

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN DIRECTORATE

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES

1 BACKGROUND

Under the Adoption Minimum Standards and Regulations 2003, every adoption agency has to produce a written Statement of Purpose (Standard 1, Regulation Part 1(1) and Schedule 1). This statement accurately describes the aims, objectives and functions of the service and describes the facilities and services provided.

This statement is subject to formal approval and is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Statement of Purpose is provided upon request to anyone working for the purposes of the service, to children who may be adopted and their parents, to anyone wishing to adopt and to adopted persons and their families.

The Statement of Purpose is also available on Solihull's website on:

www.solihull.gov.uk/adoption

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SOLIHULL ADOPTION AGENCY

The Adoption Agency of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council aims to provide a service for all its customers that is welcoming, user friendly and non-discriminatory.

The purpose of the Adoption Team is to provide a service to all those families and individuals involved in the adoption process consistent with best practice, National Standards and Regulations, and Every Child Matters.

In particular, to achieve the five outcomes under Every Child Matters which are:

- Being Healthy
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Staying Safe
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-being

Solihull Adoption Service aims through a comprehensive service to meet the needs of:

- Children who have been or may be adopted
- Birth parents and guardians of such children
- Persons who have adopted or may adopt children
- Adoptive parents and their families.

3 PRINCIPLES

The Adoptive 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.
- Where it is not possible for children to be brought up by their birth family, an alternative permanent family will be sought.
- Birth families will be offered advice and counselling and an independent support service will be available to them.
- Adoption will be considered alongside any other options to achieve permanence and stability for the child.
- 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, positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.
- Siblings should be placed together whenever possible. Decisions to the contrary should be made after a full assessment of their attachments and individual needs and advice be given by the Adoption Panel.
- 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 life long implications for all involved and requires commitment from many different organisations, professions and

- Children have a right to grow up knowing they are adopted and should have access to information about their family of birth.

4 THE NAME, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE MANAGER

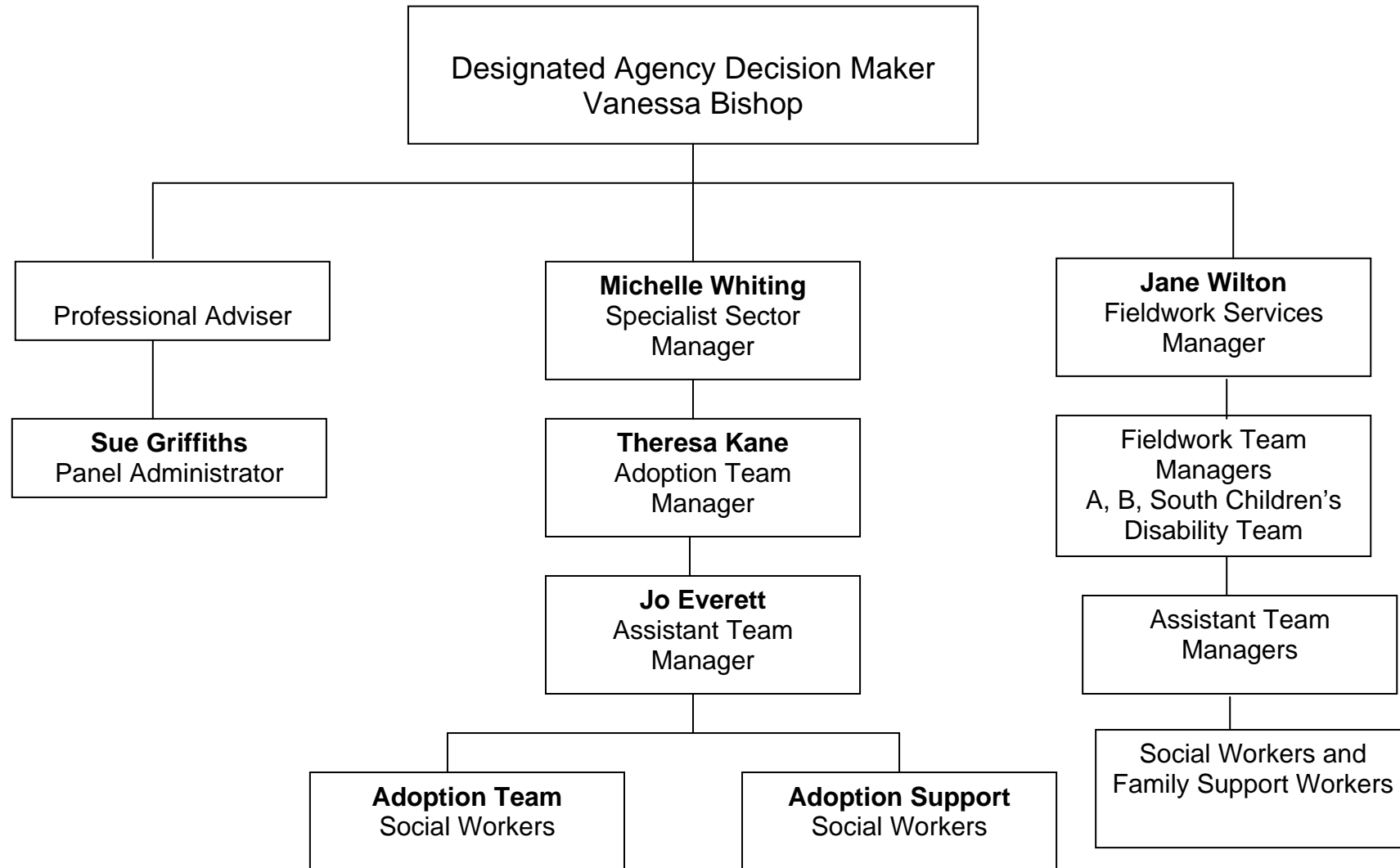
The Adoption Team Manager is Theresa Kane. She has 15 years experience within the field of social care. She is registered with the GSCC. She holds a Diploma in Social work, BSC(hons) in Social Work, Post Qualifying Award in Child Care and Child Protection, Introduction to Line Management and a Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care. She has worked in Solihull as a social worker since 2001, she was the Assistant Team Manager of the Adoption Team from 2005 to 2008 and became the Adoption Team Manager in July 2008.

NB: The Team Manager is the Agency Adoption Support Services Adviser.

5 THE ADOPTION TEAM

- The Assistant Team Manager and all social workers in the adoption Team are registered with the General Social Care Council.
- The Adoption Service benefits from a highly experienced staff group. Four social workers have in excess of 15 years experience of adoption, one has 19 years, one has 15 years and one has in excess of 8 years social work experience including adoption.
- The Assistant Team Manager and three social workers hold the Post Qualifying Award in Child Care, two hold a PQ1 Award and two hold a Practice Teaching Award.
- All staff involved in the Adoption Service have a range of experience in child care, in family placement and in the recruitment, preparation and assessment of adoptive families. Social work staff have knowledge of Adoption Legislation and Standards.
- Two of the team are dedicated to the Adoption Support Service.
- All staff understand the importance of the Complaints Procedure.
- The Adoption Service has a commitment to the continuing professional development of social workers and administrative staff.

ADOPTION SERVICE POSITION WITHIN SOLIHULL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES



6 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY

Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of services. These are:

- All staff have regular supervision and Annual Performance Appraisal.
- All prospective adopters complete an evaluation of the preparation
Prospective adopters are advised of the Departmental training. They are asked to provide feedback on their experience of attending Panel and of their general experience of the adoption process.
- and Corporate Complaints Procedure.
- Children's permanence plans are monitored through the LAC Review process.
- An audit of practice is measured against the National Standards annually and reported in the annual Adoption Agency Report.
- Members in their role as corporate parents, receive an Annual report on the Adoption Agency.
- Three monthly progress monitoring reports on children for whom adoption is the plan, are received by the Adoption Panel.
- Progress monitoring reports and statistics are received by the Cabinet on a six monthly basis.

7 THE PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITING, PREPARING, ASSESSING, APPROVING AND SUPPORTING PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

- The main consideration for the Adoption Team will be to provide adoptive families for children to enable them to grow up in a secure and positive environment which will give them the best opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- To achieve this we aim to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a robust and timely manner to meet the needs of children awaiting placement.
- Prospective Adopters will be expected to attend comprehensive training and preparation groups where they will be able to learn about the tasks and challenges of adopting and have the opportunity to meet with adoptive parents.
- Adopters hoping to adopt from overseas will be referred to 'The Inter-Country Adoption Team' for specialist adoption groups.

- Prospective adopters will have an allocated social worker for the assessment/home study and, wherever possible, the same social worker will be allocated throughout the process to adoption.
- The application will be considered by the Agency Adoption Panel which is constituted in compliance with the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005. The Panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker for approval or a qualified determination (if the applicant is not approved).
- Where children cannot be placed within the Agency's own resources, the Adoption Team will seek to make appropriate and suitable arrangements with other adoption agencies.
- Where approved families are awaiting placement for more than 3 months, they will be made available to meet the needs of children within the West Midlands Consortium or nationally through the National Adoption Register.
- The Adoption Agency will not exclude any applications on the basis of one particular lifestyle issue. All applicants will be medically assessed. Such issues as smoking, weight, alcohol consumption, previous illnesses, criminal convictions and family history will be discussed in the assessment and reported to Panel. A recommendation can then be made as to whether the prospective adopter will be likely to be able to provide a secure home for a child to grow up in.
- All applicants will be treated with respect and all enquiries and discussion will relate to their ability to offer a secure home to a child needing adoption.

Further information, including target timescales, is available in the information pack for prospective adopters and overseas adopters which are available from the Adoption Team.

Information is available online at: www.solihull.gov.uk/adoption

A post approval pack of information covering the Matching, Introduction and Placement process is available to approved adopters.

The following leaflets are also available from the Adoption Team:

- Complaints Procedure
- Children's Guide to Adoption
- Information leaflet for Adopters Attending Panel
- Information about Adoption Support
- Information about the Letterbox system
- References

8 ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

- Solihull provides adoption support through their own specialist Support Social Workers and also commissions a service from Adoption Support – Midlands’.
- Adoptive families, adoptive parents, adopted people and birth parents can apply to the Adoption Team for an assessment of need for adoption support.
- The service provides an administrative letterbox exchange system. Advice and support is available to birth parents and adoptive families to assist with the letter exchange. In addition, support, advice and assistance is available to children and the adults involved in any direct contact.
- An Initial assessment will be carried out and if the identified need can be met then support will be offered or the applicant will be signposted to an appropriate resource provider.
- If a more complex need is apparent, a social worker will be allocated and a specialist assessment will be undertaken.
- Solihull Adoption Agency commissions ‘Adoption Support – Midlands’ to provide an independent support service to birth parents involved in adoption prior to an order being made. They are also commissioned to provide an Intermediary service to adults who have been adopted and to birth parents. If adopters or adopted people prefer to receive counselling and support from an independent agency, this is also available from ‘Adoption Support – Midlands’.
- Adoption Support – Midlands can be contacted direct at;

Suite A, 6th floor, Albany House
 Hurst Street
 Birmingham
 B5 4BD

Telephone; 0121 666 6014
 e-mail adoptionssupport@tiscali.co.uk

- Solihull Adoption Support Social workers can be reached by telephone or in writing at the address and telephone number of the Adoption Team

Adoption Team and Adoption Support :

New House
 30 New Road
 Solihull
 West Midlands
 B91 3DP

Tel: 0120 709 0292
 e-mail adoptionssupport@solihull.gov.uk

9 INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

In seeking to constantly improve the quality of the adoption service, we welcome and encourage feedback from service users, providers and partner agencies. Prospective adopters will be given written information about the Directorate Complaints procedures and given information about how to make a complaint. The Communications Manager (Complaints) provides intervention, problem solving, independent investigation and mediation.

The Communications Manager (Complaints) is:

Sam Jones
Strategic Services
Orchard House
The Council House Complex
Solihull
B91 3QY

Complaint information can be provided in large print, Braille, audio tape or in another language on request to the Complaints Manager

Applicants to become adopters who are not accepted for approval on the recommendation of the Adoption Panel and/or the decision maker can make further representations through the Agency procedures or are able to ask for their case to be reviewed by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). Details of this process are made available to applicants during preparation and assessment.

The IRM has the following timescales:

- Applicants have 40 days from the agency decision to contact the IRM.
- The Adoption Agency will be contacted to produce relevant documents within 10 days.
- The IRM will set up a panel within 3 months of the application.

Contact details are:

IRM
Dolphin House
54 Coventry Road
Birmingham
B10 0RX

Tel: 0121 766 8086

Web: www.irm-adoption.org.uk

Alternatively applicants may chose to make further representations through Solihull procedures. A leaflet explaining Solihull's further representation policy will be provided alongside the leaflet from the IRM.

10 DETAILS OF OFSTED

On 1st April 2007, Ofsted took over from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). Ofsted is now responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting adoption services under the provision of the Care Standards Act 2000.

Headquarters: www.ofsted.org.uk

Tel: 0845 6404040

Fax: 0845 6404049

Address: Ofsted
National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Building
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Children's Rights Director: Dr Roger Morgan
www.rights4me.org.uk

NB: Solihull's 2006 Adoption Inspection Report is available on request or by visiting:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/\(id\)/6080/\(as\)/SC/SC_SC056812_20061211.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/6080/(as)/SC/SC_SC056812_20061211.pdf)