

Surrey Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose

2018-19

1) Introduction

Adoption agencies regulations 2005 require adoption agencies to provide a clear annual statement of the aims and objectives of the service and our strategy for meeting these.

This statement provides details of:

- Aims and Objectives
- Service overview
- Management structure, numbers, qualifications and experience of the staff
- Quality assurance and external monitoring mechanisms
- Complaints
- Arrangements for revision and circulation of the statement.

2) Service aims and objectives

Surrey's Adoption Service aims to secure adoption in a timely manner for children unable to live within their family of origin. We also provide support to all those affected by adoption, in recognition that adoption confers life-long challenges, for adoptees, adoptive families and birth families.

Our aims are informed by the following principles:

- Adoption is one of a range of permanency arrangements.
- In matching children with prospective families, the child's welfare is paramount.
- Practice is informed by the best available evidence.
- Promotion of early permanence
- We match both with Surrey families and families approved by other agencies.
- Support is available throughout the child's growing years and beyond.
- Enquiries are welcomed from a diverse range of families
- Enquirers receive a professional, timely and respectful response

- Matching is undertaken in a holistic manner, considering the ability of the proposed prospective adopters to promote the child's needs throughout their childhood.
- Surrey adopters represent a valued resource for our own children and children from other placing authorities

3) Service overview: we provide or commission

- A family finding service for children in need of adoption.
- Specialist targeted and non-targeted post order services for families who have adopted.
- Assessment of adults wishing to adopt a child from care (agency adoption)
- Assessment of adults wishing to adopt children under a non-agency process
- Counselling and support services - for adopted adults
- Support services for birth relatives- of adopted children

4) Family Finding:

We find families for children in need of adoption, whether this is a result of a request from the birth parent(s) for the child to be adopted, or more typically because a family court has given agreement to place the child for adoption. We aim is to settle a child in a permanent home as quickly as possible, given that this helps to secure positive outcomes for adopted children.

Timeliness is actively monitored both in terms of the time taken to be placed in an adoptive family, taking account of Department for Education performance indicators (the Adoption Scorecard)

Priority is given to children who may wait longest for an adoptive family-we ensure that there is a dedicated family finding social worker from the adoption service who works alongside the child's own social worker to plan and carry out the family finding process. We meet regularly to look at families wishing to be considered as prospective adopters for the child and when a possible match has been identified to ensure that there is disclosure of background information to the prospective adopters. We also agree a support plan and then to bring the proposed match to adoption panel for its recommendation.

We know that certain groups of children are likely to wait longest for a family-there is a consistent tendency for children from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to wait, also children who are of school age, sibling groups and children with additional needs. We adhere to current statutory guidance which enables children to be placed within a family that can support their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious needs, without the requirement that the family must match the child in every respect.

Siblings

Children are placed with their siblings unless there are clear indications that this would not be in their best interests, mindful that for most children this is a life long relationship which confers considerable benefit.

Whilst finding a family for a larger sibling group is challenging, family size should not in itself be a reason to place siblings separately unless it is clear that the children have different needs which indicate they need different families. This said, there is a shortage of families willing to consider siblings, especially where there are three or more children and so this may prompt

consideration of whether it is best to separate in the interests of securing adoption, or to continue to family find with a backup plan of long term fostering. In making these very significant decisions it is important to take a case by case approach as each sibling group is different.

For example, children who have been subject to developmental trauma may exhibit a trauma bond that is triggered by the experience of sharing day to day life with their sibling. For these children there may be benefits to growing up in different families but promoting the sibling relationship through contact.

Interagency placements

Given the need to ensure that children do not wait longer than absolutely necessary, we will look beyond Surrey making use of placements provided by other local authority adoption teams and voluntary adoption agencies. An inter-agency fee is paid to the receiving agency following the child having moved to take account of the work that is needed to provide a family and secure adoption for the child.

Promoting the child's voice

Where the child is of an age to express their wishes and feelings it is important that due consideration is given to this in developing the child's care plan. When family finding we ensure that the child's voice is included in drawing together information for sharing with prospective adopters.

Early Permanence (fostering for adoption)

Wherever possible we aim to place children who are likely to need adoption with families who are approved as both foster carers and adopters. This means that when the adoption plan is confirmed a further move is not required. This has the obvious advantage that children are settled at an earlier age into what will be their forever family and that they and the family share more of the child's significant milestones than would be the case when a move is needed between foster and adoptive families.

However this is a route to adoption that involves a great deal of uncertainty given that the final outcome may not be able to be predicted, and so the carers must be prepared for the possibility that the child would not remain in their care longer term. It means that we think very carefully about whether early permanence is right for the child on a case by case basis, mindful that for many children returning home or to a placement with a connected person may be possible.

In reality early permanence represents a big ask of prospective adopters whose primary motivation in coming forwards is to offer permanent care and this route to adoption is not right for all adopters, although we are finding that with additional training and support increasing numbers of applicants are willing to consider offering early permanence.

5) Post Order Support Services:

Adoption is a life-long issue for the child, their adoptive parents and the birth family. This is reflected in Adoption Support Regulations, which considers the needs of various groups of people whose lives have been affected by adoption (See appendix 2)

Many adoptive families choose to remain in contact informally with the agency following adoption via our regular training or family events, and adopted children may attend one of a

number of groups we run. We also provide a monthly drop-in for our adopters, with the facility to book a one to one slot for confidential advice. This type of support is available to anyone caring for a child adopted from care and living in Surrey and does not require an assessment of need.

Adoptive families may request a new assessment of their child's support needs at any time during the child's minority, leading in many cases to a new adoption support plan and targeted services from either our own service or signposting to another service better suited to the needs identified.

Accordingly, many adopted children and their families continue to receive support from the service following adoption. Examples include help to manage direct or indirect contact with members of the child's birth family, financial support on a one off or regular basis where this is needed to enable the family to meet exceptional needs of their child or support to share and understand **their adoption story**. We also provide access to therapeutic parenting training for adoptive parents and help to manage relationships at home.

Advice and support in relation to education issues for adopted children is provided through the Surrey Virtual School.

The Adoption Support Services Adviser

The Children and Adoption Act 2014 requires local authorities to ensure that adoptive families are aware of their entitlement to request an assessment of support needs following adoption, and we currently publicise this through our public facing website, regular newsletters sent out to over 600 adoptive families on our mailing list and also a secure adoption website-to which access is given to approved adopters and those undergoing assessment.

An Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA), currently Debra Hale is assisted by our Referral and Information Officer, acts as a point of contact for those seeking advice about support services.

Eligibility for support where another agency acted as the placing agency

Adopters caring for children placed by other agencies (or families who move to Surrey following adoption) remain the responsibility of the placing authority for the first 3 years following the adoption Order.

A placing agency may however seek advice from the ASSA of the local authority where the child will be living as regards accessing local support services and there is an expectation that ASSAs will provide help and signposting to local services (albeit that there may be a charge for any targeted services under the 3 year rule.)

The placing local authority is required to notify the local authority where the child will live that the child has been placed, and when we become aware of incoming children we will write to the family and offer them the opportunity to be included on our mailing list so they are aware of local events and services that may be relevant for them.

From three years of the date the adoption order was made responsibility for assessing adoption support needs passes to the local authority where the child is now living.

Adoption Support Fund

In May 2015 access to a government funded Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was opened out to local authorities in England to enable them to apply for funding for therapeutic services following an assessment of adoption support needs.

This has enabled our service to commission services from independent providers of adoption support, complementing the support services we provide ourselves and the local specialist post order CAMHS service operated by Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP)

6) Assessment Service for adults wishing to adopt a child from care.

The Service aims to recruit a pool of adopters to meet the needs of our looked after children with adoption care plans. We review our recruitment needs every 3 months, mindful that these can change over time. In communicating these needs to the general public we aim to be transparent about the additional challenges involved in adoption, whilst encouraging enquirers to think about how adoption could enrich both their own and a child's life.

Whilst we welcome enquiries from potential adopters interested in children of all ages and backgrounds we are particularly keen to hear from enquirers who are open to adopting children from our priority groups: children over 4, siblings, children with additional needs children from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Although we are mindful of the need for families for local children with adoption plans we also hold in mind the need for adopters across the region given that we work in partnership with 3 other local authorities: East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove to ensure that we have enough adoptive families.

Initial enquiries

We manage new enquiries through our Surrey County Council web site and by telephone. All enquirers are responded to within 2 working days, and the enquirer is offered an opportunity to attend a Readiness2adopt session-held twice monthly in Woking. This session comprises a presentation about adoption and the types of children who need adoptive families, followed by an interview with a social worker.

The purpose of the sessions is to inform the enquirer about the needs and characteristics of adopted children. We hope that this will enable the enquirer to make informed decisions as regards the following:

- Is adoption for them?
- Is Surrey the right agency for them to seek to register interest?
- Is this the right time for them to register interest?

We also apply some general eligibility criteria:

- Residence: whilst we prioritise Surrey residents we will consider enquirers who live outside Surrey on a case by case basis.
- Applicants can be single, married, in a civil partnership or be an unmarried couple (same or opposite sex)
- There is no upper age limit, but applicant(s) must be aged 21 or over,
- They should be domiciled or habitually resident in the UK
- Have no declared specified offences against children or convictions which might indicate unsuitability to work with children or vulnerable adults. (Formal checks are made later following our accepting an application.)

- The applicants should not still be undergoing fertility treatment or investigations of fertility. (We generally consider that a minimum of 6 months should have elapsed since the last treatment.)
- We consider applicants who have children living as part of their household on a case-by-case basis.
- The applicant(s) need to be able to commit to having a parent at home full time for a minimum of 6 months following placement of a child for adoption.
- Health and fitness levels should be such that they could meet the needs of a child through to adulthood (a medical is required following acceptance of an application.)
- We follow current evidence based guidance from BAAF on the detrimental effects of passive smoking for children under 5 and children with respiratory problems. We advise any smokers wishing to be considered to see their general practitioner with a view to working to the goal of cessation for a minimum period of 12 months before applying.
- We are currently considering the emerging evidence base as regards the impact of e cigarettes.
- Enquiries are welcomed from single applicants and those applying as a couple (irrespective of whether the relationship is one that is legally recognised or whether it involves a same sex or different sex partnership).
- The applicant(s) should be settled in their accommodation, with suitable and sufficient accommodation for a child to be placed.
- Applicants should be willing to engage with the assessment process including background checks.
- Applicants need to demonstrate childcare experience or be willing to extend obtain this.

Following the initial meeting enquirers receive a brief report for comment. They can then request to register interest (apply.) We are not obliged to accept a registration of interest, but if we decline to take things further we will provide reasons, and this may result in further dialogue and possibly review of our decision. Typical reasons for declining a registration might be that we do not have need of adopters for the age range or characteristics that the enquirer is most interested in, or we lack capacity to offer an assessment.

Where we do not have capacity we may signpost the enquirer to another adoption agency. In other instances we may decline to register interest where there are ongoing life events or commitments that mean we do not think this is the right time for the applicant to start the adoption journey.

Assessment

Applicants commence a 2 stage process with a view to being approved to adopt. The initial stage lasting 2 months is adopter lead, and consists of the adopter furthering their knowledge about adoption through preparation groups and e learning as well as providing detailed background information - through a series of self-assessment tasks and statutory checks including a DBS check. They also undergo a medical.

A case by case approach is taken with regards to most offences which are flagged by the DBS check, but adoption regulations precludes accepting applicants with specified offences, notably involving children. We have an expectation that applicants are open and forthcoming

with us regarding disclosure of any offences no matter how long ago these took place, and indeed all other aspects of their application.

On completion of stage one the agency reviews all the information and determines whether or not to progress the applicant to the 4 month stage 2 process. A social worker is allocated at this point to work with the applicant to complete the assessment and to present this to adoption panel, who make a recommendation with respect of approval. This must then be ratified by the Agency Decision Maker before the approval is completed.

We agree a plan at the outset of both stage 1 and 2 to enable applicants to know what is expected of them and how we will support them to complete the application.

Bringing adoption to life

Applicants attend 3 days of preparation groups –these are held at our Woking offices or if the dates are not convenient for the applicants we arrange for them to attend the groups offered by one of our 3 partner agencies. The learning style at the groups is informal, involving a high degree of applicant participation. The content can be summarised as follows:

- The adopter journey
- The child's Journey
- Coming together as a new family through adoption
- The lifelong challenges of adoption

The group facilitators provide feedback on the applicant's participation which is used to inform their assessment, and applicants also complete their own reflections on the experience and what they have learnt. As part of any assessment process visits are also arranged to foster carers and experienced adopters to hear real life stories. We also facilitate a monthly 'meet the adopters' session for applicants.

Applicants also are invited to visit our fortnightly adoptive Parent and Toddler group, providing additional opportunity to meet adoptive families and hear about the role that peer support plays in adoption.

Applicants and the assessing social worker work together during stage 2, with some meetings taking place in the applicants home, others in the office. Adoption stories are used throughout to enable the applicants to consider the needs of children we place for adoption and to think about what life after adoption might entail. The result is a comprehensive prospective adopter's report, seen and commented upon by the applicants.

In practice, applicants contribute significantly to their reports. The assessment is overseen by a manager and a manager's report is also provided to the panel. Where there is need of a second opinion to lend weight to the social worker's recommendation or to provide an independent view on any issue this is arranged in order to assist the panel.

In the few cases where the agency is unable to support an application it has the option to present either a full or a brief report to the panel, detailing its enquiries and the reasons for its concerns. The applicants are always invited to attend panel and it is very rare that they do not take up this opportunity (although not required to do so.)

Adoption panel

Surrey has an adoption panel which draws on a central list of members, as required under National Minimum Standards. Panels must be quorate when they meet with a minimum of 5 members present including the Chair. Panels make recommendations as follows:

- Whether to approve applicants as prospective adopters

- To review approval where there has been a significant change of circumstances
- To consider whether a child should be placed for adoption in the event that there is a request from the child's birth parent(s) for the child to be adopted
- To consider proposed matches
- To hear consider learning in cases where there has been a disruption of the placement prior to the making of the adoption order.
- To hold regular reviews of agency activity, including updates on cases presented previously.

In accordance with National Minimum Standards and Statutory Adoption Guidance we have appointed an Independent Chair and Vice Chair. We also appoint a non-voting Panel Adviser to provide advice and support to the Chair and Panel. Each panel must include both social work qualified members and independent members-these are people with lived experience of adoption, including adoptive parents and members who were themselves adopted as children.

All panel members undergo an application process including the taking up of references and DBS checks. In accordance with National Minimum Standards they are required to have annual appraisals and the agency must maintain files for each panel member which can be made available for inspection by Ofsted. Annual training is provided.

Legal and medical advice is made available to the panel, and the panel can make use of additional advice as required from additional disciplines. The panel are assisted by an administrator who provides detailed minutes from each panel meeting.

The panel meets fortnightly in order to ensure that there is no delay in cases being heard.

With respect to adopter applications the panel has three options available: to recommend that the agency accepts the application, to recommend that it rejects the application or to defer the case for additional information. In the vast majority of instances panel accepts the social work recommendation, however this must never be a foregone conclusion and where panel considers that it does not have the evidence before it to support a recommendation it will exercise its right to recommend otherwise.

In all instances the practice of panel is to provide the applicants with verbal confirmation of the recommendations following its deliberations on the day, with the proviso that formal ratification of the recommendation is required.

The Agency Decision Maker

This is a senior member of Surrey Children's Services, whose role is to decide whether to ratify the panel's recommendation, taking account of all the available information including the minutes of the adoption panel meeting. The decision is then confirmed in writing to the applicants and social workers.

In the event that the Agency does not approve an application or decides not to complete a partially assessed case, the applicants have the choice of seeking a further determination by a review panel (see IRM) or Surrey's own adoption panel.

Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

The Independent Review Mechanism was launched on 30th April 2004. It currently operated by CoramBAAF on behalf of the Department of Education. The IRM provides a review of the information considered by the original panel, plus any additional information the applicants think is relevant.

Review of approval

All approved adopters who have not had a child placed with them within 12 months of their date of approval are required to have an annual review of their approval. This is completed internally within the adoption service, unless there has been a significant change of circumstance or the approval is of 3 years duration in which case a fuller review is required and must be presented to panel.

Following approval

The adoption worker remains in contact with the family following approval, and a matching plan is agreed to look how the prospective adopters and agency can work together to secure a match.

There is a regular training programme provided, and adopters are expected to continue in their learning and development pending matching and following placement of children, in recognition of the additional challenges that adoptive parenting brings. As such, we try to ensure that adoption remains a 'live' issue following the end of the application process. Sessions typically run most monthly and are held in the evenings as part of a rolling programme.

The subjects are selected to build on the earlier training, with sessions such as: Foster2adopt, Introductions, Attachment, Related by Adoption (for friends and family of adopters), Matching, Social networks and adoption, Use of the post box, Contact and Life story books.

Matching with a child

The Agency Adviser maintains a list of all families currently approved by the agency to adopt and meets with the child's social worker to identify a family best able to meet the child's needs- using a matching tool to inform decision making. Our 3 partner agencies may also refer children to us for possible matching, and increasingly we are seeing more matches made across services.

There is no waiting list however - whereby adopters are matched on the basis of length of time waiting. In practice waiting times vary considerably, influenced by the numbers and needs of children available for adoption and the range of acceptance of the waiting adopters.

The adoption worker discusses any potential match with the family, thus starting a process of information sharing, designed to help all involved to think about the merits and possible risks of the proposed match. As part of this information sharing, the prospective adopters meet the current carer, our medical adviser and any other professionals involved with the child. We also organise an opportunity to see the child-typically at a distance to check that they wish to commit to the next stage.

Only when both the family and the professional network are satisfied about the match and a support plan has been agreed, is the match then formally considered-meaning that a recommendation from the Adoption Panel is sought, followed by ratification by the Agency Decision Maker.

Matching with a child from another local authority

Adopters are not restricted to adopting from their home authority, and so called 'adopter lead matches' have become increasingly common, especially with our colleagues from Brighton and Hove City Council, and East and West Sussex County Councils. This means that in

practice we are likely to approach those agencies first when we need a placement and vice versa.

Adopters can express interest in children from other local authorities and often do so-typically this follows their attendance at adoption events or having seen children featured on secure websites featuring children in need of adoptive families (the National Adoption Register and Link maker) Adopters are able to gain access to these sites with our support.

Moving into the new family

The child's social worker and foster carer carefully prepare the child to move onto their new family, using story books and a welcome book.

A planning meeting agrees a plan for introductions of the child to its new family, each plan is bespoke to take account of the specific needs of the child, with a review midway to check that things are on course and that everyone remains committed to the plan.

Regular visits are required under adoption regulations following an adoption placement, weekly for the first 4 weeks of a placement, with a looked after child review held within the first 28 days of placement. Visits to the family are usually shared between the adoption worker and the child's own social worker during this period.

Working with the local authority

When placed in the new family the child is still a looked after child and as such prospective adopters share parental responsibility with the local authority and the child's birth parents although in reality the birth parents are only able to exercise parental responsibility to a very limited extent.

The local authority will delegate authority for day to day decision making to the prospective adopters under an agreement made prior to the child moving in. This enables the prospective adopters to act in the role of a parent, pending the finalising of the adoption, typically some months later.

The child's progress within the placement is monitored by their social worker who continues to visit the child regularly. This continues until the adoption order has been made. In some instances additional support may be provided, dependent on individual circumstances such as provision of financial support, visits from a family support worker, or therapeutic help.

Role of the Court

At such time that the family and the agency are of the shared view that the child no longer needs to remain a looked after child the family are encouraged to make an application for an adoption order. The timing of this is discussed at the child's looked after child reviews - which happens at prescribed intervals-within 28 days of placement, thereafter 3 months later and then 6 months after that.

The court cannot consider an application for an adoption order before the child has been in its new home for at least 10 weeks, and in practice the timing of each application varies. When the time is right however, applicants are assisted to submit their application, and briefed as regards the court process.

Birth parent's views as regards the adoption application are sought, and some exercise a right to seek leave to oppose the making of an adoption order. The court applies a 2 stage test to any such application-considering whether there has been a significant change of circumstances for the birth parent, and also the welfare of the child. When the issue of the birth

parent's circumstances concludes with a decision not to give leave to oppose the application the court will proceed with a final hearing which is likely to result in the making of an adoption order.

In the event the court considers that the birth parents circumstances have changed and merit further consideration a full hearing will be required to determine the best outcome for the child, applying the welfare checklist. If the court is satisfied that it is in the child's best interest to be adopted it will make an order to this effect, thus ending the child's looked after status and conferring full parental responsibility to the adopters. Thereafter the adopters are able to exercise parental responsibility without any restrictions and the legal relationship between the child and the birth parents is terminated.

7) Non Agency Adoption:

Non agency adoption is a service to families applying to adopt a child who was not placed by an adoption agency. Applications are generally driven by the wish of somebody who already is caring for a child to formalise the relationship through adoption.

This service is mainly accessed by step parents, and relatives wishing to adopt a child of their family following placement under a private arrangement. However we also work with inter country adopters who have adopted a child overseas where the adoption is not recognised in the UK. With children to be adopted from abroad there are additional visiting and reviewing requirements as specified under the Adoptions with Foreign Elements Regulations (2011)

All non-agency adoption applicants are required to give the local authority 3 months notice of their intention to make an application for an adoption order, and having done so must submit an application to court no sooner than 3 months and no later than 2 years of the date of notification-this provides a window for counselling and information gathering, ahead of the need for the local authority to provide a report and recommendations to the court.

As with agency adoption extensive checks are made, with other agencies and personal referees. Applicants undergo Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and the applicant will require a medical. In making its recommendation to the Court the local authority must take account of the welfare checklist and consider all available legal options given that there may be appropriate alternatives to adoption.

As with an agency adoption the adoption order confers full parental responsibility on the applicants to the exclusion of the non resident birth parent. The court must also consider the impact for the child and other parties in the present and in future years of making an adoption order.

8) Adopted adults can access the following:

- Birth records counselling.
- Support and advice to adoptees in relation to adoption records held in the Surrey archive, or with regard to accessing alternative registered intermediary services
- Access to independent counsellors
- Access to a monthly support group
- Signposting for Intermediary services for adopted adults

9) Birth relatives affected by adoption can access:

- A specialist Birth Relative Worker,

- Counselling
- Assistance with maintaining contact through facilitated meetings or through the Surrey post box with their child's adoptive family, including assistance with letter writing if this is needed.

10) Quality Assurance and performance monitoring

We monitor the quality of our work in a variety of ways:

- Adoption Panel provides feedback on individual cases to the operational teams.
- A Quarterly Adoption Forum acts as a strategic interface between Panel and the Agency.
- Annual Adoption Agency Reports and updates are provided to elected members.
- We submit quarterly data to the Adoption Leadership Board-a national body set up to monitor performance and drive improvement in the field of adoption. We consequently receive an annual 'Scorecard' from the Department of Health based on this data.
- Ofsted inspects the Agency three yearly-most recently in 2018 when adoption services were rated as 'good'.

11) Feedback from service users

Feedback mechanisms for service users are built in to all key stages of the adoption process and have recently been revised to improve opportunities for young people to be give feedback on the service. In addition, there is an active focus group for service users which meets quarterly and provides feedback on service delivery and development.

12) Management and staffing (See appendix 1)

The Service is managed within the Care Services part of Countywide Services, which forms one arm of Surrey Children's Services

Ian Forbes, Assistant Head of Countywide Services was appointed in 2015. Ian holds a BA (Hons) in social work awarded in 1991, and a Post Graduate Management Qualification. Ian currently manages all regulated care services in Surrey including: adoption, fostering and residential services.

Suzanne Chambers, Service Manager is the operational and policy lead for Adoption and registered manager following appointment in 2010. Suzanne holds a B.A. (Hons) Psychology: awarded by the University of Durham in 1981 and a MSc Social Policy and social work studies and Certificate of Qualification in Social Work from London University (L.S.E.) awarded in 1987 as well as a Diploma in health and social care management level 5 (2013)

4 Full Time Equivalent Team Managers complete the management team, each holds functional leads as well as providing regular supervision to staff.

Casework and group work functions are provided by 15 full-time equivalent Social workers, assisted by 3 Assistant social workers and a Referral and Information Officer. The team is also supported by a dedicated team of business support staff. In addition the following are commissioned by the adoption Service:

- Independent Chair of the Adoption Panel-David Goosey
- Adult psychotherapist -1 day per week provides consultation for adopters and carers
- 2 educational psychologists-all seconded to the team for half a day per week.

All social workers are appropriately qualified for their posts and registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council. A high percentage hold post qualifying awards such as the Child care Award, or higher degrees and many have additionally undertaken specialist courses/training including Practice Teaching, Diploma in Adoption and Attachment, Counselling, Play Therapy, and Theraplay.

A satisfactory enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS, previously known as CRB) check is required for all staff including business support workers employed within the service.

13) Complaints

The adoption service adheres to the Council's corporate complaints procedure. All service users as a matter of routine are given a copy of Surrey's complaints leaflet. A children's guide appropriate for the age and needs of the children we work with is provided, either directly to the young person or their carer. complaints relating to children are handled under the provisions of the Children's Act S.26 (1989), further defined in the Representation Procedure (Children and Young Persons) Regulations (1991). With the introduction of the Children and Adoption Act 2002 and the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) 2003 came an extension of the previous provisions. In addition complaints can be made to:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

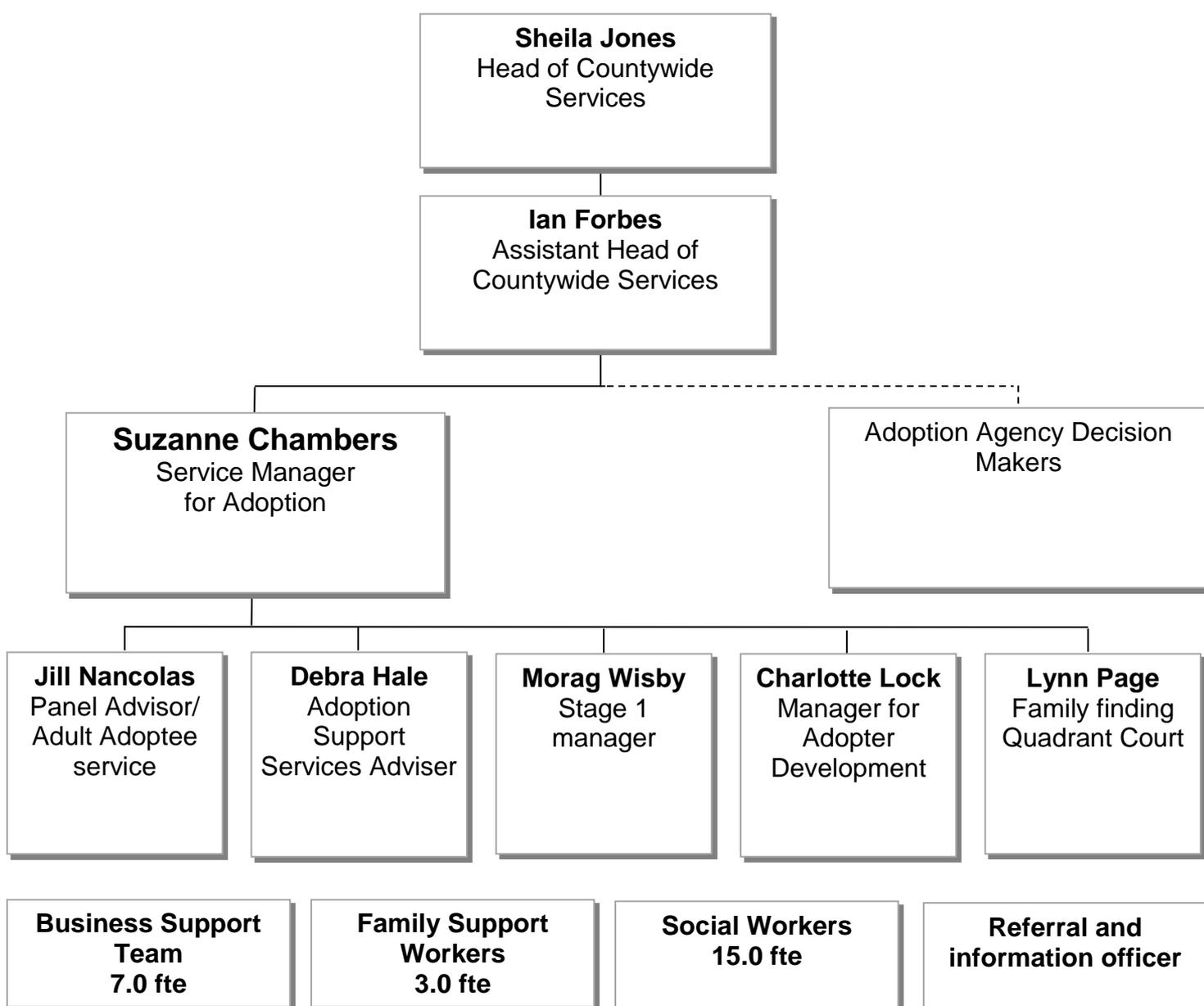
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

14) Revision and circulation

This statement has been produced by managers of the service in consultation with staff and users of the service, in compliance with National Adoption Standards and the relevant Adoption legislation. Members of the Social Services Executive will be asked to formally approve the Statement, (the revised Statement is presented to Members annually for their approval). The Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Statement is updated or modified when necessary, but at least annually, and that a copy is provided to OFSTED. The Statement will be provided to:

- All staff including independent specialists engaged in the adoption process.
- All current and prospective adopters and permanency carers.
- A copy of the statement of purpose is posted on the Adoption pages of the Surrey County Council website

Management Structure



Adoption Assessment Services

Person being assessed	Services for which they are entitled to be assessed						
	Services to enable discussion of matters relating to adoption	Assistance in relation to arrangements for contact	Therapeutic services	Services to ensure the continuation of adoption relationship	Services to assist in cases of disruption	Counselling, advice and information	Financial support
Agency adoptive child	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Adoptive parent of an agency adoptive child	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆
Child of adoptive parents				◆	◆	◆	
Natural parents or guardians of an agency adoptive child	◆	◆				◆	
A relative (or someone with whom the Local Authority consider the child to have a beneficial relationship) of agency adoptive child		◆				◆	
Intercountry adoptive child			◆	◆	◆	◆	
Intercountry adoptive parent				◆	◆	◆	
Natural sibling of an adoptive child		◆				◆	
Non-agency adoptive children, their parents and guardians						◆	
Prospective adopters						◆	
Adopted adults, their parents, natural parents and former guardians						◆	
A relative (or someone with whom the Local Authority consider the child to have a beneficial relationship) of a non-agency adoptive child						◆	