

Returning Adopters Criteria

Criteria for adopters who have adopted previously, and wish to be considered to adopt again

The Surrey Adoption Service welcomes enquiries from adopters who have already adopted a child or children. We recognise that given the right set of circumstances returning adopters can be a valuable resource to our adoption agency.

In reaching a decision we will take account of the following

The length of time that the adopted child or children has been placed within the adoptive family. (As a general rule we would expect a 2 year minimum period before we consider assessment for a further placement unless the adopters are asking to be considered for a sibling of a child already living as part of their family)

- Have legal proceedings in relation to the previous child been completed?
- The age and needs of the child or children already in placement.
- The age and needs of the child to be placed.
- Are there any big milestones coming up for the child already living in the family such as starting school?
- What else is happening for the family?
- What placement needs do we and our consortium partners expect to have over the next year? (we work closely with colleague in the following authorities to make placements available as needed in the interests of ensuring that children are placed promptly with families who can meet their needs: Hampshire, Oxfordshire, West Sussex, Reading, Brighton and Hove, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth).

The process we follow with respect to returning adopters is as follows:

- Initial enquiries are managed through the duty system and an appointment is offered with one of the stage 1 team members to explore the above.
- In most instances the enquiry will result in the service accepting a registration of interest, unless it is clear that there service is not recruiting for the type of placement the adopters would hope to offer, or it is not the right time for an application to go forwards (in which case advice would be offered).
- Contact with the adopters is entered as a new enquiry on our data system (ICS) under the adoption recruitment process.
- If the registration of interest is accepted, the adopters proceed to stage 2 for a fast track process conducted as a social worker lead assessment.
- There is no stage 1 although if checks or health assessment have expired or will do so before the process can be completed, these will be repeated but the assessment process will not be delayed for the outcome of these.
- Stage 2 commences with a written stage 2 plan, and a date for panel is agreed.
- Referees are contacted to address the changes that have occurred since the adopters first applied, and to enquire about their capacity to welcome a further child to their family.
- There is usually no requirement to attend preparation groups unless the previous application was 5 or more years ago or it is agreed that the applicants would benefit from revisiting the content of the groups.
- Opportunity will be provided to meet other adopters who have adopted again and any additional preparation that the social worker and applicants agree would assist them is provided.
- The assessment will include visits with the existing child and there will be discussion of their preparation needs.
- The assessment will consider how the parenting experience has gone, and how additional adoption tasks have been fulfilled e.g. contact and telling a child their story.
- The Prospective Adopters Report is updated to take account of their changed circumstances and an assessment of what they could offer a child.
- The completed report is seen and amendments agreed with the applicants and their comments added before submission to panel within 4 months of the registration of interest.