

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction

St. Francis' Children's Society (The Society), is a well-respected specialist adoption agency established in 1869 which has over the years continued to grow in the provision of professional and comprehensive adoption services. The Society operates within current adoption legislation and regulations and is inspected by Ofsted. St Francis' Children's Society is a Registered Charity (No: 211670) and Voluntary Adoption Agency operating in England, governed by a Board of Trustees.

Employees are located in offices in Milton Keynes and the agency covers an area of approximately 50 miles radius from Milton Keynes.

The Statement of Purpose covers the following areas:

Mission statement

Values and Aims

Data Protection

Services provided

Information about the Registered Provider

Staffing and qualifications of responsible person and manager

Systems for monitoring and evaluation of service

Procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting adopters

Information about complaints procedure

OFSTED address and contact number

MISSION STATEMENT

As a Registered Voluntary Adoption agency, the Society delivers a comprehensive range of high quality professional services, both pre- and post- adoption to families and children. The Society's main focus is on providing secure and sustainable adoptive placements for vulnerable children through the Adoption Connections service. Together with Adoption Focus the Society delivers an Early Permanence service. It also provides counselling and support as appropriate through the Birth Connections and Building Connections services to those whose lives have been affected by adoption or other permanent placements.

VALUES AND AIMS OF ST. FRANCIS' CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

1. The Society provides a personal, effective and flexible service to everyone affected by adoption - before, during and after placement.
2. The Society acknowledges that adoption is a lifelong evolving process for all those involved and therefore adopted people should have access to information and services to help them deal with adoption-related matters.
3. The Society believes that the child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process and therefore the focus is on permanency and creating a stable family life.
4. The Society believes in a holistic approach and supports working in partnership with other agencies and Local Authorities to achieve the best outcomes for children and their families and everyone affected by adoption.
5. The Society believes that children have the right to grow up as part of a loving family.
6. The Society's services are non-judgmental, diverse and inclusive.
7. The Society supports workforce development and provides staff members with suitable opportunities for development of skills and responsibilities.

DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY POLICY

St Francis' Children's Society is registered with the Information Commission's Office, reference: Z8591724.

General Statement

The Society is required to process relevant information regarding service users, staff, trustees, volunteers, donors and suppliers as part of its operation. The UK Data Protection Act 1998 was replaced by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 and provides the legal framework for the holding, processing and accessing of data.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Adoption Service (Adoption Connections)

The aim of this service is to recruit, prepare and assess prospective adopters to provide secure and sustainable adoptive placements and to offer tailored support throughout the different stages of the adoption process.

The Society recruits adopters from diverse backgrounds who can offer children a stable and permanent home. Potential adoptive parents will be welcomed without prejudice, given clear information about agency policy and procedures, while being treated fairly and with respect throughout the adoption process.

The criteria for the recruitment of adopters will be related to the needs of children waiting and the likelihood of adoptive applicants providing an appropriate placement for a child / children. This will be within the framework of legislation and government guidance. The Society ensures that the recruitment and preparation programme for adopters accurately reflects the needs of children currently awaiting adoption. The Society will continue to support specific initiatives to facilitate the recruitment of families specifically for priority (harder to place) children who are older, in sibling groups, of ethnic minority backgrounds and children with special needs/physical disability.

The Society will liaise with Local Authorities, Regional Adoption Agencies, CoramBAAF, Adoption Match (national adoption register), regional and national networks and Adoptionlink to maintain information regarding the needs of children awaiting adoption placements throughout the UK. Children will be matched with approved adopters who can offer them a stable and permanent home. Full consideration will be given to the ability of the adopters to meet the child's cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic needs.

The Triangle Project

This is a joint project with Adoption Focus which was funded by the Department for Education. A joint Fostering Agency has been established which enables the Triangle Project to dually approve adopters as foster carers in order to deliver an early permanence service.

Adoption Support

The Society is registered to provide adoption support to adopted children and their families and also to adopted adults. We will support adopters to access other specialist support as may be required through the placing local authority's resources and the Adoption Support Fund. Prospective service users will be made aware that they are entitled to request an assessment of needs for adoption support services from their local authority. The outcome of any such request will be taken into account by the agency when deciding whether to provide a service to

a particular individual. The Society provides a comprehensive support service pre- and post-placement. This includes standard support services from supervising social workers, individual direct work, consultation appointments offered by an adoption support social worker and a therapist, Theraplay® techniques, parenting workshops and social events.

The Society will provide every support and encouragement to the adoptive family to enable them to provide a secure and emotionally satisfying experience for their children, so that the children are enabled to develop healthy attachments, experience permanency and develop an integrated sense of identity.

Birth parent service (*Birth Connections*)

The aim of this service is to offer support and ongoing assistance to birth parents affected by adoption.

Birth relatives who have lost a child to adoption are able to access the Society's service of support, advice and counselling through commissioned services via their local authority. The Society will work in partnership with Local Authorities and birth relatives will be treated fairly, openly and with respect as the lifelong implications for all involved in adoption is acknowledged. Any counselling and support offered will aim to enable the birth family members to understand the emotional and legal implications of adoption and to be familiar with their rights. Any birth parent or relevant family member wishing to discuss the placement of a child for adoption will be given initial advice and guidance regarding accessing appropriate services.

The Society will provide appropriate ongoing services to birth parents, post-adoption, to enable a constructive partnership in contact arrangements. Where it is in a child's best interest for direct or indirect contact to be maintained with birth parents, siblings or other family members, the agency will seek to facilitate this. The Society will ensure that birth parents continue to be informed of services such as those offered by the Contact Register and other support organisations, in addition to the Society's resources.

Services for adopted adults (*Building Connections*)

The Society holds the records for those people historically adopted through the adoption service. A service is provided to help adopted adults and birth families to trace their family members, whilst offering the vital support and counselling this often difficult journey requires.

Qualified social workers will assist and advise in tracing procedures as appropriate and, within the Society's Policy and Procedures, act as an intermediary in reunions where requested and where appropriate.

The Society also holds the records for the St Francis' Boys Home in Shefford which closed in 1974. A service is provided for ex-residents to access their records.

Additional services offered to Local Authorities

The Society works in partnership with Local Authorities and provides commissioned services such as:

- Notified (Step parent) adoption assessments
- Theraplay techniques intervention
- Birth record counselling and intermediary services for adopted adults and their birth relatives
- Ongoing support to birth parents affected by adoption
- Life story work

REGISTERED PROVIDER

Name and address:

ST FRANCIS' CHILDREN'S SOCIETY
Collis House
48 Newport Road
Woolstone
Milton Keynes MK15 0AA
Tel: 01908 572700

Name and address of Responsible Individual

The Responsible Individual is:

Alison Miller

St Francis' Children's Society
Collis House
48 Newport Road
Woolstone
Milton Keynes MK15 0AA
Tel. 01908 572700

Name and address of the Registered Manager

The Registered Manager is:

Suzanne Strachan

St Francis' Children's Society
Collis House
48 Newport Road
Woolstone
Milton Keynes MK15 0AA
Tel: 01908 572700

Ofsted Registration

St Francis' Children's Society is a Registered Adoption Agency for domestic adoption and is also registered to provide post-adoption services. The Society has operated as a registered voluntary adoption agency continuously since 1944.

Ofsted number: SC049107

Contact details:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 1231231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Status and Constitution

The Adoption Agency is an operation of St Francis' Children's Society.

The Society is a registered charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Society is governed by its Articles of Memorandum and Association and this is available on request.

Registered Charity number: 211670

Registered Company number: 00392550

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RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Alison Miller is the CEO and Responsible Individual of St Francis Children's Society. She has a B.A. Honours Degree in Applied Social Science, Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, Child Care Award, a post graduate certificate in Advanced Social Work, and an MBA. She is trained in safer recruitment. She has been employed in the statutory and voluntary social care fields for over 30 years and has over 20 years' experience in delivering adoption services.

Suzanne Strachan is the Registered Manager of St Francis' Children's Society. The Registered Manager has a B.A Honours Degree in Applied Social and Community studies, Diploma in Social Work, Child Care Award, a BA in Child and Adolescent Studies, and a Professional Certificate in Management She is trained in safer recruitment. She has worked in the statutory child care sector for over 18 years mostly in the adoption field, including 3 years' experience in the commissioning of social care provision.

NUMBER, RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE STAFF WORKING FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE AGENCY

The Finance function is outsourced to an independent Financial Contractor, Kate Graves. She has over 30 years' experience of delivering the finance function for commercial companies.

Sarah McGrory is the Family Services Manager, she also acts as Deputy Adoption Panel Adviser. She has a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, Child Care Award, Post Graduate Certificate in Social Work studies, Post-Graduate Certificate in Education-Early Years, and National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership. She is trained in safer recruitment. She has worked in the statutory and voluntary child care sector for over 25 years and has a range of experience including safeguarding, fostering, adoption and children's centre management. She is a qualified safeguarding trainer.

Business Support Function comprises The Office Manager, who also acts as PA to the CEO, a Senior Business Support Assistant and two Business Support Assistants. All have the relevant qualifications and experience to deliver the Business Support Function.

Marketing and Fundraising

A part time Fundraiser (0.8) and part time Marketing Officer (0.8) are based in the Milton Keynes Office. Both have a range of experience across a variety of organisations and are qualified to degree level.

Adoption Team

The Adoption Team consists of 2 Consultant Social Workers, 2 Senior Social Workers 1 full time vacancy (FTE 4.6) and 1 Social Work assistant (part time). All have the relevant qualifications and experience to deliver adoption services and are HCPC registered. Some have additional qualifications such as Theraplay® level 1, Child Care Award and Practice Teacher Award. The Society regularly provides placements for student social workers. The Society also uses independent social workers to undertake specific pieces of work and all have the relevant experience and qualifications and are HCPC registered.

Adoption Support Team

1 Consultant Social Worker, 2 Senior social workers (2.7FTE) and a family support assistant (part time) deliver adoption support services, supported by a range of independent therapists who have expertise in parenting training, counselling, play therapy and Theraplay® techniques. Adoption Support contracts are delivered by therapists registered with BACP and a social worker who is HCPC registered. The Adoption Support social workers also undertake adoption recruitment and assessment work as required.

Volunteers

The Society uses a number of volunteers, for example as volunteer drivers, welcomers, fundraisers, adoption preparation group co-facilitators and adoption panel members. All volunteers undergo a recruitment process and are subject to DBS and reference checks.

All staff

All Society staff are subject to the Society's Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedures, Employment Procedures, Safeguarding, Training and Appraisal Procedures. All staff are subject to relevant DBS clearance on a three yearly basis and are encouraged to register for the single certificate DBS scheme. Similar requirements apply to those who work with the Society on a Sessional/Temporary/Voluntary basis. All staff are supervised appropriately.

Adoption Panel

Graham Pellow is the Independent Chair of the Adoption Panel. He holds a certificate of Qualification in Social Work, a Post Graduate Certificate in Public Services Management, and has also been awarded a OBE for his work for services to adoption. He has been employed as an adoption Manager since 1987 in a variety of Local Authority and Voluntary Adoption Agency settings. Having recently retired as Deputy Chief Executive of a VAA Graham is now undertaking a variety of adoption related work, including leading one of the projects to establish a Regional Adoption Agency.

The Adoption Panel Central List is managed by the Adoption Panel Adviser in consultation with the Agency Decision Maker and Adoption Team Manager. The Central List includes panel members who have a broad range of experience and professional qualifications including adoption, education and health, and seeks to reflect the diversity of society. Adoption panel members are provided with induction, regular training and annual appraisal. All panel members are subject to a DBS check and reference checks.

NUMBER AND EXPERIENCE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

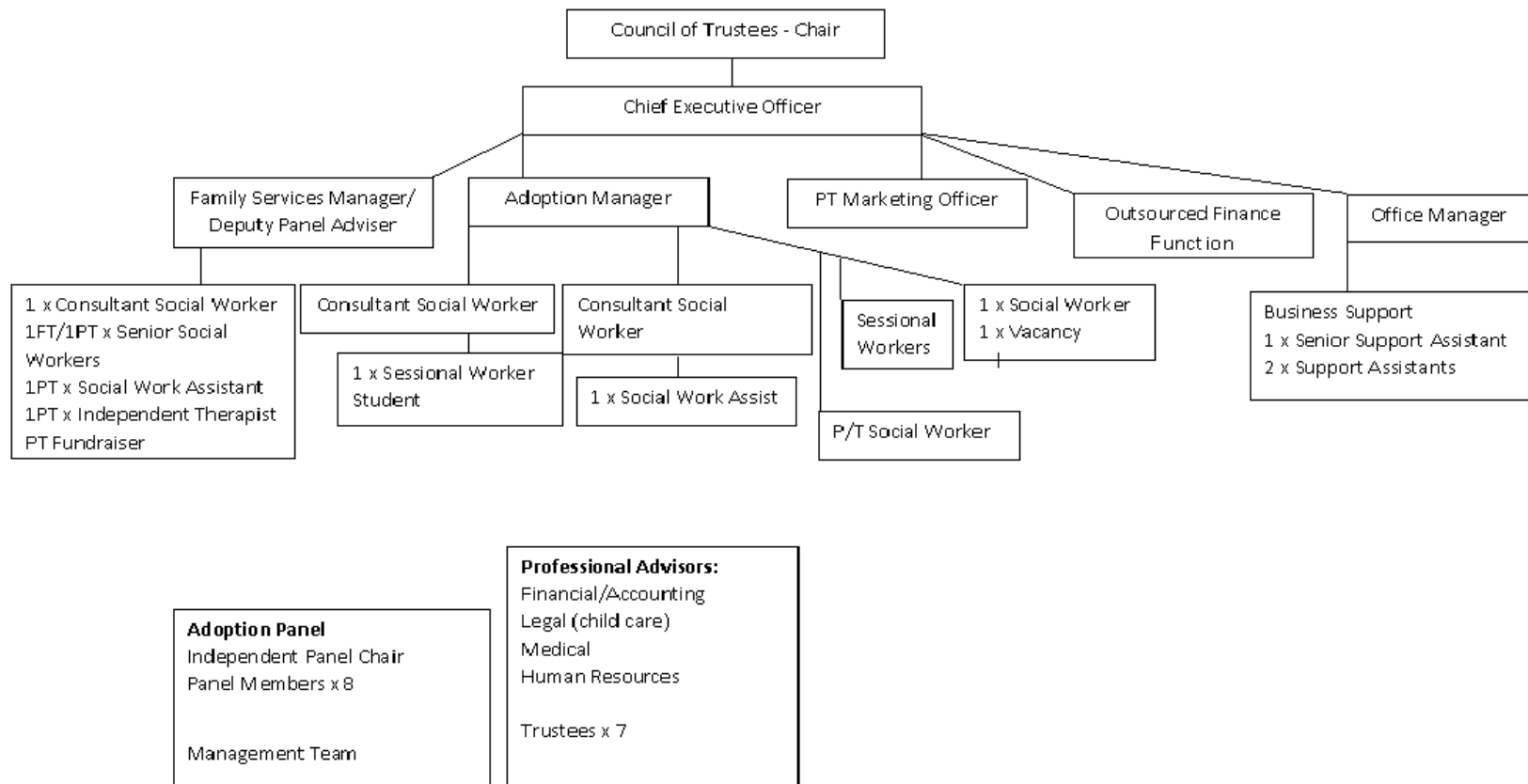
The Society is governed by a Board of Trustees, chaired by John Wallace, vice-chair Anna Saunders. The Board of Trustees meet on a regular basis, and receive reports from the Chief Executive Officer and the Financial Contractor. The Finance and Audit Committee, chaired by Anna Saunders, attended by Trustee Representatives, the Chief Executive Officer and the Financial Contractor, meets regularly and reports to the Trustee body. Kim Opszala (trustee) acts as Company Secretary. The Board of Trustees comprises of up to 10 members who must be committed to children and the adoption process and have a range of experience including financial expertise, experience of adoption, expertise in fundraising, marketing or HR. These skills contribute to the effective management and operation of the Society.

The Board of Trustees delegate the day to day management of the Society to the Chief Executive Officer, who delegates particular responsibility to the Financial Contractor, Adoption Team Manager and Family Services Manager. The Management Team comprises of the Chief Executive Officer, Adoption Team Manager and Family Services Manager. The Chair of Trustees meets regularly with the Chief Executive Officer to discuss the day to day management of the Society and attends Management Meetings on a quarterly basis. Clear arrangements are made to ensure that an appropriate Manager is in charge when members of the team are absent.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the oversight of all the functions of the agency, including those that are adoption-related, finance, business planning and human resources functions. The Chief Executive Officer is the Agency Decision Maker in relation to the Adoption Service and Adoption Panel.

The Financial Contractor has responsibility for managing the finance function of the Society. The Office Manager manages the suppliers, business support staff and premises. The Panel Adviser is responsible for the smooth functioning and quality control of the Adoption Panel. The Adoption Team Manager is responsible for managing the day to day work of the Adoption Team and supervising the social work staff. The Family Services Manager is responsible for managing the birth parent projects, adoption support services, contracts and other new initiatives.

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE SOCIETY



THE PROCEDURE FOR RECRUITING, PREPARING, ASSESSING, APPROVING AND SUPPORTING PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

Recruitment

The Society aims to provide stable and secure adoptive families for children where a decision has been made by a Local Authority that adoption is in their best interest. Recruitment activity aims to recruit adoptive families for children whom Local Authorities have difficulty placing through their own approved adoption resources. Details of these children are received through the Society social workers liaising with Local Authority social workers, RAA's, the circulation of children's profiles, and children featured via Link Maker and Adoption Match (the National Adoption Register).

Recruitment activity is ongoing throughout the year and is co-ordinated by the CEO, Marketing Officer and Adoption Team Manager. The adopter recruitment strategy is regularly updated. There is a separate marketing and fundraising budget. A recruitment group meets as necessary to review general recruitment and plan future recruitment events. The Society is working with Home for Good to recruit adopters from churches across the region and has a dedicated project worker. The Society is also a member of New Family Social and supports recruitment events for Lesbian and Gay adopters.

The Society offers information about adoption through monthly Open Events on a Wednesday evening and a Saturday morning and Lunchtime Drop-in sessions. These events have proved a popular starting point for individuals thinking about adopting. Other recruitment activities include advertising, both locally and regionally; display stands in libraries, shopping centres and other public places; circulation of promotional leaflets, posters and postcards; the Society's website; inclusion in other websites e.g. First4Adoption, CVAA, CoramBAAF; and through radio, TV programmes and newspaper interviews.

A duty worker is available from 9am – 1pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 12-5pm on Wednesdays, to take enquiries from prospective adoptive parents, to provide information about the children the Society places for adoption and to share details of the adoption preparation, assessment and approval process. A comprehensive information pack is sent to enquirers usually by return, and always within five working days, either by post or via email. The pack can also be downloaded from the Society's website. Where enquirers wish to pursue their interest in adoption, an appointment for a home visit is made and an initial assessment of suitability is completed.

Preparation and assessment

If the prospective adopter(s) want to proceed and they meet the recruitment criteria, they will be invited to submit a Registration of Interest form to start their adoption assessment process at Stage One. This enables the Society to undertake a range of standard checks (including DBS),

to contact referees, for the adopters to attend Foundation training and arrange to do their medicals. Prospective adopters are linked with an experienced adopter 'buddy' who can support them through the process.

Stage One should be completed in two months, at the end of which the Society will advise the prospective adopters whether or not they may proceed to Stage Two. The prospective adopters must advise the Society in writing of their intention to proceed to Stage Two and this stage officially starts when the Society accepts their notification that they wish to proceed.

The Society provides an integrated adoption preparation and assessment programme for all prospective adoptive parents. The Preparation Groups, which contain four separate day-long modules, are run up to six times each year. These usually take place in stage I. An additional training session is provided for those interested in Early Permanence and being dual approved as foster carers by the Triangle Project. The preparation and assessment programme aims to equip applicants to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and health needs of children placed for adoption from Local Authority care.

An assessment will include a Health and Safety risk assessment and pet-owning applicants will complete a pet questionnaire. Where agreed it would enhance the assessment, an Attachment Style interview is undertaken with each applicant and the conclusions included in the report.

The CoramBAAF Prospective Adopters' Report (PAR) (including concurrent planning and fostering for adoption carers) is used as the assessment format and a copy of this is provided for applicants at the start of the assessment process. Applicants are provided with a Homestudy Workbook, which they use to record information about themselves and their family and which contributes towards the content of the PAR assessment report. A Preparation Toolkit is provided, which enables and encourages applicants to record information about their learning, and also includes resources that may be useful to them as adoptive parents.

Once the final assessment report is prepared, a copy is shared with the applicants and any comments they make regarding the content are fully considered before the report is finalised. The applicants are asked to read and sign the final report.

Adoption Panel and Approval

The Society operates an Adoption Panel in accordance with the Adoption Agency Regulations and the assessment report is presented to the Adoption Panel for consideration within 4 months of the prospective adopters commencing Stage Two, unless the specific needs of the assessment demand more time. The Adoption Panel will be provided with the reasons for any delay experienced. Applicants are encouraged to attend the Panel and participate in the discussion, and are provided with written information to assist them in deciding whether they will attend and to prepare them for meeting the Panel.

All agency decisions are made following receipt of the Adoption Panel's Recommendations and final minutes, within seven working days. Applicants are notified in writing once an Agency Decision is made. Where the Agency Decision-maker is minded not to approve an application, a qualifying determination is issued and the applicants are given the opportunity to make representations to the Agency Decision-maker or to apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent review of their assessment by the IRM Panel.

Matching and Support

Following Panel approval/Agency Decision, prospective adopters are expected to attend further training modules including Linking and Matching, Life Story Work, The Adopted Child in School, parenting workshops and a group for the support network of adopters.

Approved adoptive parents are encouraged to join Link Maker to identify potential links. Their details are also sent to Adoption Match immediately following the Agency Decision and profiles are circulated to Local Authorities in the agency's 'Waiting Families Booklet'. In particular, details are circulated regularly within the local RAA. In addition, the adoptive family's allocated social worker will discuss with them details of children referred to the Society directly from a number of Local Authorities.

The allocated social worker will discuss all appropriate children with the adopters. If a link appears possible they will make contact with the child's social worker to commence the process of exchanging information. Full, comprehensive and up to date information about the child is requested (including health and educational assessments, the legal situation and contact).

The Society's document 'Expectations in Relation to Inter-agency Placement' is sent to all Local Authorities where a match is being considered. It describes the type of information that the Society requires to facilitate a link between children and families, why this is needed, the timescale in which it should be received, and the Society's general expectations relating to inter-agency adoption placements.

Detailed discussions take place with the adopters regarding the content of the reports during and following a meeting with the child's social worker. Advice on the content of reports is sought from the Society's Legal and Medical Advisers, whenever relevant, and this advice is discussed with the adopters.

The Society holds an internal Matching Meeting chaired by a social work manager. Minutes of the meeting including identified positives in the proposed match and highlighting any areas of concern/gaps in information, are shared with the prospective adopters, and held on file. Meetings between the adopters and the child's foster carers, teachers, birth family and the Medical Adviser are actively encouraged.

Once a placement is agreed, the social worker provides intensive support to the adopters during the introductory period and the early weeks of placement. Home visits occur on a weekly basis for the first month, followed by fortnightly for the following three months and in

accordance with assessed and agreed need. Copies of case records reflecting these visits are sent to the Placing Agency and a reciprocal arrangement of their own visits requested.

Support on the telephone is also provided and the adopters are invited to attend the Society's regular support groups and other ongoing training and social events. Additional support may be provided by the Society's links with a designated Therapist, or by the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or by an experienced adoptive family with whom the adopters will have been linked during the assessment process. The Local Authority social worker retains statutory responsibility for the child placed and is expected to visit on a regular basis.

Advice and support is provided to adopters to assist them to prepare their application to adopt for the Court, and to maintain any agreed contact arrangements.

Every effort is made to avoid a placement disruption but occasionally the needs of the child are so complex that the adopters' capacity to manage these are insufficient, even with an intensive package of support services. In such circumstances the welfare of the child remains paramount and efforts will be made to avoid an unplanned ending of the placement. Whenever possible a Placement Support Meeting will be convened as a means of sharing information, pooling resources and seeking to avoid any inappropriate placement breakdown. The adopters will be provided with support focussed on their needs during and following a placement disruption.

An Adoption Support Service is operated by the Society in the following categories:

Universal Services

- Regular visits and support by qualified and experienced Social Workers
- Regular newsletters
- Regular coffee mornings/ themed events
- Adopter Forum
- A calendar of family events throughout the year
- Follow-on Groups/training
- Buddying scheme with other experienced adopters
- Annual Adopter conference with adoption expert speakers

Targeted Services

- Regular consultation appointments with experienced social worker and therapist
- Theraplay® techniques to support placement in the early stages
- Birth Records counselling and Intermediary services
- Adoption training post placement
- Practical support from a Social Work assistant
- Therapeutic Parenting workshops

Specialist services

(funded by the responsible Local Authority or by charitable funds and available following assessment of need and availability)

- Support in accessing specialist services funded by the Adoption Support Fund such as DDP, Play therapy and EMDR
- Theraplay® Techniques Intervention, including MIM, 20 sessions, reports and specialist clinical supervision
- Life story work

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE SOCIETY'S SERVICES

The Society strives to ensure that its services are effective and efficient, and as a means of achieving this, the Society continually monitors and evaluates its operations. Progress against desired outcomes is measured for all children through a variety of methods. All services are designed and delivered to promote best outcomes for children including positive attachments, self-esteem, educational achievements, and good physical and mental health. Active participation of stakeholders is welcomed, and service users are represented on the Adoption Panel and on the Board of Trustees. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

The Society's Comments, Complaints and Compliments Procedure is readily accessible to service users in a range of mediums.

Adults

The Society is committed to seeking feedback from service users in order to evaluate current provision and inform future development. Systems are in place to access feedback from prospective adopters at key points in the assessment, preparation and placement process. The Adopter's forum meets regularly with staff to comment on service developments and generate ideas. Birth relatives who access the independent services are encouraged to complete a written feedback questionnaire or express their views verbally at the end of the assessment and counselling/support stage. Service users are represented directly as adoptive parents, birth mother and adult adoptees on the Adoption Panel and Council of Trustees.

Children and young people

Every effort is made to encourage and access the views of children placed for adoption through the Society. Staff also engage with the birth children of adoptive families, seek their views and offer support as and when required.

Younger children are involved in a range of activities and their views accessed verbally at adoption support events, and individually within their families. Young people are involved in Activity Groups. Young adoptees are supported in expressing their views of services available to them.

The Society's Comments, Complaints and Compliments Procedure (Adult and Children/Young Persons Format) is readily accessible to adoptive families and young adoptees. Birth Connections has developed a specific Comments, Complaints and Compliments leaflet for birth relatives. This procedure is highlighted to all service users at various points in their engagement within the Society. It can be provided in different languages and formats on request.

Employees

On employment an induction pack is provided alongside an induction process. Regular supervision takes place for all staff to monitor workload and professional development. There is a regular employee consultation group that meets with the CEO to look at working conditions and cross agency changes.

Exit interviews are carried out with staff leaving the Society, where practicable and with their agreement. Their views are taken into consideration in all aspects of the Society's services and HR Policy and Procedures, as are the views of current staff as expressed in annual appraisals.

Enquirers about adoption

When people request an information pack, their enquiry is followed up by the Adoption Team Duty worker. If individuals do not wish to proceed with their interest in adoption, the reasons for this are recorded and subsequently evaluated in order to inform the Society's recruitment processes. All information is stored and destroyed in compliance with GDPR.

Prospective adoptive parents

After each Adoption Preparation Group session, two Evaluation Forms are completed – one by the prospective adopter and one by the social workers facilitating the group. This provides feedback to the assessing social worker on the participation of the applicants and highlighting any issues that need to be discussed further as part of the content and delivery of the Preparation Groups. It also informs the regular review of Adoption Preparation and Assessment Programme. The Chief Executive Officer receives copies of these evaluations and copies are maintained in the Central Evaluation and Monitoring Records.

All prospective adopters are encouraged to make a written contribution to their assessment report. Feedback on the applicants' satisfaction of the services received from the Society is actively sought. Quality control is undertaken by the line manager for the social worker, with a second level of quality control undertaken by the Panel Adviser. Second opinion visits are undertaken where necessary if there are issues that need to be resolved before presentation to

panel. The quality control element of this visit ensures that appropriate work has been successfully completed at this stage and that it is to a standard in accordance with the Society's policy and procedures and that information gained from applicants may inform the future review and development of the Society's services. The content of this visit is fully recorded and is part of the Prospective Adopter's Report presented to Adoption Panel. Any information that is perceived to be useful for evaluation and development purposes is conveyed to the Chief Executive Officer.

At the end of the assessment process, and following Adoption Panel, applicants are requested to complete a questionnaire highlighting their experience of the assessment and preparation process.

These evaluations are returned to the CEO, scrutinised and used to inform the continuing development of the assessment and panel process. Any relevant information is also linked to the performance management process.

Adoption panel members complete feedback forms regarding the quality of Prospective Adopter Reports submitted to the panel. These are collated by the Adoption Panel Adviser and discussed with the Independent Panel Chair and any matters arising are discussed with the assessing social worker. Applicants and presenting social workers complete an evaluation form on the day of panel which is fed back to all panel members.

The Adoption Panel receives a six-monthly report about the Society's activity and performance. The Adoption Panel reports at least annually to the Society. Matches and placements are reported monthly to the Adoption Panel. The activity of the Adoption Connections Service is monitored through monthly management meetings and reports to the Council of Trustees 4-6 times per year.

Adoptive families

Following the placement of a child/children, adoptive parents are requested to provide feedback on the introductory process and the quality and usefulness of the support they received during this period. This information is used to inform the planning of future introductions. It also informs the delivery of the two post-approval modules focussing on matching, introductions and the early days of placement, and engaging applicants and their support networks.

Three months after the granting of an Adoption Order, the supervising social worker (and where appropriate the adoption support social worker) undertake an adoption support visit. The purpose of this visit is to engage the adoptive family in the ongoing Adoption Support Services provided by the Society and to provide adopters with further opportunity to provide feedback to the Society on all aspects of the service they have received. The information gained informs the future planning and development of the Society's Adoption and Adoption

Support Services. Adopters are supported for up to 12 months post order by their supervising social worker before the case is transferred if necessary to adoption support or closed.

Adoption support (birth relatives, adopted adults, adoptive parents)

Service users who receive adoption support services from the Society are sent a questionnaire at the conclusion of the work, seeking their views about the quality of the service they have received. This information is evaluated to improve the planning and delivery of future services.

Questionnaires are circulated to adoptive families' at all key events, with a view to establishing their need for Adoption Support Services and identifying particular topics for workshops and training, social events and other support requests. This informs the calendar of support events produced by the Adoption Support Service. Periodic feedback is sought via other Society mailings.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Society positively encourages comments and criticism concerning its services. The Society has a formal Complaints Procedure, which is made available to all service-users at their first point of contact with the Society. A simple child-focused form is also available for children in placement and after adoption to encourage children and young people to share any worries or concerns they may have.

It is anticipated that minor complaints will be dealt with at the informal stage by the social worker and/or line manager, however if the complainant, the staff member involved and their Manager are unable to resolve the dissatisfaction, then the formal Complaints Procedure will be implemented without delay.

The Representations Officer of the Society is the Chief Executive Officer and the Society sources an Independent Person in relation to Level 3 complaints.

Complaints can also be directed to your local MP. Complaints about breaches in regulations can be directed to OFSTED.

Where a child or young person wishes to make a complaint, the Society will seek to support them and provide them with the appropriate information to facilitate the process of their complaint. If the matter cannot be resolved through the Society's informal or formal Complaints Procedure, a child or young person may contact:

The Children's Commissioner The Voice of the Child in Care

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Tel: 020 7783 8330
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Freephone: 0808 800 5792
www.voiceyp.org

National Youth Advocacy Service

Freephone: 0800 616 101
www.nyas.net

Childline

0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

**THE NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE
REGISTRATION AUTHORITY:**

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 1231231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.org.uk