



Statement of Purpose

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INTRODUCTION

Adopt London South is a specialist adoption agency partnership of Croydon, Kingston, Richmond, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Sutton, Southwark and Wandsworth councils. It is hosted by Southwark Children's services. The Head of Service reports to a Management Board, made up of Senior Officers from each local authority. The Chair of the Management Board is the Southwark Director of children's services, Alasdair Smith. The service is overseen by a Quality Assurance Group, made up of senior managers from the 9 local authorities.

The Regional Agency is operated under the terms of a Partnership agreement, which confirms the legal and governance arrangements; the budget; staffing and funding contributions for the 9 local authorities.

The London Regional Executive Board oversees effective collaboration across the 4 Adopt London Regions, to promote consistency across the 23 London boroughs, including a shared Adopt London website. www.adoptlondon.org.uk

This 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 SOUTH

We aim to provide the best quality support for adoptive families within our South London community. We hold relationships 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 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 journey of meeting, introductions and moving in

We provide good quality adoption support. Adopters have access to a helpline system which provides advice and guidance on a range of issues. We also provide:

- groups for adopters to meet and get informal support
- support groups with discussions and guest speakers
- adoption specific training and support at all stages in the adoption journey
- adoption support assessment to access funding from the Adoption Support Fund for therapeutic support if needed
- Partnerships with We Are Family and New Family Social to encourage mutual support and friendship between adoptive families, children and young people

- Fun days and parties for adopted children and adoptive families who share similar experiences.

3. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

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 should 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 have to work together to deliver the needs of the services.
- 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 service works positively and respectfully with all service users and partner agencies regardless of race, colour, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age. We work within Equal Opportunities law.

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 while reducing undue delay.

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:

- i. 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.
- ii. ensuring that all those whose lives have been affected by adoption are helped to identify and receive appropriate services.
- iii. working in partnership with adoptive families & other agencies ensuring the service is based on statutory requirements & good practice within the principles of value for money for the agency.

Objectives of the agency

- i. 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.
- ii. To provide information on the process to applicants interested in becoming adopters and on the children requiring adoption.
- iii. 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.
- iv. To minimise delay in family finding, paying attention to the needs of the child at all times.
- v. 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.
- vi. To provide a range of adoption support services to birth relatives, adopted adults, adopters and their children in partnership with other agencies.
- vii. To provide information on the service that is available to those wishing to adopt from abroad
- viii. To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair.
- ix. That concerns about the service are addressed and that information about the complaints procedure is made available.
- x. That the organisation regularly reviews the services it provides, consults with, and learns from, those in receipt of their services through comments, compliments and complaints

5. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Adopt London South is based at 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH. Staff work closely with the 9 partner councils and have access to all the offices.

Head of Service is Susanna Daus: Service Manager is Pam Walton

Team Managers

- Recruitment and Assessment: Martha Clark and Nicola Sadler
- Family Finding: Shauna Lineham
- Adoption Support and (ASSA): Audrey Bouazizi with Letterbox group.
- Adoption Marketing and Recruitment: Candice Siddle
- Adoption and Permanence Panel: Panel advisors Florence Mo and Laurice Harris
- Business Support Manager: Lorraine Miller

Adopt London South 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.

Adopt London South holds 4 adoption panel days per month, in Merton and in Southwark. There are 2 Independent Chairs. The panels make recommendations about the suitability of adopters and as Early Permanence carers and make recommendations about matching children with new suitable adoptive families.

6 THE WORK OF ADOPT LONDON SOUTH

The service undertakes the following tasks:

- Recruitment of prospective adoptive families and Early Permanence carers.
- Assessment and preparation of adoptive families and Early Permanence carers, 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
- Support for Early Permanence placement throughout the care proceedings and the adoption process.
- Advice, guidance and support to adoptive families during the matching process and after placement.
- A range of adoption support services for children and families affected by adoption including assessments for therapeutic help through the Adoption Support Fund.
- 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 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 enables adopted children to maintain contact with their birth families.
- The post adoption support team offers support and signposting to counselling services for adopted adults wishing to find out about their birth families
- The assessment teams undertake the assessment of families adopting a child known to them.
- Those wishing to adopt from abroad are referred to the Intercountry Adoption Centre who offer specialist advice and support.

7. NUMBERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF

Susanna Daus, Head of Service, has overall responsibility for **Adopt London South**. She has over 38 years post qualification experience in social work, including 31 years in family placements.

The agency employs 43 staff. All adoption social workers have a social work qualification and are registered with Social Work England. The Head of Service acts as the Agency Decision Maker for Adopter approvals.

8. CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Adopters who wish to complain about their own adoption journey should firstly resolve the complaint with the Team Manager. If unhappy with the response contact the Service Manager, pam.walton@southwark.gov.uk The complaint process is finalised by the Head of Service susanna.daus@southwark.gov.uk

If the complaint is more specifically about the child's social work service before the child is adopted, this complaint may be addressed to the original Local Authority from which the child was placed.

All young people, for whom there is an adoption plan and who are of an appropriate age and understanding are entitled to make complaints.

All birth parents of children for whom the Agency is planning adoption are entitled to make complaints either with their child's social work service or with the Team Manager. If unhappy with the response contact the Service Manager, pam.walton@southwark.gov.uk The complaint process is finalised by the Head of Service susanna.daus@southwark.gov.uk

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 Web:



Adopt London South is a new Regional Adoption Agency partnership of 9 local authorities - Croydon, Kingston, Richmond, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Southwark, Sutton and Wandsworth. Our specialist adoption staff find families for children, we recruit adopters and we offer post adoption support to children, families, birth parents and adopted adults.

* If you are a social work professional wishing to discuss family finding call us on 020 7525 1748 or email: enquiriesALS@southwark.gov.uk

* For information about how to adopt call us on 020 7525 1746 or email: adoptionALS@southwark.gov.uk

* For all post adoption support enquiries email: postadoptionssupportALS@southwark.gov.uk or call us on 020 7525 4491

- For all letterbox communication email: Letterbox_EnquiriesALS@southwark.gov.uk
- Our new website www.adoptlondon.org.uk will launch in October.

