

# Statement of Purpose

## Adoption



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**Feedback:**

We welcome feedback about our policies and procedures so if you have any comments about this policy please email to [socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk)

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## 1. Principles

1.1 West Sussex County Council recognises that the Adoption and Adoption Support Agencies play a pivotal role in meeting its responsibilities in respect of children in public care for whom adoption is the best plan, adopted children, adoptive parents, adopted adults and members of a child's birth family who have been in some way touched by adoption. Additional information and an information pack can be obtained from the following [link](#).

1.2 The Authority's actions are predicated upon the principles that:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- There are unique advantages for children in experiencing normal family life in their own birth family and every effort should be made to preserve the child's home and family links.
- If children cannot remain at home, placement with relatives or friends should be explored before other forms of placement are considered.
- When it is not possible for a child to remain within their birth family or wider kinship networks, permanent substitute family care is, for most children, the most desirable placement choice.
- Practice and policies in the Authority reflect the belief that adoption is a positive outcome for children.

The Adoption Service places the child's needs as its central concern and focus for service provision. The Service adheres to the principles of good child care practice spelled out in the Regulations and Guidance of the Children Act in respect of all looked after children, the Adoption and Children Act and other adoption legislation and regulation in its various forms.

1.3 The authority aspires to meet and exceed the National Adoption Standards.

1.4 West Sussex County Council is a member of the South Coast Adoption Consortium, comprising West Sussex, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Poole. The Consortium seeks to collaborate on recruitment, training and family finding through pooling resources and developmental activity. The Consortium website [link](#).

## 2. Aims and objectives

### 2.1 Outcomes for children

#### Aim

The West Sussex Adoption and Adoption Support Agencies aim to achieve good outcomes for children and thereby maximise their life chances and choices. The service is particularly mindful of the Outcomes Framework in [Every Child Matters](#) namely: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing.

#### Objectives

To provide a secure and permanent family in a timely manner for every child for whom adoption is considered in his or her best interests by providing a service that:

- Is responsive to an individual child's history, needs and circumstances.
- Is flexible and provides placement choice for children needing adoption.
- Provides for their emotional and social development through the promotion of secure attachments to their primary care givers.
- Addresses the health care, education achievement and social integration of the child.
- Meets their ethnic, cultural and religious needs.
- Emphasises the importance of sibling relationships and attachments and of the placement of siblings together.
- Promotes the adoption of children within their kinship network as a positive choice.
- Provides an opportunity for birth relatives to contribute to placement decisions.
- Promotes and facilitates appropriate contact with birth family members in the interest of the child.
- Provides a range of support services to all involved in the adoption process throughout the child's minority and into adulthood.

## **2.2 Permanent, safe and secure**

### **Aim**

The aim of the Adoption and Adoption Support Services is to provide permanent, safe and secure family care to meet the assessed needs of looked after children for whom the Agency has made the decision that they should be placed for adoption.

### **Objectives**

Maintain a pool of motivated, committed, well prepared adopters who are able to meet the needs of children who require permanent family life throughout a child's minority and into adulthood through adoption.

## **3. The Adoption Agency maintaining a high standard of assessment and vetting of adoptive parents**

- For the Adoption and Adoption Support Agencies maintaining high quality support for adopters
- The Adoption Service providing appropriate supervision, support and training to adopters equipping them to meet the needs of children placed prior to the adoption order being made
- Providing a well organised Adoption Support Service that will deliver ongoing support and guidance to adoptive parents once the child has been adopted
- Supporting adopters through short courses and support groups
- Maintaining a responsive financial support provision
- Providing an efficient and responsive assessment and counselling service for children, adopters, birth relatives and adopted adults through the Adoption Support Service as well as through directly commissioning work with private and voluntary providers
- With partner agencies to provide appropriate and timely therapeutic support to children and their families as and when required

### **3.1 Best Value**

#### **Aim**

The Adoption and Adoption Support Agencies strive to achieve 'best value' through ensuring resources are appropriately directed at securing a permanent adoptive family for a looked after child.

## **Objectives**

Best Value will be achieved through:

- Working in partnership with adopters and partner agencies to enhance the life chances of adopted children
- Utilising local and national funding sources to ensure resources are available to children and their adopters and so improve the child's life chances through improved services

- 4. Ensuring policies, procedures and practice guidance are adhered to throughout the Adoption and Adoption Support Agencies so that best practice is the norm in work with children and adopters**
- 5. Establishing and monitoring clear roles, standards and responsibilities for staff in the Adoption and Adoption Support Agency**
- 6. Establishing creative and productive relationships with other adoption and adoption support agencies**
- 7. Using research to assist in the development of practice**
- 8. Staffing and service structure**

The Adoption and Adoption Support Service comprises two teams with two team managers. The teams are based on two sites, one part of the team dealing with assessment, placement and post placement support based in Horsham and one part of the team dealing with post adoption support based in Bognor Regis.

- 8.1 The Fostering and Adoption service manager is responsible for the management of the Adoption Service and Adoption Agency functions.
- 8.2 Collaborative working relations are enjoyed with colleagues and agencies through the West Sussex Children's Trust.
- 8.3 The Agency has a service agreement with the Post Adoption Centre, a registered voluntary adoption agency organisation specialising in advice and support to all members of the 'adoption triangle' – child and adopted person, adoptive family and birth family. Details of their services are provided to all those involved in adoption in West Sussex and can also be viewed on the Post Adoption Centre [website](#).

8.4 The Agency meets its statutory responsibility in regard to inter-country adoption by contracting with Parents and Children Together. This is a registered voluntary adoption agency specialising in this area of work, thus providing residents of West Sussex with a specialist service and a depth of expertise difficult to maintain in providing an in-house service. Further details of Parents and Children Together can be viewed on the following [website](#).

## **9. Organisational structure**

9.1 Adoption Panel membership is detailed in Appendix 1.

9.2 The Adoption Support Services Advisor is Ian Forbes Service Manager. He can be contacted on: <mailto:ian.forbes@westsussex.gov.uk>

or County Hall North, Chart Way, Horsham, RH12 1XH

## **10. Monitoring and evaluation of service**

10.1 Quarterly reports are presented to the Adoption Panel by the panel Professional Advisor.

10.2 Adoption Agency performance is monitored through individual performance management, data collection from the Adoption Panel and through the legal processes.

10.3 Overall Agency performance is monitored through collection of statistics by the DfE and is reported in PAF indicators and other Government statistical measures and targets as well as through the tri-annual inspection by [Ofsted](#).

10.4 Annual service plans are prepared for the service, with objectives for the year being formally set out and monitored through internal systems.

## **11. Adoption and Adoption Support Services**

11.1 Maintaining a Procedures for recruitment, preparation, assessment, approval and support of prospective adopters

11.2 The recruitment, preparation, assessment, approval and support of prospective adopters is guided by the National Standards for Adoption.

11.3 The Recruitment Policy Strategy is determined by the needs of children requiring placement and is included in Appendix 2.

## **12. Children's statement of purpose**

A statement of purpose for children is attached to the leaflet given out to all children who are to be placed for adoption. The text for this is included in Appendix 3.

## **13. Complaints about children's social care**

Complaints are dealt with according to the full procedures for making a complaint or representation (PDF, 67 pages, 201KB) which can be accessed through the following [link](#).

## **14. Regulation and Inspection**

Children's social care services are inspected by Ofsted. They can be contacted at the following address:

Ofsted  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

Telephone: 08456 404040  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

## **15. Paper copies of documents and translation services**

15.1 All documents referred to above with Internet links to the West Sussex website can be provided in paper copies on request. Translations will be provided on request and wherever practical contact details and information relating to the other organisations referred to in this Statement of Purpose can be obtained from either of the services below.

15.2 The Adoption Service can be contacted at the following address:

The County Adoption Team  
County Hall North  
Chart Way  
Horsham  
RH12 1XH

Tel 01403 229553  
Fax 01403 756195  
Email: [adoption.team@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:adoption.team@westsussex.gov.uk)

15.3 The Adoption Support Service can be contacted at the following address:

Adoption Support Service  
Durban House  
South Bersted Business Park  
Durban Road  
Bognor Regis  
West Sussex PO22 9RE

Telephone: 01243 642468

Fax: 01243 642507

Email: [adoption.support.service@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:adoption.support.service@westsussex.gov.uk)

## **Appendix 1 – Adoption Panel Membership**

### **Members of Panel**

Roger Meekings	Chair and independent member
Carol Buckley	Social work member and manager of NCH Adoption – Horsham and panel vice chair
Cllr Paul Graysmark	County Councillor
Dr Pauline Shute	Consultant community paediatrician, panel medical advisor
Sally Wands	Independent member, adoptive parent
Debbie Harris	Independent member, adoptive parent
Karen Goff	Social work member (adoption support)

### **Advisors and non voting members**

Sally Palmer	Professional advisor and manager of the adoption team
Karen Wilson	Legal advisor to the panel
Lynda Schneider	Adoption panel administrator and panel clerk
Dawn Briggs	Adoption panel administrator and panel clerk

## **Adoption and Recruitment policy and strategy**

### **Introduction**

From April 2011 West Sussex County Council will meet the requirements laid down in the Revised National Minimum Standards 2010. Until this point, WSCC meets the [Adoption Regulations 2003 - National Minimum Standards \(Dept of Health\)](#) published under the Care Standards Act 2000. In particular, this document aims to meet the requirements of Standard 2, paragraph 2.1:

*The adoption agency has written plans for the implementation and evaluation of effective strategies to recruit sufficient adopters to meet the needs of the range of children waiting for adoption locally.*

### **Adoption Recruitment Policy**

West Sussex County Council aims to assess and approve sufficient numbers of prospective adopters to meet the assessed needs of children and young people "looked after" by the county. The authority endeavours to provide placement choice for children and young people for whom an adoptive family is identified as the best option when they cannot be properly cared for within their birth family. Patterns of need are monitored routinely through placement requests as well as in response to the strategic objectives of the authority. These needs and strategic objectives are reflected in the adoption service business planning process and the service plans agreed within the authority. Targeted recruitment and training of adopters accompanies this process.

### **Adoption Recruitment Strategy**

- (i) The Adoption Team Manager monitors the pattern of children's placement needs through the adoption panel booking and best interest decision making process. Monitoring takes into account:
  - Children's care plans (including educational, health and therapeutic needs)
  - Age patterns and sibling group structures
  - Ethnicity, religious and cultural requirements
  - Level of care required
  - Placement family structures required
  - Placement locations required
  - Historical patterns of placement in the County
  - Placement needs within the South Coast Adoption Consortium
- (ii) From this monitoring process, information is collated to build a county-wide picture of the number, location and type of placements needed for the coming year.

- (iii) Statistics are also gathered within the department and are used to assess provision against known patterns of demand.
- (iv) Because of the continuous interest in adoption from West Sussex residents there is no need for general advertising. The Agency concentrates on raising awareness at such times as National Adoption Week through such means as posters, leaflets and press releases as well as local radio interviews
- (v) General information is also maintained, and contact details are available, via the county council's [website](#). An email mailbox is also available for enquiries: <mailto:adoption.team@westsussex.gov.uk>
- (vi) All initial enquiries regarding prospective adopter applications are dealt with within 48 hours. Each enquirer is sent an information pack within 72 hours of their initial enquiry.
- (vii) The response to information monitored and analysed by means of the feedback questionnaire included in each information pack.
- (viii) Where applicants indicate that they would like to continue with an assessment, the Adoption Team Manager undertakes to track their progress through each stage to approval, in accordance with the National Adoption Standards.
- (ix) Staff are allocated to carry out assessments by the Adoption Team Manager, giving priority to those applicants whose profile meets the placement requirements identified for children for whom adoption is considered in their best interest.

## **Appendix 3: Children's Statement of Purpose (text)**

### **West Sussex County Council Adoption Service**

West Sussex County Council has an Adoption Agency. It arranges adoptions for children and provides support to all those involved in adoption after an adoption order has been made.

The Agency knows about all the children who live in West Sussex and who need a family to adopt them.

It also knows about all the families who want to adopt children.

The West Sussex Adoption Agency has something written called a Statement of Purpose and this tells everyone why and how the Adoption Agency works.

These are the things that West Sussex County Council believes are important for children.

- Children should be able to grow up as part of a loving family that can care for them as they grow up.
- Families will be given help and support to care for their children - but sometimes this is not enough.
- If children cannot stay at home with their parents then relatives or friends will always be considered as possible long term carers before looking for a family that is not related or known to them.
- If it is not possible for a child to live with relatives or friends then a permanent adoptive or foster family would be found. We believe that adoption is a really good way of doing this although for some children a foster family may also be a good choice.

The Adoption Agency places the needs of children first and sees this as their main concern in the adoption process.

The people in the service understand adoption law and help children to understand what is happening in their lives.

The people working for the Agency all believe the important things for children are:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy life and achieve your best
- To make a positive contribution
- In the future to have a job you enjoy
- Children need good information about their birth families so that their adoptive parents can help them understand their own unique family history as they grow up.

The Service manager:

E-mail address:

Address:

Tel:

Ian Forbes – email:

<mailto:ian.forbes@westsussex.gov.uk>

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