e. commissioned to complete the assessment only, a member of the team will be appointed to link with the applicants which offers continuity and an additional quality assurance role
- Assessment then begins following the BAAF (British Association for Adoption & Fostering) Prospective Adopters Report (PAR) Form (formerly the form F) and any additional checks or enquiries initiated
- Training is a requirement and carried out to BAAF standards before, during, or shortly after the process of assessment. We encourage “second time” adopters to attend a short course specifically designed to address the relevant issues
- Anomalies and omissions are addressed through case worker supervision, Adoption Panel and Agency Decision maker
- When the assessment is complete, the applicants receive a copy and have 28 days to respond with any amendments they wish to make. This done, the report is submitted to the Adoption Panel. If the application is recommended by the panel and subsequently approved by the decision maker, post approval support is offered by maintaining contact with the assessing social worker or link team member
- The adopters are referred to the South Wales Adoption Agencies Consortium, which identifies any potential matches. The Adoption Team social worker remains involved, offering support to adopters during the process of matching, and post placement, and fulfils the requirement to complete the Annex A court report in respect of the adopters
- The need for Adoption Support Services is considered at any stage in the plan for the child when adoption becomes a possibility. An appropriate service is thus in place by the time the Adoption Order is granted
- Membership of the adoption consortium provides the means to recruit adopters for children in Bridgend County Borough where placements locally would be inappropriate
- Within set timescales, an additional recruitment resource is the Adoption Register for England & Wales

The following issue is the subject of current consideration

- A policy to review approved applicants’ continued suitability

8. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The complaints procedure requires staff to attempt to resolve complaints informally, whenever appropriate. However, when complaints do need to be dealt with formally there is clear policy, procedural and guidance information available. Where policies and procedures need to be amended in response to the outcome of complaints, mechanisms are in place to highlight specific areas for change.

The adoption agency fully adheres to, and complies with, Bridgend County Borough Council's Representations and Complaints Procedure - Section 24d & 26 of the Children Act 1989 and the Local Authority Social Services Act (Complaints Procedure) 1970. [Liaison with Complaints Officer, Ros Woods, 01656 642253]

9. ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF APPROPRIATE OFFICER FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

CSSIW
South West Wales Regional Office
Government Buildings
Picton Terrace
Carmarthen
SA31 3BT

Tel Number 01267 245160

10. ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR WALES

Children's Commissioner for Wales
Oystermouth House
Phoenix Way
Llansamlet
Swansea
SA7 9FS

Tel. 01792 765600

Updated: 11th March 2013