

# London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adoption Service

## Statement of Purpose

### 1. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose concerns the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT) Adoption Service.

A full Adoption Service Annual Report is made available during May of each year. This provides further details and information about the Adoption Service and its provision of services to children needing adoptive placement and others involved in the adoption process.

### 2. Contents of the Statement of Purpose

The Local Authority Adoption Agencies Regulations and the National Minimum Adoption Standards (2003) specify that every adoption agency is required to produce a Statement of Purpose. This statement is a summary of the adoption services provided. It is reviewed annually and updated each time services are changed or modified.

#### **The Statement of Purpose covers the following:**

- The mission statement, principles, aims and objectives of the Local Authority in relation to the adoption service;
- Who is eligible to receive adoption services;
- Who the service works with to provide adoption services;
- Information about the organisation, management and staffing of the service;
- Systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of services provided;
- The procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting adopters;
- Details of the complaints procedures;
- Useful contacts including the address and telephone number of OFSTED (responsible for the inspection of adoption services in England and Wales).

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## **3. Mission Statement of Richmond's Adoption Service**

The central aim of the Adoption Service within the Specialist Children's Services of the Children's Services and Culture Directorate is:

**To provide a range of high quality adoption and adoption support services to all parties involved in and affected by the adoption process that is consistent with statutory obligations and regulations regarding the adoption of children**

The mission statement is consistent with the council's statutory duty towards children who are looked after and the council's corporate parenting role; which is to ensure that these children are placed with families and carers who can offer them safe and stable care and ensure that their identified needs are met.

## **4. Principles of the Adoption Service**

The Adoption Service is committed to the following principles:

- Prioritising the needs of children needing an adoptive placement and putting the rights, needs and welfare of these children at the centre of the adoption process and adoption support service
- Respecting the confidentiality of all of those involved in the adoption process
- Providing services that do not discriminate against groups or individuals
- Ensuring services are delivered effectively and efficiently, in a fair and accessible manner
- Monitoring and reviewing services
- Involving users in the ongoing review and development of the Adoption Service

## **5. Aims and Objectives of the Adoption Service**

The Adoption Service has identified the following guiding strategic objectives for this financial year (2010/2011). These are linked to the Children's and Culture Services' Specialist Service Plan and are incorporated in the Team Plan 2010/11 for the Adoption Service:

- To continue to provide outstanding adoption services that meet the needs of those using the services and are compliant with legislative requirements

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- To ensure that the service responds appropriately to equality and diversity issues
- To audit and review services to ensure continuing service developments
- To contribute to improving service planning processes across the service
- To contribute to programmes of continuing professional development for staff to help them develop and improve practice
- To promote joint working with partner agencies such as the PCT & Education Service

Aligned to the above objectives, the Adoption Service has identified the following service specific objectives:

- To provide placements which fully meet the needs of children for whom adoption is the agreed plan
- To ensure that there is no unnecessary delay in placing children for whom adoption is the agreed plan
- To provide a extensive range of adoption support services to promote and enhance adoptive placements
- To provide services for birth parents to support them during and after the adoption process

### **6. Who Receives Adoption Services?**

Adoption services are provided to:

- Richmond children for whom adoption is the plan
- Birth parents
- Prospective adopters being assessed and those approved by Richmond Adoption Agency
- Children and adoptive parents who require adoption support services
- Adopted adults and members of their birth families

### **7. Working Together to Improve Services**

The LBRuT joined the South West London Adoption Consortium in May 2004. The aim of the consortium is to develop joint initiatives and improve adoption practice. Member boroughs are:

- London Borough of Sutton
- Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
- London Borough of Merton
- Adoption NCH (South East)

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In providing services, the Adoption Service works closely with all involved in the process and in particular with the following other service areas within Specialist Children's Services:

- The Family Support Team
- The Fostering Team
- The Children Looked After Team
- The Disabled Children's Team
- The Adolescent Resource Team

The Adoption Service also works closely with the following agencies and organisations to ensure that children's welfare and needs remain at the centre of planning and provision:

- Health partners
- Education partners
- Other Adoption Agencies and National Organisations

Details concerning service and agency partners are to be found at the end of this document under Useful Addresses and Contacts

### **8. The Management and Structure of the Adoption Service**

The Adoption and Permanence Team is a group of specialist staff who are concerned with meeting the needs of children who are not able, for a variety of reasons, to be cared for by their birth parents and so require alternative permanent placements.

The work of the team includes the identification of suitable adoptive placements and the recruitment, preparation, support and assessment of adoptive parents.

The team provides a range of support services to adopted children and prospective and approved adopters such as training, advice and therapeutic support. The team also provides counselling and support for birth parents

The table overleaf gives details of the members of the Adoption and Permanence Team:

## London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adoption Service

Katie Law Adoption and Permanence Team Manager (full time)	CQSW, MSc, PQCCA, AASW, DMS
Jan Cotterell Adoption Social Worker (full time)	CQSW
Marilyn Makins Adoption Social Worker (part time)	CQSW, PQCCA
Pravashani Naicker Adoption Social Worker (full time)	BA Social Work, Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work DipSW, PQ1
Jo Short Adoption Social Worker (part time )	
Julia Adams Adoption Support Development Worker (part time)	CQSW, PQCCA, MA Social Work, AASW
Kate Fender Adoption Support Social Worker (part time)	BSc DipSw, PQ1
Sally Evenhuis Adoption Support Social Worker (part time)	CQSW, PQ1
Samukele Matshakayile-Ndlovu Team Administrator (full time)	HND, ECDL

There are also a number of independent social workers who undertake work for the team.

The work of the team is overseen by Mike Ferguson, the Principal Manager for Looked After Children and Leaving Care.

### **9 Monitoring the Adoption Service**

The Adoption and Permanence Service Team Plan is aligned to the Children and Young People's Plan (2009-2013) which is monitored quarterly against its aims and objectives both by service and Divisional managers.

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A report on the work of the Adoption Panel and the Adoption and Permanence Team in the context of local and national developments and performance targets is produced annually.

### **10 Recruitment, training, support and approval of adopters**

The recruitment of adopters is prioritised according to the needs of Richmond children who need to be placed for adoption.

The team recruits adopters from a wide range of backgrounds to meet the needs and compliment the racial, religious, social and cultural backgrounds of children awaiting adoption.

Assessments of prospective adopters are undertaken following guidelines issued by the Department of Children, Schools, and Families and the British Association of Adoption and Fostering.

The Adoption Service aims to undertake assessments within the guidelines set in the National Minimum Standards (2003), that is, within 8 months of the application to adopt being received.

The assessment of adopters is presented to the Adoption Panel for recommendation and a decision is then made by the Assistant Director for Specialist Children's Services based upon the panel's recommendation.

Adoption support is provided to all adoptive families

Adoption support services include:

- Financial assistance;
- 'buddy' scheme
- Children's group
- Advice from specialist adoption practitioners
- Support groups
- Training opportunities
- CAMHS services
- Consortium services
- Specialist services e.g. for children with disabilities

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## 11 Developing Policy and Planning for Children

Permanency planning for children in LBRuT has been amended to incorporate the target timescales as set out in The Adoption Standards.

Permanence planning, including adoption, is considered at the 4 month looked after children review. Permanency planning meetings take place regularly in order to prevent children becoming 'drifting' in the planning process.

All policy and procedures across the Specialist Children's Services have been reviewed and amended. The new Adoption Service Policy and Procedures are available in written and electronic formats.

### How to Complain

Should a child, young person, birth family member, or adoptive family member or any other person involved with the adoption service have a complaint about the way in which services are planned and/or delivered, or indeed any other aspect of the service, they should make this known to the Manager of the Adoption Service whose details are included in the **Useful Contacts** section of this document. He or she will attempt to address the complaint in full, however, if this is not satisfactory complaints can be addressed to the following:

### Complaints Manager

3rd floor,  
Civic Centre  
44 York Street,  
Twickenham,  
TW1 3BZ

The Complaints Manager will ensure that the complaint is dealt with in a fair and just manner and according to guidance, respecting all confidential information disclosed. There is also a leaflet advising upon the procedure for complaint. This is available from the Adoption Service.

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Adoption Service**

**Useful Addresses and Contacts**

**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

**Manager of the Adoption Service**

Ms Katie Law  
Adoption and Permanency Team  
42 York St,  
Twickenham  
TW1 3BW

✉ Email: [katie.law@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:katie.law@richmond.gov.uk)

☎ Tel: 020 8831 6137

**Principal Manager Children Looked After and Leaving Care**

Mike Ferguson  
42 York St,  
Twickenham  
TW1 3BW

✉ Email: [m.ferguson@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:m.ferguson@richmond.gov.uk)


Tel: 020 8891 7679

# London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adoption Service

OFSTED is the body responsible for the inspection of local authorities' social care departments and all adoption services.

## **OFSTED**


National Business Unit  
Royal Exchange Building  
St Anne's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

 Tel: 08456 40 40 40

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

## **Children's Rights Officer**

Roger Morgan  
OFSTED  
Alexander House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE


 Tel: 020 7421 6800

**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
Adoption Service  
Other organisations and useful links**

**British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)**

Saffron House  
6-10 Kirby Street  
London  
EC1N 8TS

 Email: [mail@baaf.org.uk](mailto:mail@baaf.org.uk)

 Tel: 020 7421 2600

  <http://www.baaf.org.uk>

**Department of Schools, Children and Families  
Adoption Web pages**


  <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/adoption>

**Adoption UK**

46 The Green  
South Bar Street  
Banbury  
OX16 9AB

The office is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

 Email: [admin@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:admin@adoptionuk.org.uk)

 Tel: 01295 752240

  <http://www.adoptionuk.com/>