



## ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**Registered Manager:** Lorraine Courtney  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

**Responsible Body:** Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

**Telephone:** 0161-817 2250

**Email:** [info@caritassalford.org.uk](mailto:info@caritassalford.org.uk)

**Chair of Trustees:** The Bishop of Salford

*A charity registered in England No 1125808  
Company Registration No 6594417*

Caritas Diocese of Salford ('Caritas') is a Registered Adoption Support Agency providing services to adopted adults and children, adoptive parents, birth parents and other birth relatives.

The service developed alongside the Adoption Agency operated by the predecessor charity - Catholic Children's Rescue Society - which began in 1942 and was incorporated into Caritas in 2010.

The Adoption Support Agency was first registered in 2008 following the closure of the Adoption Agency.

Following his appointment as the Director of Caritas, effective 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, the agency has nominated the Director as the new Responsible Individual following the retirement of the previous Director. At the time of compilation of this updated statement, this is subject to the required processes by Ofsted. The nominated Responsible Individual is:

Patrick O'Dowd  
Director  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Caritas House, Nobby Stiles Drive, Manchester, M4 4FA

The Registered Manager is:

Lorraine Courtney  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
3 Ford Street, Salford, M3 6DP

### **Registered Manager Adoption Support Service - Lorraine Courtney**

Lorraine Courtney qualified as a Social Worker in 1980 and has worked in Children and Families teams in Strathclyde, West Devon and Stockport. She graduated from the University of Glasgow with a M.A. degree and holds a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work from the University of Edinburgh and a NVQ Level 5 Diploma in Management.

Lorraine has been a member of the Family Placement Team since 2001 and has worked full time in the Adoption Support Service since 2007 having previously worked between adoption and adoption support. She was successfully appointed to the role of Team Manager in January 2013 and became the Registered Manager in August 2016. She is registered with Social Work England, number SW 44424

### **Management Committee**

The Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees with a wide range of experience and skills who provide overall governance to the work of the Charity. As part of their governance review the Board have appointed from within their membership a Management Committee (known as the 'Caritas Committee') which acts as a general purposes committee and has regular oversight into the strategy and operations of the charity. In addition to the Trustee Members, there is a co-opted member of the clergy invited to join who has pastoral responsibility for supporting the works of Caritas.

Day to day management of the charity is delegated to the Director and the management team who have experience in leadership and management and provide access to the

service for support in the areas of health and safety, human resources and staff development, finance and general administration.

The Adoption Support Service forms part of the charity's services to Children and Families. This includes a dedicated Schools' Social Work Service and two places of accommodation dedicated to Expectant/Young Parents and their infant children.

At the time of writing the Adoption Support Service operates from Cathedral Centre, 3 Ford Street, Salford, M3 6DP which is retained as the registered address of the charity. From the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 the Service will have a primary office located within Caritas House, Nobby Stiles Way, Manchester, M4 4FA. Where appropriate it will use other offices or facilities owned/operated by the Charity as required. The Charity has offices or services based in Manchester, Bolton, Bury and Blackburn and accesses other bases for specific areas of work.

### **Staffing**

In addition to the employment of a full-time Registered Manager and following recent inspections, Caritas are presently seeking to recruit an additional part-time social worker support to enhance and develop service delivery and reduce waiting times. These staff are supported by part-time administration support.

Caritas has also established new systems and processes to ensure that in the event of a proposed absence or in the event of any unplanned absence, the Registered Person will contact the regulator to notify them of any absence. The Registered Person will also make arrangements to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable arrangements will be put in place to avoid or mitigate any such absence to ensure that the provision of the service can continue. A report will be made to the trustees of action taken.

Caritas has access to the services of a consultant with many years of adoption experience who advises on delicate and complex post adoption matters.

### **The services offered by the Adoption Support Service are:**

- Birth records counselling - where adoptions have been arranged through the former Catholic Children's Rescue Society, and via spot purchase by other agencies on request.
- Intermediary services provided both to adoptees and to birth relatives. The services of birth record counselling and intermediary services can also be provided on behalf of other agencies on request.
- Advice, support and signposting to children and adoptive parents where adoption was arranged through this organisation.

### **Services to Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives**

Services are provided to meet the need for information, tracing and in a number of instances, intermediary services and reunions. As such it is a time-limited intervention but is often characterised by return referrals over time where people who use the service may be tentative in their first contact and ready to move further in their search when they approach Caritas again.

Many adoptees choose to make contact at different points in their adult life and our processes ensure a swift and sensitive response which acknowledges that individuals will return for further assistance as necessary.

Where there is a high volume of referrals a waiting list operates and cases are prioritised on the basis of when the adoption was made (especially those before 1975) or where there is a need for particular or special personal information (e.g. medical information). People who use the service are informed of the waiting time and kept informed if this changes.

Since the implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 an intermediary service to birth parents seeking information and tracing is provided. Reunions are facilitated between adoptees and birth relatives where this is the wish of both parties. In addition, descendants of birth parents often request a service, sometimes after a birth parent has previously been in touch but also when they have discovered the existence of an adopted sibling e.g. when a parent is deceased.

The practice and procedures for this area of work have benefited from the extensive knowledge and experience gained from the agency's long history of adoption.

The inevitable complexities require skilled and sensitive handling and the combined skills, experience and training of staff ensure that this is provided.

### **Under 18s and Up to aged 25 Service**

The closure of the Adoption Agency and registration as an Adoption Support Agency in 2008 has resulted in a gradually diminishing number of young people where the agency was involved in the placement. The majority of the families of this age group should have an Adoption Support Plan agreed with their placing agency - usually a Local Authority and known as the Appropriate Adoption Agency (AAA) - which outlines support available.

In 2015, the Government became aware of the increasing need for support and created the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) to fund therapeutic support for eligible children and their families. The only way to access this funding is to request that the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) or Local Authority undertake an adoption support needs assessment of the adoptive family.

As a result of these additional nationwide resources, Caritas may not be the appropriate agency to offer support to families in response to presenting issues. However, we have maintained the strong commitment made to our families at the time of placement and we welcome any direct approach from adoptive families to the Adoption Support Service by telephone, email or in writing.

When adoptive families contact this agency to request support, the Registered Manager will co-ordinate a response either directly or via administrative support. In some instances, only remote support and guidance is required (e.g. by telephone or virtual technologies). However, on occasions a face-to-face meeting may be offered to discuss the difficulties the family is experiencing and, if appropriate, an assessment is undertaken to enable a detailed referral to be made to the local authority or Regional Adoption Agency. We endeavour to be responsive, offer advice and support, act as an advocate and signpost to other agencies if it is appropriate to do so.

In line with Government guidance, we have extended the Under 18s Service to offer the same support/signposting to young people aged up to 21 years old, or up to 25 years old if they have Special Educational Needs.

### **Monitoring of the services**

Birth relatives and adult adoptees are asked to provide evaluations of the service and suggested improvements are considered and implemented either immediately or by a change in procedures when evaluations are reviewed.

The services are provided in line with the National Minimum Standards and Regulations for Adoption Support Agencies. The general overarching policies of Caritas are followed together with the specific policies and procedures of the Adoption Support Service. Casework activity is recorded and is monitored by the Registered Manager through file sampling, supervision and practice development in service meetings.

Feedback from people who use the service is actively sought and from Local Authority Social Workers where referred/commissioned by the local Authority.

All services are included in the routine Ofsted inspections of the Adoption Support Agency.

### **Service review**

Following changes in the external environment and impact of regulatory and wider circumstances, the Trustees have required that a review of the service be undertaken to evaluate the long-term future. Following the appointment of the new Director, the review and outcome of this review is expected by December 2021.

### **Confidentiality**

People who use the service are assured of confidentiality and safe maintenance of their information and records in line with Data Protection & Information Governance guidance and legislation and in line with Caritas' Policy and Procedures. People who use the service are asked for ID verification to ensure the sharing of information/records is appropriate.

The adoption database is accessible only to named persons within the Adoption Support Service.

### **Safeguarding and Adult and Child Protection**

Caritas operates an overarching Safeguarding & Adult and Child Protection Policy of which all people who use the service are made aware. Child protection training is regularly updated to ensure that staff follow the procedures of the Agency which are aligned with respective local authority processes. Additional procedures specific to the Adoption Support Service are included in the Service Policies and Procedures.

### **Complaints and Representations Procedures:**

Caritas is a Catholic social action agency. In accordance with these values and those outline in our mission and value statements, we seek to treat each person with respect, dignity and in a professional manner. We recognise our responsibility to ensure a competent standard of service to all individuals and groups to whom the service is offered.

Caritas accepts fully that such a service should be open to scrutiny and the organisation has a robust Representations and Complaints policy system managed by the HR Manager who will oversee the investigation of any complaint, appoint independent persons as necessary and monitor all complaints to conclusion.

All complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible and, unless exceptional circumstances exist, will adhere to the timescales outlined in the policy and procedures. People who use the service will be provided with written information about the Complaints Procedures of Caritas.

**Complaints should be addressed to:**

Sue McVeigh  
HR & Business Support Manager / Representations and Complaints Manager  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

Tel: 0161 817 2250  
Fax: 0161 833 1635  
Email: [sue.mcveigh@caritassalford.org.uk](mailto:sue.mcveigh@caritassalford.org.uk)

**People who use the service may also make complaints and representations to Ofsted:**

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 1231231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**This Statement of Purpose was reviewed and amended by:**



..... (Registered Manager)  
Lorraine Courtney

20<sup>th</sup> August 2021  
..... (Date)

**Agreed:**



..... (Responsible Individual)

Patrick O'Dowd

20<sup>th</sup> August 2021  
..... (Date)