

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 Adoption Service](#). This document is available as directed by the Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2005.ⁱ This means that it is available for everyone involved in the adoption process (children, young people, adopters and birth families), those working for adoption services, those services which support the adoption process and for agency partners.

This document is supported by the Children's Guide to Adoption available for children and young people involved with the Adoption Service or who have already been adopted.

A full Adoption Service Annual Report is made available during May to provide further details and information about the Adoption Service and its provision of service to children, families and adopters.

2. Contents of the Statement of Purpose

The [Local Authority Adoption Services \(England\) Regulations 2003](#) specifies that every adoption agency is required to produce a Statement of Purpose. This is a key document against which the Adoption Service is inspected by Ofsted. The [National Adoption Standards](#) requires each adoption agency to produce a Statement of Purpose for its adoption service. The statement is a summary of the adoption services provided and will be updated each time services are reviewed, changed or modified. The Statement itself will be made subject to annual review. The Manager of the Adoption Service will be responsible for ensuring that this occurs.

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 receives adoption services;
- who the service works with to provide adoption services;
- information about the organisation and staffing of the Service;
- structure and management of the Adoption Service in the LBRuT;
- 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 Education and Children's Services Directorate is:

'To provide a high quality range of adoption and adoption support services for children unable to live with their birth families, available to all parties affected by the adoption process, that will be consistent with statutory obligations and regulation 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 (Children Act 1989); to ensure that they are placed with families and carers who can offer them safe, stable care and promote their life chances.

4. Principles of the Adoption Service

The Adoption Service is committed to the following principles:

1. Putting the rights, needs and welfare of children at the centre of the adoption process and adoption support service	2. Respecting the confidentiality of all of those involved in the adoption process
3. Providing services that do not discriminate against groups or individuals	4. Ensuring services are delivered effectively and efficiently, in a fair and accessible manner
5. Monitoring and reviewing services	6. Involving users in the ongoing review and development of the Adoption Service

5. Aims & Objectives of the Adoption Service

The Adoption Service has identified the following guiding strategic objectives for the forthcoming year (2006/07) as specified in the Specialist Children's Services' Service Plan and which are laid out in the Team Plan 2006/07 for the Adoption Service:

- To continue to provide good quality adoption services in response to the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and to meet legislative requirements
- To ensure that the Service responds appropriately to equality and diversity issues affecting the planning and delivery of services
- To audit and review services to promote continuing service improvements

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- To improve service planning processes across the Service
- To provide programmes of continuing professional development for all staff to help them develop and improve practice
- To improve 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 work to increase the numbers of children looked after who are adopted to meet both national and local targets
- To reduce the delay in permanency placement where adoption is identified as being in the child's best interests
- Throughout the adoption process to work with children, birth families and adoptive families to reduce the possible disruption and difficulties experienced
- To work to prevent and/or reduce adoption breakdown within adoptive families through extensive adoption support services

6. Who Receives Adoption Services?

Adoption services are provided to:

- children who are to be adopted
- birth parents
- prospective and approved adopters including those who are seeking to adopt from overseas
- children and their adoptive parents who require adoption support services
- adopted adults and members of their birth families

7. Working Together to Improve Services

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames joined the South West London Adoption Consortium in May 2004. The aim of the consortium is to develop joint initiatives and improve practice to speed up the process of adoption for children in member boroughs. 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 will work closely with all involved in the process and with the following service areas within the Specialist Children's Services:

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

The Adoption Service 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 (primary care services)
- Education
- 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. Structure of the Adoption Service

The Adoption Team is a group of specialist staff who are concerned with meeting the needs of children requiring permanent placement. This includes the recruitment, preparation, support and assessment of adoptive parents. Recruiting adopters is prioritised according to the needs of the children who need to be placed for adoption. The team works to ensure that it is aware of those children who are about to enter the adoption process to enable preparatory work to take place within the service.

In addition there is a range of support services provided to children and prospective and approved adopters such as training, advice and therapeutic support.

9. Management of the Adoption Service

A structure chart showing how the service is managed within the Specialist Children's Services is shown at the end of this document. It shows the relationship between the Management of the Division and the service. It also gives details of the Adoption Service Manager and the Adoption Team workers providing the service.

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The Adoption Team consists of the following staff members:

Dawn Godfrey (full time)	Adoption Manager	MA Social Work, DipSW, PQCCA, MPA
Jan Cotterell (full time)	Adoption Social Worker	CQSW, DipSW
Marilyn Makins (part time, 18 hours)	Adoption Social Worker	CQSW, PQCCA
Janet Allen (full time)	Adoption Social Worker	MA Social Work
Jo Short (part time, 18 hours)	Adoption Social Worker	DipSW, PQ1
Julia Adams Development Worker (part time, 24 hours)	Adoption Support	CQSW, PQCCA, MA Social Work, AASW
Gerne Pieterse Worker (full time)	Adoption Support Social	BA Social Work, PQCCA
Sally Evenhuis Worker (part time, 30 hours)	Adoption Support Social	CQSW, PQ1
Samukele Matshakayile-Ndlovu Team Administrator (full time)		
Rachel James Officer (part time, 18 hours)	Publicity and Recruitment	

There are also a number of independent social workers who undertake assessments of people wishing to adopt from overseas.

10. Monitoring the Adoption Service

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

An annual report on the work of the Adoption Panel and the Team in the context of local and national developments and performance targets is produced.

11. Recruitment, training, support and approval of adopters

LBRuT's Adoption Team aims to recruit adopters from a wide range of backgrounds to meet the needs and compliment the social and cultural backgrounds of children awaiting adoption. Assessments of prospective adopters are undertaken following guidelines issued by the [British Association of Adoption and Fostering](#). Assessment format will be amended to incorporate the guidance issued by the [Department for Education and Skills](#) in respect of adoption

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assessments when such guidance becomes final and fully available this year (2006).

The Adoption Service aims to undertake assessments within guidelines set in National Minimum Standards, that is, within 6 months of the application to adopt being received. The LBRuT recognises the need to ensure that the permanence needs of all children are met, including those children of black and minority ethnicity as well as those children who have a disability.

The assessment and approval of adopters is presented to the Adoption Panel for recommendation and an agency decision is then made by the Assistant Director for Specialist Children's Services based upon those recommendations.

Adoption support is provided to all adoptive families. There is also provision of continuing support through in-house training and support groups.

Adoption support services include:

- financial assistance;
- 'buddy' scheme
- equipment for specialist needs support
- translation services (including translation to braille)
- children's group
- advice and training
- CAMHS Service;
- consortium services

12. Developing Policy and Planning for Children

Permanency planning for children in the 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 lost in the planning process and 'drifting' through the looked after care system. 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.

13. 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 and he or she will attempt to address the complaint in full. If, however, this is not satisfactory, complaints can be addressed to the following:

April 2007

Specialist Children's Services

Education and Children's Services Directorate

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adoption Service

Complaints Manager

2nd Floor,
Regal House,
Twickenham,
TW1

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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Useful Addresses and Contacts

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Manager of the Adoption Service

Ms Dawn Godfrey
Adoption Service,
42 York St,
Twickenham
TW1 3BW

✉ Email: d.godfrey@richmond.gov.uk

☎ Tel: 020 8831 6137

Principal Manager Children Looked After and Leaving Care

Mr Paul Walsh
42 York St,
Twickenham
TW1 3BW

✉ Email: p.walsh@richmond.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8891 7679

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OFSTED

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

Children's Rights Officer

Roger Morgan
Ofsted
Alexander House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Tel: 020 7421 6800


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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

 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.

Tel: 01295 752240

Fax: 01295 752241

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Footnotes

ⁱ This document is available to:

(i) any person working for the purposes of the adoption service ;(ii) children who may be adopted, their parents and guardians ;(iii) persons wishing to adopt a child; (iv) adopted persons, their parents, natural parents and former guardians (v) National Care Standards Commission.

Review of Statement Of Purpose and Children's Guide

The London Borough of Richmond will, in accordance with the Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2005:

- (a) keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children's guide; and
- (b) notify Ofsted of any such revision within 28 days.