STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

ADOPTION SERVICE 2013
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR BIRMINGHAM ADOPTION SERVICE

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of standard 18 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and the Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2011.

This document is has been revised to reflect developments since the Statement of Purpose, April 2013 was approved.

The Adoption and Fostering Services are subject to restructure, with an implementation date of December 2013. There will be a combined service for adoption and fostering, with one Head of Service, to provide a more streamlined approach, with the child at the centre, whilst achieving efficiencies to ensure that our resources are targeted at improved placement services. This will also enable our services to continue to be compliant with revised regulations and guidance as they come into force.

A revised Statement of Purpose will be issued upon completion of the process and upon approval by the Cabinet, Birmingham City Council.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Background; Birmingham City Council’s Vision &amp; Priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Aims &amp; Objectives; Principles of the Adoption Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Appointed Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Adoption Service Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The Organisational Structure of the Adoption Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Monitoring Arrangements to Ensure Effectiveness &amp; Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Complaints &amp; Appeals Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Advocacy &amp; Children’s Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Children’s Rights Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Independent Review Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Ofsted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix 1: Directorate Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix 2: Adoption Management Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix 3: Adoption Service Structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES
DIRECTORATE
ADOPTION SERVICE

BACKGROUND

Under the Adoption National Minimum Standards and Regulations 2003, every adoption agency has to produce a written Statement of Purpose (Standard 18, Regulation Part 2(I) and Schedule 1) The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulation 2005. This statement accurately describes the aims, objectives and functions of the service and describes the facilities and services provided.

This statement is subject to formal approval and is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Statement of Purpose is provided upon request to anyone working for the purposes of the service, to children who may be adopted and their parents, to anyone wishing to adopt and to adopted persons and their families.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL’S VISION & PRIORITIES

“Every child in every part of the City should achieve their potential. We will provide early help and support to those children and families who need it and, working together, will ensure that every child has the belief, aspiration and support to be their best.”

Our vision and the drive to ensure children and young people are safe, healthy and engaged in learning will be delivered through a focus on six key priorities:

- Prevention
- Integration
- Aspiration
- Safeguarding
- Participation
- Excellence through partnership

CYPF aims through a comprehensive adoption service to meet the needs of:

- Children who have been or may be adopted
- Birth parents and guardians of such children
- Persons who have adopted or may adopt and their children
- Adopted persons and their families.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES ADOPTION SERVICE

The aims and objectives of the Adoption Service in Birmingham Children, Young People and Families Directorate (CYPF) are to provide a service to all those families and individuals involved in the adoption process consistent with best practice, National Standards and Regulations.

PRINCIPLES

The Adoption Service believes that:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- It is best for children, where possible, to be brought up by their own birth family.
- The child’s welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child’s wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages.
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.
- Children’s ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language should be recognised, valued and promoted when decisions are made.
- The particular needs of disabled children should be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made.
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family should be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions and individuals who have to work together to provide services of those affected by adoption.
- Children have the right to grow up knowing they are adopted and should have access to information about their family of birth.
THE APPOINTED MANAGER, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE MANAGER

Janet Denny - Head of Service,
Adoption Service
PO Box 16262
Birmingham
B2 2WX

Telephone: 0121 303 2698
Email: janet.denny@birmingham.gov.uk

Qualifications:
1989 CQSW
2007 Masters Degree – Managing Partnerships in Health & Social Care
2007 West Midlands Regional Post Qualifying Consortium – Advanced Award in Social Work

Experience:
Twenty six years experience in many aspects of social work with children and families, with 21 years of management experience. Since 2004 has held the senior management position as Head of Service.

Chair of the West Midlands Family Placement Consortium on behalf of the 14 West Midlands authorities and two voluntary agencies and a member of the BCC Directorate DBS Panel.
ADOPTION SERVICE PERSONNEL:

Head of Service Adoption: Qualifications and Experience – See above. The Head of Service is the Adoption Support Services Adviser, and is managed by the Assistant Director (Children in Care Provider Services) who in turn is managed by the Service Director for Children's Social Care.

Adoption Improvement Manager: MA Hones 1969, CQSW1973, Dip Soc Admin Studies 1973, NVQ 4 in Management 2004, PQSW1999, PAC - Adoption Counselling Expertise2000. This post was created in December 2012 and continues until March 2014, funded by the Adoption Improvement Grant and the Adoption Reform Grant. The Adoption Reform Grant has also facilitated developments in Recruitment and approval of adopters, and in the improvement of general services to reduce delay for children requiring permanent placement. The post holder is seconded from the Adoption and Fostering Panel Team. (Post holder retains role of Agency Adviser and IRM Link)

Adoption and Fostering Recruitment Team – managed by the Head of Fostering

Adoption and Fostering Panel Team - managed by Head of Service Adoption
- Team Manager (Seconded as Adoption Improvement Manager) Post covered by Team Manager Adoption Team 2 in the interim
- 2 Panel Advisers, DipSW or equivalent, + PQ2
- Financial Support Officer
- 0.5 Letterbox Coordinator

Adoption Team 1 - Generic (with a lead in Adopter Training and Support)
- Team Manager - DipSW / CQSW, 1985 Dip Public Service Management 1998
- 1 Senior Practitioner - MSW CCETSW 1998, CIPD certificate in training practice (April 09)
- 5 Senior Social Workers - all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications. Three have PQ1, and one has the PQ full award and Practice Teachers award

Adoption Team 2 – Generic + Cover for Panel Manager
- Team Manager (MA in Social Work, DipSW, NVQ4 in Management)
- Senior Practitioner (B Phil in Child Care, DipSW, NVQ4 in Management, PQ1 & 2)
- 7 Social Workers (all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications, 5 have PQ1, 2 have PQ2 and 1 undertaking PQ Specialist Award)
Adoption Team 3 - Generic + Lead in post adoption support and services to adults affected by adoption
- Team Manager (BA Hons in Sociology, CQSW (1987), Practice Teachers Award (2010))
- Senior Practitioner (BA Hons., Applied Social Sciences and Diploma in Social work)
- 7 Senior Social Workers (all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications, 4 have PQ1 and 3 have PQ Full Award).

Adoption Team 4 Generic + Lead in family finding
- 1 Senior Practitioner (CQSW (1977), PQ1)
- 6 Social Workers (all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications. 3 have PQ1, 1 has PQ2)
- The service also works with a pool of appropriately qualified and registered Independent Social Workers managed by a Senior Practitioner.

Professional Support Services (Administration Teams)
- The Professional Support Service was redesigned in 2013 and all administrative support is now provided on-site by a generic team of workers, managed externally to the adoption service.
THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The Adoption Service is a city wide service. There are four generic teams which cover a range of functions including: assessment of adopters, support to adopters both pre and post approval, and family finding for children approved for adoption. The Panel Team and the Recruitment Team have a joint function for fostering and adoption. A post placement and post adoption service to families and adopted adults is also provided, working in partnership with specialist Adoption Support Agencies, such as Adoption UK. After adoption services to Inter Country Adopters are provided in part by Inter Country Adoption, via a Service Level Agreement.

RECRUITMENT TEAM
PO Box 16262 Lancaster Circus Birmingham B2 2WX (Tel 0121 303 7575) www.birmingham.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering

The team provides a welcoming point of contact for anyone interested in becoming an adopter, including those who make enquiries about intercountry adoption, step-parent and relative adoption.

The team provides access for the prospective adopters during the usual office hours and Thursday evenings. The Team devises and delivers projects and promotional campaigns to raise general awareness about the City’s need for adopters, and also to generate enquiries from potential applicants. Promotional activity is planned in collaboration with BCC Corporate Communications, and our Promotions Officer. This covers all standard elements of promotional activity including the production and distribution / display of posters and literature citywide, media campaigns, advertising, and networking through community engagement projects and events and co-ordination of recruitment campaigns on a twelve month planned basis (including making use of venues, range of media and events and festivals throughout the city).

Enquirers receive an information pack) and an invitation to attend an information meeting, where a recruitment DVD is shown and available to take home. A detailed discussion with a social worker, either by telephone or by a visit enables enquirers to decide if they would like to proceed, and if they are eligible to adopt. The Recruitment Team supports applicants who then register their interest in adoption through Stage One of the new national process for adopter approval, from July 2013. Statutory checks and references are completed,

The team liaises closely with colleagues in the Adoption Service to develop, arrange and provide media features for specific children and to provide advice and consultation on advertising and promotional work.

The team is always very keen to hear views you may have on our recruitment processes and customer service in general.

ADOPTION AND FOSTERING PANEL TEAM
The team administers and manages Birmingham’s Adoption Panels and Fostering Panels. We have four separate Adoption Panels. There are at least 13 Panel meetings a month, 8 of which are Adoption and 5 Fostering. We also
have the ability to convene a further Adoption Panel, when demand for Panel space is high. This extra Panel can sit up to 6 times a year.

The team has two Panel Advisers who, along with the Team Manager, provide professional advice to Panels. Adoption Panels consider approval of adopters, matches, and termination of adopters' approval. Adopters are invited and supported to attend Panel.

Panels liaise closely with Birmingham's decision-makers for Adoption currently the Assistant Director, Children in Care Provider Services, Children’s Integrated Care and the Head of Service, Safeguarding, Child Protection & Review.

The team monitors the performance of the Service providing an annual report to Panels and monthly business information to managers via the Central Resource Exchange (CRE). Panel Advisers also provide a consultation service to children's workers and others across the Directorate.

The Panel Team administers the arrangements for approval of adoption plans. Two part time Agency Decision Makers have recently been appointed to cover adoption decision and adoption and fostering panels. In addition, they will have responsibilities in relation to the Fostering Regulations.

The Panel Team manages the Central Resource Exchange database, (CHARMS), which provides matches between children with plans for adoption and approved adopters. CRE is the identified link with the National Adoption Register and the West Midlands Consortium Register. The Panel Team also includes the quality assurance function for the service.

The information held in CHARMS is integrated with the CareFirst database, to provide valuable business information and these links are currently being developed to improve our ability to promote timely planning and placements for children requiring adoption.

The Panel Manager is also the Agency Adviser and the Adoption and Fostering link with the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

**ADOPTION TEAM 1 - GENERIC + ADOPTER TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

PO Box 16262 Lancaster Circus Birmingham B2 2WX (Tel 0121 303 1010)

The team co-ordinates all adoption pre-approval training and benefits from a well resourced training facility. The team has developed a rolling programme of courses, which are designed to prepare applicants for the tasks of parenting an adopted child / children.

The training is structured into a pre-course introduction workbook and seven separate but interlinking modules with accompanying workbooks. The course provides prospective adopters with underpinning knowledge on subjects such as brain development, attachment, interrupted development and the impact of the child's pre-placement experiences on all of these areas. The courses are led by Assessment social workers with input from experienced adopters, adoptee, CAMHS workers and adoption support workers. Day 1 of the training
course is now undertaken in Stage 1 of the process, with completion of an introductory workbook. This is followed by three days in Stage 2. Adopters are assessed by an Assessment Social Worker using the BAAF PAR Form, which includes personal reference reports, medical reports and evaluations from training groups. This Team also undertakes the preparation training and assessment of foster carers wishing to adopt children in their care. All courses are well attended and post training evaluation forms are testament to the fact that they are well received.

The team also organises groups for children of prospective adopters and has developed an interactive workbook for children aimed at giving them an understanding of adoption and what to expect.

In addition to the training function this team also undertakes all aspects of pre-adoption work. Working together, the teams continue to develop a post approval training programme to equip families touched by adoption to deal with issues which may arise through the life cycle. There is a Welcome Pack for newly approved adopters. We host and facilitate support groups for adopters and children. The annual “Summer Event” – a closed event for adoptive families - celebrates adoption for all our families with children up to 12 years. The newsletter is an occasional publication. The Stay and Play Groups for new families are popular, as are the monthly coffee mornings, where children are welcome. An adopter's lending library has been established, stocked with relevant books for children and adults. The service also provides a Duty helpline, and participates in the out of hours ‘on call rota’ for adopters and foster carers. In partnership with Adoption UK, BAAF, and the Post Adoption Centre, access to specialist training such as ‘Piece of Cake’ is sometimes available, subject to funding. Adopters have access to a starter year’s membership of Adoption UK and New Families Social (for lesbian and gay adopters). There is a service level agreement with the TESS Adoption Project. There is also a partnership agreement with After Adoption, to provide sessions of independent support to birth parents. The philosophy of the service is to provide early intervention to help adopters establish children in placement by proactively promoting attachment and bonding.

**ADOPTION TEAM 2 – GENERIC + Temporary cover for the panel team manager**
PO Box 16262 Lancaster Circus Birmingham B2 2WX (Tel 0121 303 1010)

**ADOPTION TEAMS 3 & 4 - GENERIC**
PO Box 16262 Lancaster Circus Birmingham B2 2WX (Tel 0121 303 1010)

All generic teams undertake a wide range of tasks including Family Finding for all children with a plan for permanency via adoption.

The teams provide a consultation service to social workers planning permanency for children, and advice and information on options to ensure consistency, particularly for large sibling groups where children can have different Plans. Social workers contribute to the citywide monitoring meetings, established to ensure that plans are progressed in a timely way, and with robust reasons for the proposed plan.
The teams always consider placements with Birmingham approved families first. If such placements are not appropriate for the child then current West Midlands Consortium Placements will be considered followed by other interagency options. External placements, if appropriate, are spot purchased via interagency agreements. Matches are presented to Panel in partnership with the child’s Social Worker. The teams’ co-ordinate Adoption Support Plans, Adoption Placement Reports, Adoption Placement Plans and they support introductions and placements.

The teams also provide all the tasks associated with supporting adopters following approval at Panel. This includes support through matching, placement and the Court process through to Adoption Orders. Post adoption support is continued in line with Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005. The teams are responsible for development and finalisation of Adoption Support Plans. Alongside are annual reviews of adopters and preparation of files for archiving.

Counselling support to birth parents is provided through an agreement with an independent Adoption Support Agency and referral is made at the time that the plan of adoption is agreed. Further opportunity for birth parents to access counselling is available when they are ready, and is not restricted to the early stages of separation.

In addition, the teams provide birth records counselling, access to archived adoption files, provision of information to other adoption agencies and Children and Families Teams where appropriate.

The teams facilitate and coordinate direct and indirect (letterbox) contact between the parties to adoption, and provide administration of the financial support service for adopters, outlined in the Adoption Support Services Regulations.

In addition to supporting families to adopt Birmingham children, the teams facilitate the placement of children from other local authorities throughout the UK, and children from abroad. There are links with the West Midlands Consortium to promote local interagency matches.

Inter country adopters are supported through the wait for a match, and where required, receive a service upon returning to the UK with their child, if the adoption has not been completed abroad. They are referred to Inter Country Adoption, a voluntary adoption agency specialising in intercountry placements, for training, and on occasion, assessment, to enable them to pursue their adoption plan without delay. Inter country adopters are self funding through assessment and placement. However, supported is provided by the Adoption Service free of charge.
MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY

The Adoption Service’s CHARMS database in conjunction with the Care First database provides monthly performance statistics and business information. The Adoption Service business plan includes service targets and objectives to meet Adoption Standards and Regulations. These are monitored through audits, supervision, management meetings, Performance Development Reviews and Children’s Services performance meetings, and the Adoption Action Plan Monitoring Board. The Adoption Service provides monthly performance reports to the Departmental Leadership Team.

THE PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITING, PREPARING, ASSESSING, APPROVING AND SUPPORTING PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

Birmingham’s Adoption Service is enthusiastic about the opportunities provided by the new Adoption Agency Regulations to simplify and accelerate the process of approval for adopters. There is now a fast track route for second time and ‘foster carer’ adopters. A concurrent placement project is planned and will launch shortly. We aim to find adoptive placements for all the children looked after in Birmingham who require a permanent family through adoption. We aim to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a robust and timely manner to meet the needs of the children who are waiting. We positively support disabled people where they meet the needs of children waiting. We also positively invite applications from lesbian and gay adopters, and have a well established group of parents, who have been successful in parenting a wide variety of children requiring adoption. Adopters who are single, or in partnerships are welcome.

Where children cannot be placed within the Agency’s own resources, the Service seeks to make appropriate and suitable arrangements with other adoption agencies to secure placements.

Further information is available via:

- Adoption Service eligibility criteria and priority policy (last agreed through cabinet member in Dec 2011)
- The information pack for potential adopters, which is available from the Recruitment Team.
- Information is also available on line via www.birmingham.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering

A range of guides are available on line, and hard copies can be provided upon request for enquirers without internet access.
INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

To improve the quality of the Adoption Service, we welcome and encourage feedback from service users, providers and partner agencies.

Prospective adopters are advised of the Directorate’s complaints and compliments procedures and given information in an appropriate language on how to make a complaint. The Customer Relations Service provides intervention, problem solving, independent investigation, mediation, review and independent advocacy services etc.

Name and address of Customer Relations Manager:

Karen Holland
Customer Relations Service
PO Box 16465
Birmingham
B2 2DG

Tel: 0121 303 5161
ADVOCACY & CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Children, Young People & Families Directorate has a Rights and Participation Service which will help children and young people by providing an advocate for a young person in need of support. This service also provides a forum for collecting the general views of young people and children about service provision.

Children’s Rights are managed by the ‘Rights and Participation Service’. Their mission statement is:

RAP aims to OPTIMISE and EMPOWER children and young people's involvement in both strategic and local decisions that affect their lives. We challenge and champion children and young people’s rights to ensure that when decisions are made they are involved consulted and listened to.

- RAP provides advocacy to Birmingham’s children in care and care leavers.
- RAP supports Birmingham's Children in Care Council
- RAP supports Birmingham's Young Disabled Champions.
- RAP supports Birmingham’s UKYP young people.

For any further information:

Contact: Lisa Carter  
Head of Rights and Participation Service  
The Lighthouse – Young People's Centre  
100 Alma Way  
Aston  
Birmingham, B19 2LN  

Tel: 0121 303 7217 or 303 7229
CHILDREN’S RIGHTS DIRECTOR

The Children’s Rights Director is Dr Roger Morgan. His job is to make sure that the Adoption Service carries out its duty to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children who are in care.

This work is done on behalf of Ofsted and is undertaken separately from inspections and reviews.

The law says that Children’s Rights Director must listen to children and young people.

The Children’s Rights Director can be contacted using any of the following methods:

By writing to him at: The Office of the Children’s Rights Director
                      Ofsted
                      Aviation House
                      125 Kingsway
                      London
                      WC2B 6SE.

Phoning him on Freephone 0800 528 0731

Emailing him at RogerMorgan.rights4me@ofsted.gsi.gov.uk
Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

Applicants to become adopters who are turned down for approval on the recommendation of an Adoption Panel and / or the Decision Maker are able to ask for their case to be reviewed by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). Details of this process, with timescales, are made available to applicants during preparation and assessment.

The IRM has the following timescales:
- Applicants have 40 days from Panel decision to decide to contact the IRM
- The adoption agency (Panel Team Manager) will be contacted to produce relevant documentation within 10 days.
- The IRM will set up a Panel within 3 months of the application.

Contact details are:
Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)
Unit 4
Pavilion Business Park
Royds Hall Road
Wortley
LEEDS
LS12 6AJ

Tel No: 0845 450 3956 (charged at local rate)
Fax: 0845 450 3957
Email: irm@baaf.org.uk
THE ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR OFSTED

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting Adoption services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

Questions or complaints
The one point of contact for all questions, queries and complaints is the Ofsted National Business Unit.

The telephone number is 0300 123 1231. The National Business Unit manages all calls and will redirect them as necessary; they can also be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD

N.B. Birmingham’s 2012 Adoption Inspection Report is available on request or by visiting: www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/SC053481
APPENDIX 1

ADOPTION SERVICE POSITION WITHIN PART OF BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE

Strategic Director
CYPF

Service Director
Education & Commissioning

Service Director
Integrated Services & Care

Assistant Director
Integrated Services Central & West

Assistant Director
Integrated Services South

Assistant Director
Children in Care Provider Services

Assistant Director
Integrated Services East

Assistant Director
Integrated Services North

Assistant Director
Safeguarding & Development

Head of Service
Fostering Service

Head of Service
Adoption Service

(A) Adoption Improvement Manager

Head of Contact & Escort Service

Team Managers
Fostering Service

Team Managers
Adoption Generic Team 1

Team Manager
A&F Panel including Generic Team 2

Team Manager
Adoption Generic Team 3

Team Managers
Adoption Generic Team 4

Social Work Staff

Panel Advisers Social Work Staff & Trainee Social Worker

Social Work Staff

Social Work Staff

Registered Managers

Service Managers Residential Children's Homes

Team Managers TESS Service

Contact & Escort Staff

Processing...
Staff involved in the Adoption Service have a range of experience: in childcare, in family placement and in the recruitment and preparation of adoptive families. Social work staff have knowledge of appropriate Adoption Legislation and Standards.

- All staff have an understanding of the importance of the Complaints Procedure.
- Staff come from diverse backgrounds and heritage and are able to promote equality and diversity.
- The Adoption Service benefits from the retention of experienced staff from a wide range of disciplines and all social workers are appropriately registered.
- The Adoption Service has a policy for continuing professional development of both social work teams and administrative staff.
- Each team may carry a proportion of vacancies at any one time; the staffing assignment is on the following page.