

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH
ADOPTION SERVICES STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
2018 - 2019

The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, Woolwich SE18 6HQ
020 8921 2752

1.0 Statement of Purpose

- 1.1 Our principles and values
- 1.2 Adoption Statement

2.0 The Royal Greenwich Adoption Service Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 An adoption plan
- 2.2 The child
- 2.3 Birth parents and extended family
- 2.4 Adult adoptees
- 2.5 Adopters within this country and from overseas
- 2.6 Adoptive placements

3.0 Positive Outcomes

- 3.1 Safe and secure
- 3.2 Happy
- 3.3 High achieving
- 3.4 Healthy, active and well
- 3.5 Equal opportunity
- 3.6 Included
- 3.7 Safe
- 3.8 Ambitious

4.0 The Adoption Service Structure

- 4.1 Group leader and staffing
- 4.2 Monitoring and evaluation of the service

5.0 Services Provided

- 5.1 Identifying adoptive families for children
- 5.2 Recruiting, assessing and supporting adopters
- 5.3 Assessing and approving intercountry adopters
- 5.4 Adoption support services
- 5.5 Non agency adoption
- 5.6 Access to birth records and intermediary services

6.0 Complaints, Investigations and Outcomes

- 6.1 Complaints to Royal Borough of Greenwich
- 6.2 Complaints to Ofsted

7.0 Record Retention

8.0 The Registration Authority

I.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This statement of purpose has been produced by the Royal Borough of Greenwich Adoption Services to meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2014).

It is intended give staff, volunteers, children, birth parents, prospective adopters and adopters a clear understanding of the principles, values, aims and objectives that underpin our work as well as detail the services that the Permanence Team provides.

This document has been endorsed by the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Directorate Management Team. It will be made available to Ofsted and used when inspecting our service. It is reviewed and updated yearly.

I.1 Our principles and values

Royal Greenwich is committed to providing the highest standards of care to children who are looked after. All those involved in the care of Looked After Children work together to support the Council in its corporate parenting responsibilities, demonstrating a commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children in public care.

We place the well-being of the child at the heart of everything we do and believe that all children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

I.2 Adoption Statement

Royal Greenwich Council is committed to supporting a child's birth family to provide a stable permanent home. However, there are situations where it is not possible for a child to remain within their birth family. In these circumstances the Council will explore adoption as one of the positive routes to secure a permanent family where the child can experience secure stable family attachments. Once legal permission is given we do our utmost to avoid any delay in placing children in adoptive families as this can have a severe impact on the health and development of the children waiting to be adopted.

The adoption process is centred on the child's welfare, safety and needs. Their wishes and feelings will be considered and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process. The views of the birth parents will be given due consideration within the context of the child centred approach. The child's ethnicity, cultural, religion, language and social background will be respected and given due consideration. We ensure that adoptive families, whose backgrounds are different from their adoptive child/ren, will respect and preserve or have the ability to promote the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background. The particular needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and taken into account when making decisions.

The Council recognises that adoption has lifelong implications and is committed to establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with all organisations and individuals involved in and affected by the adoption process. It further recognises that delay in family finding is detrimental to the child. Therefore, the Council has a strategy to ensure that every effort is made to have a reasonable, varied pool of prospective adopters who will meet the different needs and different backgrounds of the children.

The Council's overall approach to adoption is framed within the context of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, Children Act 1989, Adoption Regulations 2005, Adoption Guidance 2014 and Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014.

1.2.1 The child's welfare and safety

The welfare and safety of the child will always be at the centre of our practice. We work closely with Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board to consult, report safeguarding cases and receive current training/information on child protection and safeguarding issues. (Working together to Safeguard Children, March 2015)

We aim to ensure children understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm including neglect, abuse, and accident within the adoptive home.

1.2.2 Equality and diversity

There is a wide diversity in child rearing practice, family values and attitudes across the different racial, cultural, religious and social class groups residing within the borough. This diversity will be respected and understood.

Children who are looked after by the local authority will be given the opportunity to develop a positive identity and strong self-esteem. Discrimination based on race, religion, culture, language, age, gender, disability, sexuality or social class will not be tolerated.

When a child is placed with adoptive parents who are of different race, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the adoptive families should have the ability and capacity to access resources to develop the child's positive identity and build good self-esteem about their own culture, religion, race and language. The agency will offer training and support.

The disadvantage experienced by children who are looked after will be acknowledged. Adoptive parents should have the ability to empathise, to reflect, to resolve conflict, to deal with changes and to take advantage of learning opportunities. They should be open to ideas and be non-rigid in their thinking.

Children with disabilities should have the same opportunity to be considered for adoption. We recognise that children with disabilities will have additional needs and will need extra support to enable them to be adopted.

Translation and interpretation support will be assessed or made available on request to all service users.

1.2.3 Involving the child

The needs, wishes and feelings of the child will be at the centre of our work. Their wishes and feelings will be listened to and taken into account.

1.2.4 Planning for Adoption

At the earliest stage in thinking about permanence planning for a child the Adoption team will be involved at an Adoption Early Warning meeting and consideration will be given to a Foster to Adopt Placement.

At the first Child Looked After review- within four weeks of a child becoming looked after all options for permanence are explored, including considering extended family members and friends to determine whether they can provide a permanent home for the child.

Within the next three months a plan for permanence will be made at a Looked After Review.

Where adoption has been identified as the plan for the child at the statutory review, the Agency Decision Maker will consider the adoption plan within six weeks of the statutory review.

Where adoption is being considered as a strong possibility for a child the agency will consider placing the child in a concurrent placement or a fostering for adoption placement. Fostering for adoption places a child during the period of temporary local authority care with foster carers who are also approved as adopters.

We will aim to identify the placement of a child with specific prospective adopters within six months of a Placement Order being granted. If no suitable adoptive family is identified, a progress report will be presented to the Agency Decision Maker.

Where a parent has requested that a child aged less than 6 months old be placed for adoption, a match with suitable adoptive parents will be identified and recommended by panel within three months of the agency agreeing that the child should be placed for adoption, provided that all the relevant documents are signed and witnessed by CAFCASS officers.

The child's adoption plan will be continuously monitored through various reviewing processes. If there is no adoptive family identified six months after approval, a review will be held to decide whether adoption should still be the suitable plan. Also within nine months of a placement order being granted the plan for adoption will be reviewed by the child's Independent Reviewing Officer. This is to help avoid drift in a care plan for a child.

1.2.5 Partnership with parents and family

Birth parents or those with parental responsibility and significant others in the child's life will be provided with full information (verbal and written) and their wishes ascertained and respected. Limitations may be imposed by a court or by decisions to promote the interests of the child.

2.0 THE ROYAL GREENWICH ADOPTION SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Adoption Service will provide:

2.1 An adoption placement

- which reflects the wishes and feelings of the child and the views of the parents and anyone else with parental responsibility
- which values and promotes the child's ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and social background, and develops the child's positive identity and self-esteem. Delay should be avoided and children should not wait for a family that reflects all aspects of their background.
- based on the child's assessed needs as reflected in the care plan and agreed by the Agency Decision Maker.
- which promotes positive outcomes

2.2 The child, on placement, with

- information and ready access to a service that can respond to allegations or complaints.
- a guide to the adoption service and ways of receiving support or representation.
- a system for monitoring the child's welfare and safety.
- an opportunity for an enjoyable childhood, with the benefit of excellent parenting and education, and a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life

2.3 Birth Parents and extended family with

- the opportunity to express their views in relation to the plans for their child, and to be involved in planning for the child's future wherever possible.
- the opportunity for both birth parents, including unmarried fathers, to receive counselling or support, from in-house or independent support services to ensure that the alternatives to adoption have been explored and the implications of adoption fully discussed.
- the opportunity to receive appropriate support if they have special needs, for example where the parent has mental ill health or learning disabilities.
- an interpreter where English is not their preferred language.
- the opportunity to receive counselling and advice both pre and post birth if they decide to place their children for adoption.
- an assessment and advice regarding contact arrangements with the adopted child after the adoption order and a written contact agreement.
- access to an intermediary service once the adopted child is over 18 years of age.

2.4 Adult adoptees with

- support to access their adoption records and to know more about the circumstances of their life leading to the adoption.
- support in tracing and intermediary service with their birth relatives if it is considered to be appropriate.
- support in making contact with the 'Adoption Contact Register' to register their wishes.

2.5 Adopters, both within this country or from overseas

- will be recruited in accordance with the Regulations laid down under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Suitability of Adopters Regulations 2005, the Adoption Guidance 2014 'Preparing, assessing and approving prospective adopters' and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014
- generally, selection criteria will be based on the broad needs of the children requiring placement; the adopters' ability to support the welfare and safety of the child and Council policy; recommended by the adoption panel and will be approved by the Adoption Agency Decision Maker
- a referral to the Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC) if they wish to be assessed as suitable to adopt from overseas. There is a charge to the applicant for this service.
- a level of support, outlined in an adoption support plan, from the Council that reflects the complexity of their needs, including support groups, social worker visits, services from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), training, reviews, and financial support as agreed. Access to voluntary and private sources of support can also be made through the Adoption Support Fund
- access to the Council's representation and complaints process
a commitment to the adopted child, as adoption is a lifelong process.

2.6 Adoptive placements must be:

- identified as speedily as possible and within the required timescale and National Threshold after the decision to place the child for adoption is made and approved.
- identified in partnership with colleagues in the South London Adoption and Permanence Consortium; Adoption Match, Adoption Link and national adoption agencies.
- identified by using innovative matching strategies such as Activity days and Exchange days.
- made from a choice of adoptive families, with as far as possible, a match which reflects the wishes and feelings of the child and the views of the parents or anyone else with parental responsibility.
- made in a planned way and involve all appropriate people significant to the child
- assessed for adoption support services and a plan and reviewing process put in place to sustain the placement. The plan will identify, and give consideration to, a child's present and future therapeutic needs.

- supported by all essential information and documents, including Child's Permanence Report, Adoption Placement Plan, Adoption Medicals, and educational, psychological and psychiatric reports if relevant.
- supported by social work visits to both the child and the adoptive parents
- supported by regular reviews that are in accordance with statutory guidance until an adoption order is granted.
- supported by ongoing training and support groups pre and post adoption order.

3.0 POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

When producing the Greenwich Children and Young People Plan 2017 – 2020, we asked children, young people, parents and carers what they wanted for children in Greenwich. We seek to promote these for all children, both as an adoption service and part of the wider professional team.

3.1 Supported and Secure

Feeling stable, nurtured, loved, understood and encouraged. Having a sense of belonging and self worth.

Adoptive families provide stability, continuity and normality in a child's life helping to promote positive identity and good mental health. The Adoption Service ensures the child has the opportunity to develop positive identity and self-esteem, by placing the child in a family which is able to meet the child's needs, without unnecessary delay.

When a child is placed with adoptive parents who are of different race, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the adoptive families should have the ability and capacity to access resources to develop the child's positive identity and build good self-esteem about their own culture, religion, race and language. The agency will offer training and support in relation to these needs.

Good quality life story books, later life letters and adoption files are provided for children who are adopted. This assists with the child's ability to develop a positive identity, resilience and good mental health.

Contact with the child's birth family is facilitated and promoted (as far as is beneficial for the child)

3.2 Happy

Having fun. Being creative. Having lots to do. Being stimulated. Feeling inspired, confident, carefree and fulfilled.

The disadvantage experienced by children who are looked after is acknowledged. Adoptive parents are supported to empathise, to reflect, to resolve conflict, to deal with changes and to take advantage of learning opportunities.

An Annual Fun Day is provided for all adopted children close to or living in the Royal Borough of Greenwich to enjoy a day with other adopted children, sharing the experience of being adopted.

3.3 High Achieving

Enjoying school and wanting to learn. Achieving educationally. Gaining skills and experience for the future.

Statutory LAC reviews and home visits continue to monitor adoptive children's education attainment and educational needs until the adoption order is granted and beyond if there are on-going needs.

3.4 Healthy, Active & Well

Good physical and mental health. Able to form positive relationships. Well fed, clothed and rested. Access to affordable cultural, leisure and recreational activities.

Children in adoptive placement continue to attend statutory health assessments in a timely way.

Adoptive parents are given appropriate parental responsibility to address an adoptive child's health care needs.

Children with identified therapeutic needs receive support from Royal Greenwich CAMHS or the local CAMHS, or independent services.

Adoptive parents are given information on the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on children's development and provided with timely support and interventions where required.

There is no automatic ban on people who smoke but we consider that people wanting to become adoptive parents should not smoke, for health reasons both for the adopters and the children. If adopters do smoke, we will not consider them for young children (less than 5 years) or for children of any age with breathing difficulties or health related issues that could be aggravated by the effects of passive smoking.

3.5 Equal Opportunity

To achieve, succeed and reach full potential. Access to a good school place. Easy access to the right information and support at the right time.

The particular needs of disabled children are fully recognised and taken into account when making decisions.

The child's ethnicity, culture, religion, language and social background will be respected and given due consideration. We ensure that adoptive families, whose backgrounds are different from their adoptive child/ren, will respect and preserve or have the ability to promote the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

3.6 Included

Having a voice and being listened to. Feeling valued, respected and respectful. Being part of a welcoming and inclusive place.

The adoption process is centred on the child's needs and welfare. Where the child is of an age and intellectual understanding, their views are fully sought and considered through direct consultation with them.

Children with disabilities should have the same opportunity to be considered for adoption. We recognise that children with disabilities will have additional needs and will need extra support to enable them to be adopted.

Translation and interpretation support will be assessed or made available on request to all service users.

3.7 Safe

A good, safe and stable home. Free from fear, stress, anxiety and depression. Free from exploitation. Safe in relationships, online and in our community.

When children are placed in adoptive families, there are systems to ensure adoptive families provide a safe, nurturing environment, where a child can experience positive parenting. These include the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) chairing the Looked After Child review and regular home visits by both the adopter's supervising social worker and the child's social worker.

There is an out of hours emergency duty service available for crisis situations, with a mobile contact number available during the introduction period.

3.8 Ambitious

Having high aspirations. Having hope and curiosity. Enjoying education and wanting to learn.

On-going adoption support services are available for adoptive families, including support on educational issues. This includes support in ensuring the adopted child has priority in school place allocation. Funding for therapy can also be made via the Adoption Support Fund.

4.0 THE ADOPTION SERVICE STRUCTURE



4.1 The Group Leader and staffing

The team leader is supervised by the Permanence Group Leader C

The post holder is Bryan Edmands, who has LLM in Child Law, Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Social Studies, BA (Joint Hons) Social Science, Practice Teacher Award and CQSW.

Position	Name	Qualifications
Team Leader	Sue Glogg	Dip. SW Dip. HE in Applied Social Science Advanced Child Care Award Practice Educator – Enabling Others Award Leadership & Management in the Public Sector – The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Level 5 Diploma in Leadership & Management
Assistant Team Leader	Vacant	

Adoption Social Worker Practice Senior	Karen Shelton (30 hours)	Dip. SW Dip. HE in Applied Social Science PQI Child Care Award Practice Teacher Award
Adoption Social Worker Practice Senior	Pat McElroy (28 hours)	Registered Nurse BA (Hons) Dip. SW PQ I Child Care Award Practice Educator – Enabling Others award
Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA) Practice Senior	Yvonne Palmer	B.Sc. Sociology CQSW & Post Graduate Dip. In Applied Social Studies PQI Advanced Child Care Award
Adoption Social Worker Practice Senior	Pat Keith	B.Sc. Environmental Studies Dip. SW MA Social Work PQ Child Care Award Practice Teachers Award
Adoption Social Worker Practice Senior	Laura Kinkead (17.5 Hours)	BA (Hons) Social Work PQ Advanced Child Care Award Practice Educator - Enabling Others Award.

Adoption Social Worker Practice Senior	Catherine Hopewell (16.8 hours)	B.A (Hons) Social Work CQSW Practice Teacher Award
Adoption Social Worker Practice Senior	Trisha Keogh	Social Work (Social Studies) Degree (2010) National Qualification in Social Work (2010). Practice Educator – Enabling Others Award
Adoption Social Worker	Jo Popplewell	BA French and Italian MSc Development Studies MA Social Work
Specialist Business Support	Siobhan Hobin (p/t) Sarita Phull (p/t) Kim Ellen	□

The Adoption Team Leader is responsible for the overall management of the Adoption Team, with a specific role in managing the Adoption Panel; quality assuring the assessment of adopters; supervising adoption support workers; reviewing the on-going adoption allowances (Financial support) annually; controlling and monitoring budget; liaising with internal and external agencies. The Assistant Team Leader is primarily responsible for monitoring early warnings for children's plans for adoption; supervising social workers in recruiting and assessing and supporting prospective adopters, team development and improving practice standards. She also deputises for the Team Leader in her absence.

All staff members have a job description and person specification relevant to their posts. There are clear lines of supervisory and management responsibility.

All staff will receive monthly supervision, practice observation opportunities and annual performance review and development interviews in accordance with departmental policy. Supervision is recorded in writing and kept electronically. Staff are encouraged to develop and undertake continuous professional development.

4.2 Monitoring and evaluation of the service

The adoption service is managed in accordance with the Department's Performance Management Policy. This requires that each team sets a work programme to meet both the national requirements and the local standards and plan.

The team contributes to an annual service plan, which sets out the teams aims and objectives.

Quarterly reports are completed against a range of performance indicators (scorecard). These are used to monitor performance and to inform future planning and requirements.

The Group Leader, Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader sample and review files according to the departmental procedures to ensure all relevant documents are in place and recording is up to date.

5.0 SERVICES PROVIDED

The Adoption Team is responsible for a number of activities:

5.1 Identifying adoptive families for children

Helping to identifying adoptive placements for children either from Greenwich resources or through different channels of advertising, both regional and national.

Liaising with the social workers and foster carers of the children placed and offering support and guidance where necessary.

5.2 Recruiting, assessing and supporting adopters

5.2.1 Recruiting and Assessment

There is a recruitment strategy led by the Team Leader, which includes the use of websites, bus adverts, flyers, community events, targeting local organisations, and joint working with the South London Adoption and Permanence Consortium.

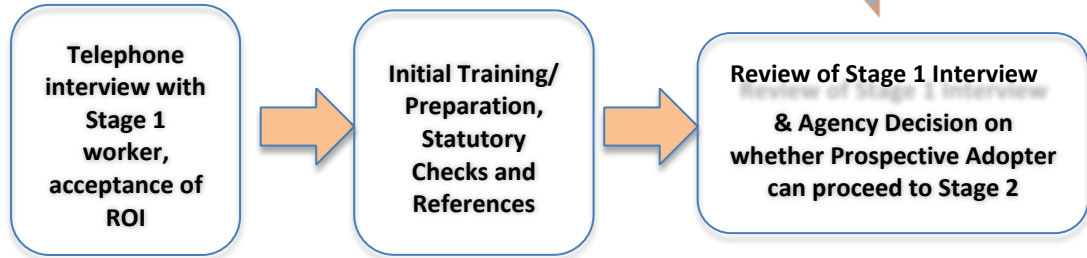
When an enquiry is received either by email or telephone an invitation is sent to a Royal Greenwich information event or to an event held by one the consortium adoption agencies.

The recruitment process follows a set pattern and can be accessed via members of the South London Adoption & Permanence consortium as well as the agency

- Pre Stage



- Stage 1



The Assessment Process follows a pattern. Information events are held every other month between the consortium members. A full information pack is provided to enquirers which includes the Registration of Interest (ROI) form and the link to the online form for completion. Once the form is completed the agency will call the applicant and make a decision on accepting the registration of interest and devise a Stage 1 plan with the enquirers. The applicants will then be guided through Stage 1 and given opportunities to attend learning events and learn more about the process and the joys and challenges of adopting.

At the end of Stage 1 there will be a review interview and information shared with the team and a decision made on whether or not to offer a Stage 2 assessment.

Stage 2 of the assessment process follows a Stage 2 plan consisting of both group sessions run by social workers and adopters and individual assessment, using the British Agency for Adoption and Fostering (CoramBAAF Adoption & Fostering Academy) PAR (Prospective Adopters Report) framework. We aim to complete the PAR within 4 months.

5.2.2 Approval

The completed report is presented to the Adoption Panel, constituted under the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005, Adoption Guidance 2014 and Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014. Both the assessing social worker and the prospective adopters attend the panel. The Panel recommendation of the applicants' suitability to adopt, together with the agreed minutes by Panel members are presented to the Agency Decision Maker for approval.

The Adoption Panel recommends to the Agency Decision Maker the children who should be placed with proposed prospective adopters.

Where a decision is made to refuse an application, advice is given about how to challenge the decision, including that representations should be submitted within 40

working days either directly to the agency or that they may request a referral to the Independent Review Mechanism

5.2.3 Training

There is an ongoing training programme for adopters set out in the adoption support service plan. Adopters are encouraged to attend. The training aims to support adopters dealing with a range of issues relating to adoption. For example, explaining the importance of contact for children, explaining adoption to the adopted child, life story work, attachment issues and education issues.

Jointly with the South London Adoption and Permanence Consortium a range of training workshops are organised for adopters, addressing issues relating to adoption, for example, explaining adoption, education, managing challenging behaviours, social media and the risks and implications for post adoption contact.

On occasion, Greenwich will pay for adopters to attend specific courses organised by other agencies, which are identified as beneficial to sustain the placement.

5.2.4 Support

Each adoption family receives an 'Adopters Info Pack' at the start of Stage 2 covering information relating to adoption, for example, attachment, loss, attending the adoption panel, telling the adoption story, finance and welfare benefit issues.

Adopters approved by Greenwich are supported primarily by the supporting social workers in the Adoption Team or by the agency social worker where the placement is inter-agency. If there is an agreed need for counselling or therapy that cannot be met by the local health service provision, this will be funded for an agreed period and reviewed. The Department has a Service Agreement with the South London Adoption Counselling and Consultation Services to provide independent therapeutic support to adopters and adopted children.

The child in placement will have an allocated social worker, who will visit the placement according to the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 & 2013 and Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005.

There are regular workshops for adopters and a bi-monthly support group commissioned by the Consortium for Black Adopters. There is an annual Fun Day for adopters and adopted children

The Consortium runs a support group for adult adoptees and adolescent adoptees

There is a Greenwich out-of-hours emergency duty service available for crisis situations.

There is additional guidance available in relation to support that can be provided to each adoptive family, around the child's psychological, attachment, educational and health needs.

There are adoption support packages available in particular circumstances to sustain and maintain the adoptive placement, which may include ongoing or one-off financial support. Based on assessed needs the agency will also make an application to the Adoption Support Fund.

5.3 Assessing and approving intercountry adopters

The Intercountry Adoption Centre is commissioned to carry out the assessment of families who reside in the borough and wish to adopt overseas. All referrals are made promptly to provide a timely service to the enquirer. The assessment, approval and support follow the process of domestic adoption set out above.

5.4 Adoption support services

As set out in the Adoption Support Services Regulation 2005, children who may be adopted, their parents or guardians, persons wishing to adopt, the adopted person, their parents, birth parents and former guardians are entitled to support services as set out in the regulations. The service has the remit to:

- assess eligible service users for adoption support services or signpost to other appropriate services
- provide information about adoption support services in the form of a Children's Guide
- provide services to ensure the success of the adoptive placement or adoption e.g. training for adopters or respite care
- provide counselling, advice and information
- provide therapeutic services if necessary
- provide support groups for adoptive parents and adoptive children
- provide support for contact arrangements between adoptive children and their birth relatives and others
- assist financially to enable any support services (including support of contact) arrangements if appropriate
- provide financial support to adoptive parents if appropriate
- assist in accessing inter-agency service provision e.g. CAMHS

5.6 Non agency adoption

Assessing and completing court reports on step-parents/relative adoption.

5.7 Access to birth record and intermediary services

Adopted people aged 18 or over can apply for access to their birth record and a copy of their birth certificate. The procedure for dealing with any such application

will differ depending on whether the Adoption Order was made before or after 30 December 2005.

The Agency:

- provides assistance to an adopted person aged 18 or over to obtain information in relation to his or her adoption in accordance with the Regulations on Access to Records.
- facilitates contact between such persons and their birth relatives if appropriate

Number of children placed in adoption placements

Refer to Royal Greenwich's Adoption Annual Report 2016/17

6.0 COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The adoption process requires input from a number of people, and can be a complex process for those involved. Usually the process completes without any major disagreements or concerns from prospective adopters or service users. However, where difficulties do arise then it is imperative that prospective adopters and service users have access to a robust complaints process.

It is important to us that all complaints are treated seriously and acted upon speedily. Prospective adopters and service users are advised of their right to complain should they not be satisfied with the service, and given advice on how to do this. All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and responded to in a meaningful way.

6.1 Complaints to Royal Borough of Greenwich

Complaints may be made to the Adoption Team Leader, the Group Leader, the Complaints Manager, the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (for adopters in assessment) or directly to Ofsted.

There are different stages of complaint within the department. Direct complaints are referred to the Complaints Manager for monitoring. Our aim is to respond appropriately and to the satisfaction of the complainant from within the Adoption Service (a Stage 1 complaint), if that is acceptable. Where the complainant is not satisfied then they are advised on how to take their complaint further.

All Stage 2 complaints are managed by the Complaints Manager (currently Mr Gerard Murphy), who will appoint an Independent Investigating Officer. Usually matters are resolved by the end of Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. If this is not the case, a Stage 3 Review Panel of three independent people may be convened to consider the complaint. At any point in this process the Local Government Ombudsman can be approached.

6.2 Complaints to Ofsted

Service users can also make complaints to the Ofsted National Business Unit Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. Tel: 08456 404040

Or call the Ofsted helpline on **0300 123 1231**

7.0 RECORD RETENTION

The indexes to all adoption case records are kept for a minimum of 100 years and where the case concerns a placement, the papers are kept for 100 years from the date of the Adoption Order. All other records are retained in line with the Royal Borough of Greenwich Policy and GDPR on record retention and destruction.

8.0 THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

The office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting adoption services under the provision of the Care Standards Act 2000.

The report of any inspection by Ofsted becomes a public document and can be found on the Ofsted website.

The address of the registration office is:

National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Building
St Ann's Square
MANCHESTER
M2 7LA

083456 404045

www.ofsted.gov.uk