APPENDIX A

Statement of purpose and function:

Adoption agencies of

Leicester City Social Care and Health Directorate

Leicestershire County Social Services Department

Rutland Social Services Department

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Statement of Purpose and Function
Adoption Service

1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Purpose and Function explains the aims, objectives and services provided by the Adoption Team for Leicester City Social Care and Health Directorate, Leicestershire Social Services and Rutland Social Services, as part of the Local Authority's responsibility in fulfilling the requirements of the Adoption Regulations and National Minimum Standards (2000).

1.2 The Statement of Purpose and Function is available to staff of the organisation, prospective adopters, children and young people, parents, and other professionals.

1.3 The addressees of the three Local Authorities who have approved the statement of purpose and function are as follows:

Leicester City Council
Social Care and Health
New Walk Centre
Welford Place
Leicester  LE1 6ZG

Leicestershire County Council
Social Services Department
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester  LE3 8RL

Rutland County Council
Social Services Department
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland  LE15 6HP
2. **Aims of the Adoption Service**

**Primary aim**

2.1 The primary aim of the Adoption Service is to ensure that children who are referred for an adoptive placement, are placed, as a matter of priority, within a loving and supportive family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

2.2 Additionally it is the aim of the service to:

- Place children at the centre of the adoption process and act in their best interests at all times, ensuring the process is timely and avoids delay.
- Recruit high quality adoptive families to meet the needs of children referred for adoption.
- Provide advice and training for childcare social workers on all matters relating to adoption.
- Provide a range of support services and information to adoptive families and children to ensure adoptive placements are successful.

3. **Objectives of the service:**

3.1 To ensure children’s needs have been fully assessed and that it is considered to be in the child’s best interests to be adopted before a matching process starts.

3.2 To ensure that the views of children and young people have been listened to and given due consideration in any decisions taken about their future.

3.3 To regularly publicise adoption services to enable members of the community to consider adoption as a positive option and to recruit carers from a wide variety of backgrounds to meet children’s' specific racial, cultural and linguistic needs and who will respect their birth and family origins.

3.4 To recruit, train and retain highly skilled and appropriately qualified staff who have experience in the making and supporting of family placements, and in understanding the effects the adoption process can have on all parties. To ensure that all staff of the service are committed to ensuring children and families receive the support and advice required to maintain stable family life.
4. Principles

4.1 The Adoption Service believes that:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- It is best for children, where possible, to be brought up by their own birth family.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully 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.
- Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language should be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.
- The particular needs of disabled children should 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 should be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions and individuals who have to work together to meet the needs for services of those affected by adoption.
- Children have the right to grow up knowing they are adopted and should have access to information about their family of birth.
- Where appropriate children should continue to have contact with family members who are significant to them.
5. Management of the Adoption Service

5.1 The adoption service is provided through a joint arrangement between Leicestershire, Rutland and Leicester City local authorities. Leicestershire and Leicester City provide managers who are responsible for the adoption team. Leicestershire County Council is the lead agency.

5.1.1 Leicester City Council

Name of Manager: Mark Tingley.

Address: Eagle House
11 Friar Lane
Leicester
LE1 5RB

Experience and qualification of the Manager are:

Mark Tingley has a CQSW and BA (Hons) in Social Science. He has over twenty years experience as a social worker and social work manager, having worked both in London and Leicester.

The registered provider is Leicester City Council Social Care and Health Directorate.

The agency decision maker on behalf of the Local Authority is Kim Bromley-Derry, Service Director.

5.1.2 Leicestershire County Council

Name of Manager: Cath Satoris

Address: Social Services Department
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester LE3 8RL

Experience and qualification of the manager are:

Cath Satoris has a degree in Social Studies and a CQSW from the University of Leicester obtained in 1974. Cath Satoris also has a Diploma in Management from the University of Leicester obtained in 1996. She has worked extensively in children's and placement services.

The registered provider is Leicestershire County Council Social Services Department

The agency decision maker on behalf of the Local Authority is Flick Schofield, Assistant Director
5.1.3 **Rutland Council**

Name of Manager: Stephen Attwood

Address: Rutland Social Service Department  
Catmose  
Oakham  
Rutland  
LE15 6HP

Experience and qualification of the manager are:-

Steve has been a qualified social worker for over 25 years. He has extensive experience in children’s services. In 2003 he obtained a Certificate of Management from the Open University.

The registered provider is Rutland County Council Social Service Department.

The agency decision-maker on behalf of the Local Authority is Colin Foster, Director of Social Services.

5.2 The Adoption Service employs a number of qualified and experienced staff as follows:

- Two Team Managers (Faye Andrews and Mary Lowles), who manage the day-to-day arrangements of the Adoption Team and who have 10 years’ experience and 27 years’ experience respectively in social work. Both have social work qualifications and extensive experience of child care and adoption services.

- Five full time and six part time experienced social workers, who are all qualified social workers and experienced in adoption work.

- Two post-adoption workers (one qualified in social work and one unqualified support worker), who have relevant experience

- Two administrative assistants and three clerks who provide administrative support to the team.
6. **The Work of the Adoption Team**

6.1 The Adoption Team is based at:

Eagle House  
11 Friar Lane  
Leicester  
LE1 5RB

6.2 This team provides the following services:

- Recruitment of adoptive families; including publicity, information giving and regular information evenings.

- Assessment and preparation of prospective adoptive families, which includes visiting the home, undertaking a home study, references, checks, and preparation groups.

- Support for approved families awaiting placement.

- Advice, guidance and support to adoptive families during the matching process and post placement, this includes workshops and events for adoptive families.

- Running training and educational events and providing guidance for departmental staff who are preparing children, their parents and carers.

- Provide support services post adoption, to adoptive families and birth relatives.

- The facilitation of direct and indirect contact arrangements.

- The provision of a specialist consultation and advice service.

- Counselling, information, and advice in relation to the following individual situations:

  - Birth parents who's children might be adopted.
  
  - Prospective adopters.
  
  - Adults who have been adopted, including support with tracing relatives. This includes access to birth records counselling.
  
  - Birth relatives of an adopted person, who want support with tracing relatives.
  
  - People who wish to adopt children from another country.
  
  - Non agency adoptions including step parents who wish to adopt their partner’s children.
7. **Enquiries about Adopting a Child**

7.1 A range of leaflets are available to explain to people what adopting children is all about and the processes that prospective adopters will need to go through. The Adoption Service welcomes enquiries from people from all backgrounds, whether single, in a relationship, or married, and regardless of sexuality, race or religion. There is no upper age limit for a prospective adopter(s) but adopters will need to be in good general health with lots of energy and love to give to a child(ren).

7.2 The Adoption Service has a well-defined recruitment strategy whose aim is to prioritise the recruitment of adopters who can best meet the needs of local children requiring adoption. The recruitment strategy is published within the annual report of the Adoption Service and can be obtained on request by contacting the Adoption Team at Eagle House.
7.2 **Process for the Assessment and Approval of Adopters**

**Target Times**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 1 - 8 weeks</td>
<td>Attend Information Evening - send form back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 1 month</td>
<td>Home visit by Adoption Worker(s) - discussion of personal situation and wishes/what sort of child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 2 weeks</td>
<td>Application forms offered after agreement by the Adoption Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 3 Months</td>
<td>Completed Application returned. References taken up (CRB, Probation, Social Services, Child Protection Register, Personal References, employer, and school). Medicals arranged with GP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Months</td>
<td>Preparation/Assessment. Attend groups/meet other Adopters. Adoption worker completes &quot;Home Study&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adoption panel to recommend approval of adopters, applicants are able to attend Panel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 Months</td>
<td><strong>APPROVAL BY THE ADOPTION AGENCY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post approval training one day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adoption Social Worker visits 3 monthly until a child is placed. Adopters complete family &quot;Album&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child's Social Worker offered a choice of suitable adopters. Visits to discuss and give information by child's and adoption social workers. A video of the child may be available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement to go ahead on the &quot;Matching&quot; taken to Adoption Panel for recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MATCHING APPROVED BY ADOPTION AGENCY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and placement of child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placement is reviewed at intervals. Both child and adoption Social Workers continue to visit to monitor progress and offer support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ADOPTION COURT HEARING</strong> (Attended by adopters with child and social worker) - <strong>ORDER MADE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adoption support services available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. **Local Authority Adoption Panel and Decision Making Responsibilities**

8.1 Each of the three Local Authorities have their own Adoption Panel and consider cases arising from their area. The Panel has the responsibility to:-

- consider the assessment of prospective adoptive parent(s) and recommend whether they are approved as adoptive parents.
- decide whether adoption is in the best interests of the child.
- agree the matching of child(ren) to a family.
- decide on the financial support available to a child(ren) who is being adopted.

8.2 The Adoption Panel is governed by guidance and regulations. Panel members include qualified social work managers, a medical adviser, elected Members of the Council, lay people (who are not employed by the Service/Council and may have personal experience of adoption). A legal adviser attends the panel.

8.3 Following the recommendation of the Adoption Panel, the papers are passed to the “Agency decision maker” who has responsibility for the final approval. This decision is then put in writing to the prospective adopter(s)
9. **Monitoring the Quality of the Adoption Service**

9.1 The quality of the Adoption Service’s work and standards are regularly monitored.

- The managers of the Service ensure the staff are appropriately skilled, trained and supervised on a regular basis to ensure they can undertake the functions of their work.

- The work of the adoption team is governed by Adoption Standards, Guidance and Legislation. The work of the team is subject to regular inspection. The local authorities submit information on their achievements against performance indicators.

- An annual report is produced by the three Local Authorities on the activity, achievements and areas of development within the Adoption Service.

- The Adoption Panel independently scrutinises all assessments and judgements made about children being considered for adoption and those of prospective adoptive parents. The Adoption panel has a critical role to play in the provision of independent expert oversight.

- Elected members of the Council have a duty to be accountable for the Adoption Service.

- The Adoption Service is subject to a three yearly inspection by the National Care Standards Commission.

- Feedback is gathered from a variety of service users through evaluation proformas.
10. **Complaints Procedure**

10.1 Each of the three Local Authorities has a complaints procedure. If a complaint is made it will be considered by the relevant Authority and the complainant will be informed of the relevant Authority dealing with the complaint.

10.2 Copies of the procedure and complaints forms can be requested from the Adoption Team at Eagle House, 11 Friar Lane, Leicester, Tel: 2995899.

10.3 Generally, there are three stages to the procedure. **Stage 1** will involve the manager responding to the complaint attempting to resolve the matter informally. **Stage 2** will involve an investigation by an independent person, at **Stage 3** an independent panel considers the complaint. There are clear timescales for the complaint to be considered, investigated and responded to.

10.4 All complaints and matters of concern will be treated with respect and confidentiality, and will be recorded as part of the responsibilities of the Council. These records are open to Inspectors of the National Care Standards Commission.

10.5 Children who are already placed in pre-adoptive placements (ie children in care of the Local Authority) also have access to the Council’s Children’s Rights Officer Leicestershire and Leicester City, who will assist any child in making a complaint if they wish, and support them throughout.
11. **Reviewing the Statement of Purpose and Function**

11.1 The Statement is reviewed and approved on an annual basis by the executive side of the council who have a responsibility for the Adoption Service for each Local Authority.

12. **National Care Standards Commission**

The local office of the Care Standards Commission is:

National Care Standards Commission  
The Pavilions  
5 Smith Way  
Grove Park  
Enderby  
Leicestershire  
LE19 1SX

Tel: 0116 2815900  
Fax: 0116 2815910
APPENDIX A

STRUCTURE CHART

Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland Joint Adoption Service

- Agency Division Maker (Service Director)
  - City Adoption Panel
    - Service Manager (Placements)
      - Adoption Team Manager City
    - Adoption Team Manager County
  - Adoption Team
    - City/County Social Workers and Administrative Staff

- Agency Division Maker (Assistant Director)
  - County Adoption Panel
    - P.O. Family Placements
  - Adoption Team

- Agency Division Maker (Director Rutland SSD)
  - Rutland Adoption Panel
    - Head of Children's Services Rutland
Appendix A

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

Social Care and Health Directorate

Andrew Cozens
Corporate Director
of Social Care and Health

Kim Bromley-Derry
Service Director
Children and Family Resources

Andreas Bunyan
Service Director
Children and Family
Assessment and Strategy

Elaine Yardley
Service Director
Older People

Bhupen Dave
Service Director
Adults

David Oldershaw
Service Director
Resources

David Oldershaw
Corporate Director
of Social Care and Health

Childrens Resources
(Homes, Fostering & Adoption,
Family Centres, YOT), EDT,
Drugs Action Team Coordinator

Duty Assessment & Childcare Service Teams,
Disabled Children’s Team, Children’s Hosp. Team,
Child Protection and Indep. Review Service,
Policy and Planning Unit, HAZ Disabled Children’s Co-ord.

Older Persons Services, Benefits Support,
Elderly Persons Homes, Asylum Team,
Home Care, Hospitals, Health Partnerships,
Access and Intermediate Care Services

Learning Disabilities,
Mental Health, Physical Disabilities & Sensory Impairment,
Planning and Service Development,
Older Persons Mental Health

Resources
(HR, Finance, Procurement,
Staff Development, Performance
Management, IT, Admin & Property)