

ADOPTION SERVICE

**STATEMENT OF
PURPOSE**

2009-2010

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1 Introduction

This 'Statement of Purpose' sets out the aims, objectives, principles and values of Cambridgeshire County Council's Adoption Service. It contains information about the service, how it is monitored and contact details of other organisations related to the service. Further copies of the Statement of Purpose can be obtained from the Adoption Service on 0800 052 0078 It can also be viewed and downloaded via the Council's website; www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk by typing in the 'Search' box, 'Adoption Statement of Purpose' or follow the links to: Children, Young People and Families – Social care – Adoption - Publications. Copies can also be provided in other languages and in large print.

The Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003, the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards Addendum 2005. Cambridgeshire County Council's Adoption Agency is inspected against these standards by Ofsted. Should you wish to comment about the service you may contact them at:

Ofsted
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE
Tel No: 0300 123 1231 or 0300 123 4666
E-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Reports on the inspection of the Adoption Service are available on the internet at www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually, at the end of each financial year (March 31st).

Cambridgeshire's Adoption Service recognises the lifelong nature of adoption and provides the following services:

- Information, advice and counselling for parents.
- Care planning for children.
- Recruitment of sufficient adopters to enable a realistic choice of a family for Cambridgeshire's children.
- Preparation, training, assessment and approval of adoptive applicants.
- Family finding for children.
- Matching and linking children to families.
- Supporting the introduction, and placement of children with adopters.

- Assessing the support needs of those touched by adoption, specifically the adopted child, the adoptive parent and their family, birth parents, birth relatives and adopted adults.
- Providing information about the range of services available to those touched by adoption.
- Providing services to support those touched by adoption.
- Counselling service for adopted adults who wish to have access to information about their birth family, and their adoption records.
- Intermediary Service for birth relatives who wish to seek information about their adopted child or relative.
- Advising, counselling and reporting to Court where an application is made for a Step Parent Adoption.

2 Aims and Objectives

Cambridgeshire County Council's Adoption Service has the following aims and objectives:

1. To provide a high quality adoption service to children, their birth parents, prospective and approved adopters and to social work colleagues.
2. To maximise the contribution adoption can make in promoting permanent families for looked after children.
3. To ensure that all the Adoption National Minimum Standards are met within the adoption service.
4. To recruit sufficient adopters to enable a realistic choice of family for Cambridgeshire's children.
5. To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious heritage and language of children are fully recognised and valued.
6. To provide support services that seek to ensure successful outcomes for children placed for adoption.
7. To enhance stability for adopted children and adoptive parents.
8. To provide an adoption service that is timely, fair, honest and transparent to all who have an interest in the adoption process.
9. To maintain a qualified, experienced and skilled staff to satisfy the objectives of the service.

Service Aims 2009-2010

In addition to the above objectives the Adoption Service is working to:

- Meet the Local Authorities target of 9% of children, who are in the care of Cambridgeshire County Council, being adopted in 200-2010.
- To provide support services to avoid adoption placement breakdown and promote placement success.

3 Our Commitment to Children.

The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances to:

Be healthy

Stay safe

Enjoy and achieve

Make a positive contribution

Achieve economic well being

The Adoption Service actively endorses these outcomes for children and endeavours to ensure they inform the Service's every day practice.

Cambridgeshire County Council aims to place children at the centre of the adoption process and act in their best interest at all times, ensuring the process is timely and avoids delay.

Cambridgeshire County Council believes that all children and young people have the right: to be healthy, happy, and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and to have high aspirations for their future.

Cambridgeshire County Council would wish all children to have secure relationships with family, friends and carers, be eager, excited, curious and engaged in learning, have self confidence, be able to co-operate and communicate socially and have the best possible health and development.

4. Structure

Cambridgeshire County Council's Adoption Service is part of the Office of Children and Young People and is managed by the County Manager, Fostering & Adoption. There is an Adoption Team Manager, and an Adoption Support Team Manager. Social workers in the service work closely with colleagues in assessment and care management teams.

Cambridgeshire Adoption Service is based at Scott House, Huntingdon and Castle Court, Cambridge.

Managers within the service are experienced social work practitioners and have access to managerial training courses. The County Manager is an experienced manager and social work practitioner. There are clear job descriptions and person specifications for all posts within the service.

Social workers are suitably qualified and have access to Post Qualification training and award schemes.

The County Manager for Fostering & Adoption is:

Jackie Coventry
Fostering & Adoption
Scott House
5 George Street
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 3AD
01480 372 526
E Mail: Jackie.Coventry@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

When the County Manager (Fostering & Adoption) is unavailable, managerial responsibility is delegated to:

Tracy Morton Service Manager, Fostering & Adoption, who can be contacted at the above telephone number and address.
E Mail: Tracy.Morton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The Director of Children's Social Care is Niki Clemo, Room No: B009, Castle Court, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, CB3 0AP. 01223 718063.

Details of the staff in the Adoption Service are given in Appendix I.

5. The Adoption and Permanence Panel

As an adoption agency, Cambridgeshire County Council is required to have an adoption panel. Because the Cambridgeshire Panel also considers cases where children are to be placed permanently with foster carers, the panel is referred to as the Adoption and Permanence Panel.

Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption and Permanence Panel meets once every two weeks, however can meet more frequently if needed. Membership is as follows:

An Independent Chair
A Deputy Chair
A Medical Adviser
A Social Work representative from Children's Assessment and Care Planning Service
A Social Work representative from the County Fostering and Adoption Service
An Independent Member who is an adopted person
An Independent member who is an adoptive parent
An independent member who is a Birth Parent
A County Councillor
An Education Psychologist

The Adoption Panel also has 2 advisors who are not members but are present at the Panel meetings to give advice when required. These are:

The Agency Advisor
The Legal Advisor

The Panel considers;

- The suitability of people applying to adopt.
- The suitability of plans to place a child for adoption or permanent fostering.
- The matching of placements of children with suitable adopters or foster carers.
- The annual reviews of prospective adopters who have not had a child placed with them

The Adoption Panel makes recommendations to the Council and these are confirmed as decisions or not by the Agency Decision Maker Niki Clemo, Cambridgeshire County Council's Director of Children's Social Care.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation of Service

The Cambridgeshire Adoption Service is monitored to constantly evaluate how well the service is performing. Team managers within the service, senior managers and the Policy and Practice Standards Manager evaluate the work of the service in order to promote effective service delivery.

Overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation rests with Councillor Martin Curtis, Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

Performance Indicators for the Service: Aims and Objectives

Specific performance indicators have been identified for each of the Service's Aims and Objectives. The indicators are as follows:

A. To provide a high quality adoption service to children, their birth parents, prospective and approved adopters and to social work colleagues.

Feedback is sought from users of the service, via questionnaires and looked after children's reviews.

B. To maximise the contribution adoption can make in promoting permanent families for looked after children.

Where it has been agreed that adoption is in the plan for the child, Cambridgeshire Adoption Service aims to secure a suitable permanent family for that child without unnecessary delay and to support families in providing a placement for life.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. 9% of looked after children in Cambridgeshire are adopted in the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

2. The Service aims for all adoptions to be achieved within a maximum of 2 years after the recommendation that adoption is the plan for the child.

C. To ensure that all the Adoption National Minimum Standards are met by Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service.

OFSTED considers how well Cambridgeshire County Council meets the Adoption National Minimum Standards.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service aims to meet all National Minimum Standards in the forthcoming inspection scheduled for this financial year.

D. To recruit sufficient adopters to enable a realistic choice of family for Cambridgeshire children.

The number and range of children and young people for whom it has been agreed that adoption is the plan can vary over time. Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service aims to target the recruitment of adopters to those who fit the profiles of the children and young people for whom adoption is the plan. This will enable resources to be concentrated on finding the right family for Cambridgeshire children.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. To complete the assessment and approval of 20 new adoptive families between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011.

2. 95% of children for whom it has been decided that adoption is the plan, are placed for adoption within 12 months.

E. To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious heritage and language of children are fully recognised and valued.

F. To support adopters to help them provide a family for life by working in partnership with other agencies.

It is recognised that by adopting children and young people, families need continuing support. Cambridgeshire Adoption and Adoption Support Services aim to create a culture of support to families throughout the lifetime of adoption by working in partnership with adopters and other agencies to ensure that families feel supported and able to ask for assistance at any point.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. To measure the number of referrals for a service that go on to receive an adoption support service.

2. To obtain feedback from adopters, children and other agencies about their satisfaction with the response to their request for support.

G. To enhance stability for adopted children and adoptive parents.

Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service aims to recruit and approve adopters who can provide a family for life. The service will strive to work with and support those families to enable this to happen.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. Establish baseline numbers of both the disruptions of adoption placements and adoptive family breakdowns in Cambridgeshire by July 2011.
2. Compare the ratio of disruptions of adoptive placements of Cambridgeshire children with both regional and national figures (where available).

H. To provide an Adoption Service that is timely, fair and transparent to all.

Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service has aims and objectives that are reviewed on an annual basis by senior management teams, independent auditing teams as well as inspection processes. Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service will provide clear information to all stakeholders on what services can be provided and what cannot within the Annual Report. All stakeholders will be treated equally and fairly and will be given the opportunity to raise any concerns or grievances about the service.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. Adoption assessments completed within 5 months of an application to adopt being received by the service.
2. Report on the number and outcome of any complaints by adopters or anyone else receiving a service from the Adoption/Adoption Support Service.
3. Consultation with children and young people to evaluate their satisfaction with the services, measured via feedback, both formal and informal.

I. To maintain qualified, experienced and skilled staff to satisfy the objectives of the Adoption Service.

Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Service will only be able to provide good quality services with a sufficient number of well-trained staff. The service aims to ensure that all staff are trained and vacancies are kept to a minimum to ensure that the aims and objectives are consistently achieved.

Measures of Success / Performance Indicators

1. Ensure that a minimum of 20% of social workers holds a Post Qualifying Award.
2. Ensure that all staff complete sufficient training days for their continued registration with the General Social Care Council.
3. Recruit and retain staff in the service to meet service needs.

7. Recruitment, Preparation, Assessment and Support to Prospective Adopters

Cambridgeshire County Council has a detailed policy and procedure for the preparation, assessment and approval of prospective adopters. The following is a summary of the recruitment, assessment and approval process in Cambridgeshire:

- Call the free phone information line (0800 052 0078) or complete the online enquiry form at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/children/adoption
- Prospective adopters contacting the service are provided with written information about adoption.
- If prospective adopters wish to find out more, they are invited to an Adoption Information Session. These are held monthly across the county.
- Following attendance at the Information Session, prospective adopters wishing to pursue their enquiry will be visited by an Adoption Social Worker who will complete an initial assessment.
- The initial assessment interview allows the prospective adopter to further explore the adoption process whilst providing the adoption service with the opportunity to determine which applicants are most likely to meet the needs of Cambridgeshire children requiring adoptive placements.
- If it is recommended by the social worker that the enquiry be progressed, prospective adopters are invited to attend Adoption Preparation Training and a formal assessment is then undertaken by a qualified social worker.
- If the social worker does not recommend that the prospective adopters enquiry is progressed at that time, they are advised of the reasons for this decision and possible action they may wish to take such as: counseling in relation to their own life experiences or extending their knowledge of the needs of children for whom adoption is the plan. They are advised of the Cambridgeshire County Council complaints procedure and how to access this if they feel they have been unfairly treated by the Adoption Service.
- In accordance with the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005, Cambridgeshire County Council is required by law to carry out statutory checks and references in relation to all applicants. These include:
 1. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks (C.R.B.)
 2. 3 personal references
 3. Employment references
 4. Local authority and probation checks
 5. Medical checks

In addition C.R.B. checks are taken up on any other person in the prospective adopters' household aged 18 years and over.

- Once the assessment is completed it is presented to the Adoption Panel, which makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker, who will make a decision

in relation to the approval of applicants within 7 working days of the Panel recommendation. All prospective adopters are supported by a social worker throughout their assessment, approval, and throughout the process of matching and placement with a child

- If the prospective adopters are not recommended for approval, they are able to submit further representation to the agency or apply to the secretary of state for a review by an independent review panel. Information in relation to the independent review mechanism is available on the website: www.irm-adoption.org.uk.
- Prior to any placement of a child both the adoptive family and the child's support needs will be assessed. Support plans are agreed with the adopters as part of the placement report and plans are reviewed regularly up until the time an adoption order is made.

8. Adoption from Overseas

People wishing to apply to adopt a child from overseas are referred to PACT, Parents and Children Together, 7 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4 QS, Freephone: 08007311845, who provide information, advice and counselling about this area of adoption.

Advice and information can also be obtained from the Intercountry Adoption Centre, Tel: 0870 516 8742. www.icacentre.org.uk

9. Adoption Support Services to adopters and their families

Cambridgeshire County Council Adoption Support Service is committed to supporting adoptive parents, birth parents, children and young people throughout their life.

A range of Adoption Support Services is provided by the Adoption Support team in Cambridgeshire:

- Telephone, postal advice and email information and signposting service.
- Assessment of those in need of an adoption support service, including financial support or education support.
- Assisting in the formulation of adoption support plans for adopted children and families.
- Short-term specialist intervention such as, updating life-story work, contact mediation, and attachment issues or challenging behaviour.
- Assistance with the letterbox contact system as and when appropriate. This may include help with writing letters, recording and monitoring the letters that come through the post-box, and advice for working with birth relatives or adoptive parents when there is conflict about direct contact with the child.
- Counselling in preparation for search and reunion. Intermediary services between birth relatives and adopted people aged 18 and above.

- Access to support groups and workshops for members of adoptive families and birth parents.
- Access to information about resources such as videos and books.
- Opportunities for networking with other adoptive families including social events.
- Agency updates for adoptive families e.g. Adoption Support Booklet
- Birth records counselling and intermediary services for adopted persons seeking birth relative and birth relatives seeking adopted persons.
- Referral to specialist local resources

The Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA) can be contacted at Scott House, 5 George Street, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 3AD Telephone: 01480 372502. An Adoption Support Information and Resource booklet is available which gives details of adoption support in Cambridgeshire and can also be accessed on the Local Authority's website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Adoption Support can be requested by contacting 0800 052 0078

10. Information and Support for Children and Young People

Children and young people can be affected by adoption in different ways and specific advice, help or support is available for children and young people who:

- Have been adopted.
- Had brother(s) or sister(s) adopted.

Or whose

- Parents may be considering placing their new baby for adoption.
- Parents may have had one of your siblings placed for adoption.
- Parents are considering adopting a child.
- Parents have already adopted a child.

If there is anything that children or young people would like to talk about, they can contact the Adoption Support Team on: 0800 052 0078 or by email to fanda@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

“What is Adoption” - A guide for children is available from the Fostering and Adoption Service, please telephone or e mail us for a copy

Information is also available from the Office of the Children's Rights Director for England (Roger Morgan) who can be contacted at Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE, tel no: 0800 528 0731 or via the internet on www.rights4me.org The website also contains information for children and young people about adoption and fostering.

If you are a child or young person who has obtained a copy of this Statement of Purpose and would like someone to explain what it is about, please contact the Adoption Support Team on the above telephone number.

11. Complaints

Cambridgeshire County Council has a Customer Care Department that is not managed within Children's Social Care. Complaints, general comments and compliments can be made to the Customer Care Officers. They ensure that complaints are passed to the relevant Team Manager for further exploration of the issues raised and for a response to the complainant to be made. The Office of Children and Young People's Services has, as required, a comprehensive complaints procedure which is available in leaflet form on request from any Cambridgeshire County Council office or on the Cambridgeshire County council web site: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk. The Customer Services Manager can be contacted on (01223) 717958.

12. Feedback

We would welcome feedback about the contents of this statement of purpose. If you would like to share your views, comments or concerns please contact: Jackie Coventry, County Manager Fostering & Adoption, Scott House, 5 George Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3AD, Tel: 01480 372526

Jackie Coventry
County Manager Fostering and Adoption

Niki Clemo
Service Director, Children's Social Care

Councillor Jill Tuck
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

Appendix 1

Service Director (Children's Social Care), Niki Clemo

Head of Social Care, Elaine Petch

County Manager, Jackie Coventry

**Jill Blöse
Service
Manager**

**Ricky Cooper
Adoption Support
Manager**

**Wendy Jewitt
Family Finding
Fostering Referral &
Assessment Acting
Team Manager

**Claire
Branton
Mo Eastwood
Trainers**

**Jackie
Coventry/Tracy
Morton
PPSM
(Adoption)

**Tracy Morton
Adoption &
Permanence
Team Manager**

**Natalie Doran
Business
Support
Manager**

**Natalie
Doran /
Ricky
Cooper
Marketing

**Rob Geen
Jennie May**
Kelly Johnson
Mairead McEntee
Sarah James
Susan Hepburn
Deborah Ward

**Janet Brackenbury
Marion D'Arcy
Sonya Harris
Dorothy Ward
3 vacancies**

**Berat Pottinger
PPSM
(Fostering)**

**Anna Griffin
Kathie Bennett
Ruth Reynolds
Andy Cussell
Sue King
Kat Heath
Lucy Millington
Kate Murphy
Jan Longman
Nadia Kouros
2 vacancies**

**Julia Pettit
Crystal Nicholas
(acting)**
Maira Quincey
Jacki Smart
Rachael
Buckingham
Hilary Roberts
Nicola Barnes
Debbie Morton
Vicki Welford
Becky Downes
Tomasz
Abramowicz
Scott Phillips
Pauline Snow

**Nicole Wolfe /
Carrie Cassells
Link Team Manager**

**Prue Maple
Kinship Team
Manager**

**Suki Chumber
Fostering Team
Manager

**Suki Chumber
Fostering Extra
Team Manager**

**Jenny Braddock
Sue Fuller**
Lindsay Church
Carole Darlow
Heather Gardiner
Maria Corpion
Dawn Polite

**Alison Langford
Stuart Stapleton
Shona Plummridge
Penny Reichert
Monica Robinson
Ann Tyson**
Yvonne Hore
Louise Crawford

**Cressida Edmonds
Cynthia Maragna
Teri Wright
Peter Gillings**
Sarah Butcher
Sue Jones
Vicky Bisanz
Debbie Howell
John Abankwa
Karinne Ablett
Sheila Farrow
2 vacancies

**Jane Ellis
Helen Watson
Jo Rankin**
Michelle Dean
Lisa Hughes
1 vacancy

** covering posts due to vacancies

● Senior / BSO Position