



# Adopt London East

## Statement of Purpose

### March 2023

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Adopt London East Regional Adoption Agency

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The wording in this publication can be made available in large formats such as large print or Braille. Please call us on 01708 434547.



## 1. Introduction

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that an adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that it provides.

This statement can be used by children and young people and families as a guide to what they should expect a service to provide and to do.

Adopt London East commenced in operation on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019. It is a shared adoption service working on behalf of and Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, and Tower Hamlets councils.

The Head of Service reports quarterly to a Management Board, made up of Senior Officers from each local authority with representation drawn from Adopters and the Voluntary adoption steering group. The Chair of the Management Board is Tara Greer, Director of Living Well in Havering.

The regional adoption agency operates within the terms of an Inter-authority Agreement, which confirms the legal and governance arrangements; the budget, staffing and funding contributions for the five local authorities.

The Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with:

- Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011
- Care Planning Regulations 2010
- Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011)
- Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Local Authority Regulations 2005
- Adoption Agencies & Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- Adoption Agencies (Panel & Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012
- Care Planning, placement and Case and fostering services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Adoption Agencies are inspected against these standards by Ofsted.





## **2. About Adopt London East**

Adopt London East is hosted by Havering Local Authority and brings together adoption services for Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, and Tower Hamlets. We aim to provide the best quality support for adoptive families within our East London community. We work within a systemic framework which means we hold relationships between us as central to everything we do. We guide and support people who wish to adopt through our assessment process. This includes individual consultation and preparation training using a range of tools and materials to make sure our prospective adopters are well prepared and make the right decisions for them.

Each child and adoptive family is unique. We get to know our children and families well and work hard to match the right child to the right family. We make sure adoptive families meet all the people who have been important to their child and support them through the exciting and sometimes scary time of meeting, introductions and moving in.

Adopt London East has a comprehensive Adoption Support Service. Adopters and professionals have access to Advice Line alongside a duty service, providing advice and guidance in a range of issues. Adopt London East has a Core Offer which includes:



The requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Children and Families Act 2014 underpin the principles and values of our service:

## Values

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and where possible this should be within their own family.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account at all stages.
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and will be avoided wherever possible.
- The child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality will be fully recognised, positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.
- The particular needs of disabled children will 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 will be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many organisations, professionals and individuals who will work together to deliver to meet the needs of the adoptive families.
- Birth parents and birth families are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption. They will be treated fairly, openly and offered a support service.

## Equal Opportunities

The adoption service abides by equal opportunities legislation and the policies of the London Borough of Havering. The service works positively and respectfully with all service users and partner agencies regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation and age.





### **3. Principles and Values**

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Every attempt will be made to secure an adoptive family which meets a child's emotional and developmental needs taking into account their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability taking into account the need to avoid undue d



#### **4. The Aims and objectives of the Agency**

The agency is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Children and Families Act 2014 by:

1. Ensuring the provision of a high quality adoption service which guarantees the best possible standards of care, safety and protection for children or young people who are looked after and who need adoptive placements.
2. Ensuring that all those whose lives have been affected by adoption are helped to identify and receive appropriate services.
3. Working in partnership with adoptive families and other agencies ensuring the service is based on statutory requirements and good practice within the principles of value for money for the agency.

#### Objectives of the agency

1. To recruit, assess and provide adopters that meet the needs of the children to be placed for adoption within the timescales laid down by National Adoption Standards.
2. To provide information on the process to applicants interested in becoming adopters and on the children requiring adoption.
3. To ensure that adopters receive appropriate preparation, training, support and advice to enable them to offer the best possible standards of parenting, safety and protection for children or young people in their care.
4. To minimise delay in family finding, paying attention to the needs of the child at all times.
5. To provide information on the services available to all those affected by adoption recognising that as adoption has lifelong implications for all those involved, their needs will change over time.
6. To provide a range of adoption support services to birth relatives, adopted adults, adopters and their children in partnership with other agencies.
7. To provide information on the service that is available to those wishing to adopt from abroad.
8. To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair.
9. That concerns about the service are addressed and that information about the complaints procedure is made available.
10. That the organisation regularly reviews the services it provides, consults with, and learns from, those in receipt of their services through direct work with an Adopter Advisory Board supported by Adoption UK and through comments, compliments and complaints.





#### **4. Organisational Structure of the Agency and Service Users**

Head office: The Town Hall, Min Road, Romford The service also operates a base in each partner Local Authority

Head of Service and Agency Decision Maker: Sarah Johnson

Team Manager – Recruitment and Assessment: Luke Scillitoe (Start date May 2023)

Team Manager – Family Finding: Anthea Bennett

Team Manager – Adoption Support and Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA):  
Belinda Bhatti

Panel Advisor: Carrie Wilson

Business Support Manager: Currently vacant

Adopt London East provides an adoption service for: Children who are in need of an adoptive family; Birth parents; Prospective and approved adopters; Children and adoptive parents who need adoption support services; Adopted adults and members of their birth families.

## 5. The Work of the Adoption Service

The service undertakes the following tasks:

- Recruitment of prospective adoptive families.
- Assessment and preparation of adoptive families, including visits to the home, a home study, taking up references and statutory checks and running preparation training.
- Family finding for children who need a permanent home through adoption Support for families waiting for a child to be placed with them.
- Advice, guidance and support to adoptive families during the matching process and after placement.
- Those wishing to adopt from abroad are referred to another agency that provide a service under contract for Adopt London East.
- The family finding team become involved with every child where adoption may be the plan during the decision making process and takes the lead in family finding at the earliest point possible.
- Children's social workers (based in each Local Authority) and adoption social workers jointly undertake the task of planning for permanence and preparing children for adoption.
- The responsibility for matching and supporting adoptive families is a shared task until the adoption order.
- Adoption letterbox service, direct contact support service and access to adoption archives. This enables adopted children to maintain contact with their birth families.
- Support and signposting to counselling services for adopted adults wishing to find out about their birth families and an Intermediary service.
- Help is also available through social workers in the service who speak Asian languages. Approved interpreters will be used if required.



## 6. Management, Numbers, Qualifications and Staff Experience

Sarah Johnson – Head of Service, has overall responsibility for Adopt London East. Qualifications: MSW- Masters in Social Work 1996, Management Qualification Level 5 from the Institute of Leadership and Management 2015. Sarah has over 20 years experience working within the Adoption Sector. Previous to that Sarah worked as a children's social worker

The agency has three team managers and one panel advisor. All team managers are social work qualified and have extensive experience in adoption services. The Head of Service acts as the Agency Decision Maker and the Adoption Support team manager acts as the agency support services advisor (ASSA).

Luke Scillitoe – Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager is a qualified and registered social worker, he qualified in 2012. He has a background in children's safeguarding and over 10 years' experience working in adoption sector including experience of recruitment and assessment, family finding and adoption support.

Belinda Bhatti – Adoption Support Team Manager and ASSA is a qualified and registered Social Worker who qualified in 1988 and has worked in the field of Social Work since then. For over 20 years Belinda worked in Adult Social Care in a variety of specialisms including working with adults with a physical disability, learning disability, mental health issues and hospital social work as a social worker, team manager and service manager. In 2011, Belinda had a career change and started working in the field of adoption and has experience in recruitment and assessment, family finding and adoption support.

Anthea Bennett – Adoption Family Finding Team Manager qualified in 2002 and holds a Diploma and Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Work. She also holds a Diploma in Systemic Supervision and National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Early Years and Education. She has over 23 years of experience in childcare and has been employed as a Team Manager of the Adoption Team since February 2010, prior to which she held the post of Practice Manager of the Team from March 2007. She then held a position as the Adoption Practice Leader and was formally the Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA) and the professional advisor for 'Should be placed for Adoption' decisions. Before working in the adoption team, Anthea was a child protection practitioner within the Safeguarding and Intervention Team.

There are 12 full time equivalent qualified social workers across the three service areas, two of whom are Advanced Practitioners. Within the Adoption Support Team the Family Connections Team have a Manager and 3 co-ordinators (unqualified workers) providing support with a range of keeping in touch options with first families.



All social workers have a social work qualification and are registered with Social Work England) and have relevant experience in children and families service. They have an enhanced DBS check.

The agency has a Business Support Manager and two full time equivalent administrative staff.



## **7. Family Finding for Children with an Adoption Plan**

The family finding social workers from Adopt London East work closely with the allocated social worker for the child. The local authorities ADM's are responsible for the decision making for children requiring an adoption decision. The panel advisor for Adoption London East provide the quality assurance if CPR's and the recommendation to assist the ADM in their decision making.

A family finding social worker is allocated following the ADM decision of a child's adoption plan, although earlier monitoring is applied under a Concurrent planning arrangement for babies and toddlers where we consider prospective adopters can care for the child on a fostering basis in anticipation of the Court's placement order.

Early Permanence is an option for children who are unlikely to return to their birth family. The advantages of the child being placed on a fostering basis with their prospective adopters (who are considered to be a good match for the child) is the stability and consistency the child will have with their prospective adopters, avoiding changes of placement and the instability that can cause. This enables Adopt London East to start the joint planning process which minimises drift and delay.

Family finding social workers work closely with the legal team for children who are likely to have a placement order by producing a family finding statement to assist the court. This process supports evidence of the likelihood of securing adoption for the child in question.



A profile of the child is produced and the family finding social worker will look for suitable adopters in a variety of ways through consideration of approved in-house adoption from Adopt London East and across the regional agencies. Children are referred to the Adopt London Hub and Link Maker if no matches have been identified in-house.

Additionally specific advertising may take place in publications appropriate to the specific needs of the child should the child fall into the category of hard to place. The family finding social worker with the child's social worker (overseen by a manager) will be closely involved in the selection of adopters. And of the process of taking the proposed matching of a child to adopters to panel for their recommendation.

Once the recommendation is ratified by the Agency Decision Maker, they will help plan the introduction process and the arrangements for the child to move to the adopter's home.

Family finding social workers pay a key intergraded part in supporting the child's social worker in preparing the child for adoption. Please refer to section 10 Beyond Approval – Matching and support for further information on child and adopter matching process.





## **8. Our Service to Prospective Adopters**

Anyone interested in finding out more about adoption can access information on adopting with Adopt London East via our website [www.adoptlondon.org.uk](http://www.adoptlondon.org.uk) or make contact through the dedicated advice line. At first contact, enquirers are given information verbally about the adoption process and either invited to an information session or should they so wish, offered an individual home visit.

PLEASE NOTE: Applications for adoptions from overseas Inter-country adoption is a specialist area of work, as each country has its own rules and regulations regarding adoption. Adopt London East has a contract with the Intercountry Adoption Centre to provide this service. Applicants pay a fee for their assessment service, including the home study and then further fees for safeguarding checks etc.

### Initial Contact

The first discussion usually takes place over the telephone, we will take some more details and answer any questions. Adopters are then invited to Foundation Day, the

purpose of this is to give prospective adopters more information regarding adoption process in order to support their decision making if this is the right time for them to move forward with the process. Following the Foundation Day all applicants are given a Registration of Interest, alongside this a call is made to all prospective adopters to discuss their specific circumstances and gives them an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have prior to moving on to stage 1 of the process.

### Next steps

The Registration of Interest form marks the beginning of Stage 1 and at this point we will progress medicals, contact references, and undertake statutory checks. These checks will include a Disclosure and Barring Service check (checking for criminal records and convictions). At the end of Stage 1 a social worker will visit the prospective adopter at home to complete Stage 1 Review Report and a recommendation for the Team Manager to make a decision regarding the applicants moving to stage 2 of the process. We aim to complete stage one within 2 of months of the beginning, however, there are a number of factors that might not make this possible

### Stage 2

During stage 2, prospective adopters are allocated a social worker where the assessment is completed. The assessment is used to help prospective adopters to consider carefully and honestly what they want from adoption and what they can offer a child. Many of our children have had difficult life experiences and come from complex backgrounds. Prospective adopters will have time to think carefully about our children's needs and how they can meet them. We ask lots of detailed questions about family background, childhood and adult experiences, relationships, and present circumstances. For prospective adopters adopting as part of a couple, the social worker will see both partners together and individually.

The assessment process is demanding and will take around four months to complete. There are very good reasons why everything is explored in depth with you in this way. Adoption is for life, and we must be sure our adopters are right for the role. Just as importantly, they must be as certain as they can be that adoption is right for them and that they can make the lifetime commitment required

As the assessment reaches its final stages the adoption social worker will start to put together the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR). This report details the applicant's potential as an adoptive parent along with the results of medical, police and authority checks and personal references. The report will clearly describe the sort of children applicant feel they could adopt. The worker will discuss their thoughts throughout the



## The adoption panel

The adoption panel is made up of 2 independent chairs, social workers, other professionals and independent people, including an adoptive parent and adopted adults. To be quorate a Chair, a social worker with three years relevant post qualifying experience, and three other members must be present at each panel; these are drawn from a Central List of members. Panel members consider the prospective adopters report and consider if the applicants should be approved to adopt. They will be invited to come to the panel meeting and will be given the opportunity to speak and share any information which they feel is particularly relevant to their application. The Assessing social worker will also be present to answer any further questions and to provide support. The panel will make their recommendation on suitability to adopt which will then be shared directly with the applicants.

The full minutes from the adoption panel meeting, the prospective adopters report and any associated paperwork will then be sent to the agency decision maker (ADM) for Adopt London East and they will formally decide whether to approve someone as suitable to adopt, based on the above paperwork and the recommendation from the adoption panel.

## What if the decision is no

Some applicants decide adoption is not for them at some stage in the process. The assessment process is designed to give enough information to help prospective adopters to make their own decisions, and the agency would support them to withdraw if they decided it was not right for them. There may also be an issue, or a change of circumstances such as a bereavement which mean that applicants need a short "time out" from the assessment to process before beginning again.

Sometimes we feel that becoming an adoptive parent is not right for the applicant, or there are concerns that they do not have the parenting capacity needed to parent an adopted child. If we have any concerns we will share these, and discuss honestly what the options are. Usually these issues are identified very early on in the assessment process, but occasionally they come out later as people realise the importance of some issues to their application.

If prospective adopters have begun the formal stage 2 assessment they have a right for the assessment to be presented to panel even if the recommendation is not to approve. The final decision is then made by the ADM. If prospective adopters are unhappy about the decision they may make a formal complaint or refer themselves to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) .This is an independent panel who will review all aspects of the assessment and decision making process. More information will be given to prospective adopters should they require it.





### Adoption by existing foster carers

Foster carers should notify the service in writing of their wish to be considered as adopters for a child or children in their care. This will be considered by ALE as their formal Registration of Interest. If the child/ren's plan is for adoption, this will be acknowledged and a meeting held between workers from ALE and the relevant borough's fostering team and the child's social worker to consider how this should be progressed. A viability visit would be undertaken to the foster carers, during which they would be informed of their legal right to make a private application to adopt if the child(ren) has been with them for twelve months. A fast track assessment process will be provided for approved foster carers who want to be assessed as adoptive parents. Stage 1 and 2 of the adoption process will take place concurrently in order to avoid delay. They will be offered preparation to adopt training, as foster carers will need to consider carefully the differences between short term fostering and a lifelong, legal commitment to a child.

### Second time or subsequent adopters

Families who have already been assessed as adopters can apply to adopt again as long as there is a year's gap following their first child's adoption order being made, and a 2 year age gap between their child and a potential new child. In this case, they would express an interest in adopting again and be offered a home visit to discuss their circumstances. If it is appropriate to proceed they would then complete the registration of interest form and start the process.

Second time adopters will also be offered preparation training again as there are other factors to consider. If their interest is in respect of a subsequent sibling or half sibling of a child they have already adopted, the timescales and age gap would not necessarily apply. This assessment would be given high priority and the home visit would involve the child's social worker too. In these cases stage one and two would run concurrently.

### Matching and support

The adopter(s) social worker will help to identify suitable matches with a child/ren and will provide support and guidance throughout the whole process. All prospective adopters are referred to the Adopt London Hub and Link Maker, with their agreement, if no match has been identified locally.

In January 2023, Adopt London was awarded a grant from Adoption England, a Matching Manager has been appointed to work across 4 London Regional Adoption Agencies (Adopt London, North, South, East and West) working across 24 London Boroughs. The project to promote Matching across London.



Each child where adoption is a likely plan will have an allocated worker from the family finding team. The family finder works closely with the child's social worker to consider matches for that child.

When a match is being considered adopters are given the Child Permanence Report and all appropriate written information about the child, their background and assessed needs. The report will include details of any proposal for contact, or exchange of information through the letterbox system with the birth family that will operate once the child is adopted.

Adopters meet with the child's social worker and other professionals relevant for that child; medical advisors; child's foster carers; teachers etc. to enable them to make an informed decision regarding their ability to meet the needs of the child. A life appreciation day will often be arranged depending on the child's age and circumstances to help build as full a picture as possible of the child's experiences. Details of the level of parental responsibility that will be delegated to the prospective adopters will be outlined and any adoption support, including any financial arrangements will also be discussed.

The proposals for the placement will then be set out in the adoption placement report, which will be seen by the prospective adopters before panel and comments and observations will be included in the panel documentation.

#### Process for the matching of a child

The child's social worker, the prospective adopters and their social worker will attend the Adoption Panel. The process for panel is the same as for approval with recommendations being made to the Agency Decision Maker for the Local Authority who have responsibility for the child. The Agency Decision Maker will make the decision on whether the adopters are suitable for a particular child.

If a match is agreed an introductions planning meeting is arranged to plan for the introduction and placement of the child. This meeting will involve the foster carer for the child, the prospective adopters, and the relevant social workers. The meeting will establish that the adoptive family has all the information available about the child and will draw up a timetable and process for the introductions, monitoring and support.

There are some variations to this process if prospective adoptive parent/s are taking the Early Permanency Route to adoption, are second time adopters or foster carers adopting the child they have been fostering. These differences will be carefully explained to prospective adoptive parents from the beginning of their adoption process.

#### Annual Reviews of Prospective adopters

In the event that it is not possible to move to a match within 12 months from approval, the adoption social worker and their manager will conduct an a review of the plans and checks and references may need to be updated. If no placement has been made within two years of approval, an updated report will go to adoption panel for consideration.

#### Meeting birth parents

Most adopters will meet the child's birth parents either prior to placement, or more usually, once the child is placed and settled. They will be supported by their social workers in a suitable venue. The benefit of meeting birth parents is so adoptive parents can talk to their child about their birth family and aid the exchange of information.

### After placement

Visits will be made by both the child's social worker and the family's adoption social worker. These are based on both statutory requirements and the individual needs of the child and prospective adopter(s). The child remains a 'looked after' child until an Adoption Order is made. The child has to be visited in the first week of placement, followed by weekly visits up to the child's first statutory review at 4 weeks post placement, when the pattern of visiting will be discussed and agreed but will be not less than six weekly.

The child's review will determine when an application to adopt may be made and advice will be given by the worker for the prospective adopters. The 'Annex A' report for court will be prepared by both the family's and child's social workers. Life story material will be provided for the child by the child's social worker and given to the adopters for safe keeping for the child in the future. The child's social worker is responsible for ensuring that a "later in life letter" is completed before the Adoption Order is made, which will give an account of the circumstances of the adoption.

### Family Connections and Keeping in Touch

Support with keeping in touch arrangements between adopted children and their birth families is provided by specialist workers within the agency. All arrangements will be reached having taken account of what is in the best interests of the child, and will be discussed with the prospective adoptive parents. All agreements reached will be detailed in an agreement and specified in the Adoption Support Plan before a child is placed. Keeping in touch may include letter-box contact or face-to-face meetings between the child and members of his/her family, including parents, siblings, or extended family members. A letterbox service may be set up between the adoptive parents on behalf of the child and a birth parent or any other relative or with any other person the agency considers relevant. Support and supervision of direct contact may be arranged where necessary and agreed.

Adopt London East has a comprehensive adoption support service for all those affected by adoption. This service is provided in partnership with a number of voluntary agencies and other providers who provide an independent service and other services. The adopters' social worker will ensure that adopters have access to local support networks and specialist organisations, e.g. We Are Family, New Family Social and other services and are on the mailing list for any events organised through the adoption service. The adoption service also provides 12 months free membership of Adoption UK to all new adopters.

The agency has a specialist adoption support team, operating across the region who offer a range of adoption support services. They also signpost other services for those affected by adoption; including:

- Adoptive parents
- Adopted children and young people
- Birth parents
- Adopted adults

For adoptive families: The adoption support team will undertake an assessment of need with the family and will agree a support package based on the family's identified needs, including consideration of making an application to the Adoption Support Fund.



Adopt London East has a Core offer:

Birth Relative Support Groups	Separate groups for female and male birth relatives	ALE Contact Team
Advice Line/Counselling Birth Relatives	Part of contract	PAC-UK
Adoptive Families Support Groups	Groups for children and parents	ALE and Baptist Church
Tweens/Teens Group	Group for Tweens and Teens and their parents	ALE
Advice Line/Counselling Adopted Adults	Part of contract	PAC-UK
Advice Line/Counselling Adoptive parents	Part of contract	PAC-UK
We Are Family	Peer lead support for Adoptive Parents	We are Family
Subscription NATP	On Line Resource for adoptive parents	NATP
Advice Line	Telephone service	ALE Adoption Support Team
Advice Line/Virtual School	Virtual meeting	LBH Virtual School and ALE
Introduction to NVR	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE Adoption Support Team
Introduction to Therapeutic Parenting	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE Adoption Support Team
Life Story Work	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE Adoption Support Team
Telling/Talking about Adoption	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE Adoption Support Team
Contact	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE Adoption Support Team
Preparing Teens for Transition into adulthood	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE Adoption Support Team
The Impact of Trauma using VR	Training for Adoptive Parents	ALE
The Impact of Trauma using VR	Training for Teachers	Anster and ALE

Other services available include:

- Comprehensive core offer
- Duty service and newsletter
- Support groups
- Training and Workshops
- Links with mental health and educational services
- Assistance and review of contact arrangements between adopters, adopted children and birth relatives
- An annual social event for adoptive families
- Offering training and advice for schools to help teachers understand adopted children's needs
- Working with children in their adoptive families around understanding their life stories
- Signposting to other organisations designed to help adopted children
- Information about registering a veto for birth relative access to information

Services for birth relatives include:

- Access to a confidential and independent advice and counselling service via an independent agency
- Support regarding keeping in touch arrangements
- Support groups
- Enabling parents to record on their child's file whether or not they wish to have contact with their child from the age of 18

Services for Adopted Adults include:

- Discussion and advice about wishes around contact with and from birth relatives
- Support advice and guidance with access to birth records
- Information about our adoption services can be accessed via our website or by contacting the service on;

Telephone: 01708 434547

Email: [adoptlondoneast@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:adoptlondoneast@haverling.gov.uk)

Website: [www.adoptlondon.org.uk](http://www.adoptlondon.org.uk)



## **9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE**

Adoption staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals of their performance. Training needs are identified and met through in-house training or through externally commissioned trainers. A management information system is in place which ensures reporting of accurate information about adoption.

Adoption Agencies are monitored by external inspections carried out by Ofsted. There is regular adoption panel training to ensure that panel members keep up to date with current issues. Panel members also have annual appraisals. Regular feedback is received from the Adoption Panels and twice yearly meetings are held between the Management team, Panel Chairs and Agency Decision Maker. The Head of Service submits a quarterly report to the Management Board and provides an annual review and plan for the Joint Committee by 30th November in any year. This can also be taken to individual local authority scrutiny boards or Executives by 30th January the following year. A robust quality assurance framework is in place with regular auditing of files, plus evaluation feedback from adoptive parents and other service users.

## **13. CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

All prospective adopters engaging with the Agency and all birth parents of child for whom the Agency is planning adoption are provided with written information about Complaints Procedures, including contact details for the Complaints Officer.

All young people, for whom there is an adoption plan and who are of an appropriate age and understanding are likewise informed of the Complaints Procedures and also informed of the role of the Children's Rights Service.

The service is inspected by OFSTED. Any person who has concerns about the service may contact OFSTED at:

Piccadilly Gate Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

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

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



