

**One Children's Service**  
*Helping Children to be their Best*  
**Adoption Action Plan**

## **Our Vision for Children**

### ***Helping Children to be their Best***

- Providing children and families with early support
- Helping families with problems and keeping children safe
- Giving the best opportunities to children and young people in care
- Working with schools and others to make sure that children succeed
- Supporting our staff to be outstanding

### ***Our practice standards***

1. The families best interest shall be of primary consideration in all areas affecting them
2. Work is carried out in partnership with the child
3. Work is carried out in partnership with parents and carers to enable them to meet their responsibilities and achieve optimum outcomes for children
4. Work with families is carried out within community networks and between agencies to achieve optimum outcomes
5. Work with children is undertaken with the legislative framework and makes best use of best practice guidance
6. Work with children, young people, parents and carers, consistently promotes social inclusion
7. Records and reports are accurate, complete, accessible and up to date and demonstrate the decision making process
8. Work with families is managed and supervised to achieve the best possible outcomes

## ***Our Principles***

- **Access:** Children, young people and families should be able to access a range of appropriate services at the time they need them and in places that make sense to them
- **Early intervention:** Effective early assessment and intervention will reduce the need for more costly and possibly less successful provision later
- **Reducing dependency:** Working with families at all levels of need to reduce dependency and promote self-reliance
- **Shared responsibility and response:** Getting the best for a family is everyone's business and services need to develop shared responsibility and response to children, young people and their families
- **Equality of Opportunity:** Services should continue to work together to remove the cultural, geographical and economic barriers to opportunity which some families face
- **Workforce Development:** All staff will have access to learning and development experiences related to early intervention and prevention

## ***Our priorities for adoption (in line with the service development plan)***

Giving the best opportunities to children and young people in care by:

- Ensuring that children remain in care for the least time necessary and that permanent alternatives are secured on their behalf as quickly as possible
- Ensuring that all children and young people in care have up to date care plans that are robust and personalised
- Improving placement choice and ensure that placements are matched to the long term changing needs of children and young people

**Priority 1: The Journey of the Child**

**Accountable Lead: Head of Service and Adoption Service**

Item	Objective	Action	By Whom	By When	Progress	Performance Measure	RAG
1.1	Implement the 'Early Permanence Principle'	Identification of children and tracking	Adoption Service	November 2013	Monthly meetings have been set up to track children with placement orders, party to care proceedings and in PLO process	Timeliness and accuracy of adoption process	
		Streamline early permanency pathway and disseminate across the directorate	Head of Service (A&F / R&A)	December 2013	Pathway designed, implementation and training to be scheduled for January 2014		
		Early Permanence Principle training and guidance for frontend social workers	Head of Service (A&F / R&A)	January 2013	A training programme has been set-up	Improved joined up working	
		Secure resources via the Adoption reform grant to support and increase the use of fostering to adopt and concurrent planning	Head of Service (A&F / R&A)	December 2013	Report written for DMT	Improve timeliness of achieving permanency for children with a plan for adoption	
		Assess and approve prospective adopters for concurrent placements and fostering for adoption	Adoption service	February 2014	Proposal to utilise part of the adoption reform grant to provide training to workforce, implement new permanency policy (reflecting PLO framework) and embed	Exceed last year's performance on numbers of children adopted and timeliness of being placed in their adoptive homes	

66

					early permanency for children  Fostering for adoption is now part of the assessment and approval process for prospective adopters		
1.2	Ensure agency decision making is in place and includes appropriate challenge	Commence an audit of ADM decisions to ensure timescales are met  Paper presented to DMT detailing ADM arrangements for both Adoption and Fostering Services	Safeguarding and Quality Assurance head of service  Head of Adoption and Fostering Service	January 2014  January 2014	The appointment of a new panel advisor has been completed	All agency decision makers decisions are made within 7 days of the ADM receiving minutes and papers  Create capacity for accurate and reflective decision making	
1.3	Ensure child permanency reports and other opportunities are maximised to reflect and record children's wishes	Produce Children's guide for two age groups and disabilities	Head of Service	January 14	Draft guides have been circulated to managers, Heads of Service and DMT for comment	A comprehensive selection of children's guides available, as per Ofsted's recommendations	
		IRO's views on plans for children should be evidenced and recorded at the point that papers are sent to the agency decision maker	Head of Service / Safeguarding Team Manager	November 13	IROs views are recorded within the child's permanency report and an 'IRO tick box' has been included before papers are passed to the ADM	ADM to receive IRO's views and comments with papers to inform the decision making process	
		Questionnaire to be used at relevant stages of the adoption process	Head of Service (QA and A&F)	January 2014	Audit to be undertaken to evidence wishes and feelings are collected for	Children's views and wishes are recorded throughout stages as they	

					children and parents / adopters	proceed through the system	
		Produce a 2014 programme of social events for adopted children	Adoption service	December 2013	Summer gathering and Christmas party have been booked and information distributed	Adopters and adopted children feel valued and appreciated	
1.4	Ensure all life story books and later life letters are completed and provided to adopters within 10 days of the adoption order hearing	Audit to be undertaken to outline quality of later life letters and any backlogs	Jenny Goodes and QA team	January 2014	Social workers have been made aware of their responsibility to complete Later Life Letters which are monitored through supervision and at the fortnightly inspection preparation meetings	All life story books and later life letters are in place without any backlogs	
1.5	Ensure annual Ofsted feedback questionnaires are sent to children	Embed process for a member of staff to complete this action annually	Adoption team manager	May 14	This year's questionnaires were sent out 1 week after the email was received from Ofsted	All current children are sent a questionnaire and are encouraged to complete and return	
1.6	Development of Liquidlogic to reflect new changes to the two stage adoption assessment process and improve monitoring of children with plan for adoption	Fully implement version 9 of the Liquidlogic Adoption & Fostering module	Adoption team manager and performance manager	April 14	Scoping meetings to be arranged  Now scheduled for January 2014	Adoption service to be able to view version 9  Childrens data is accurate and up to date	
1.7	Review how information is communicated to children in care and ensure material meets their level of understanding and ability	Set up process for information to be monitored during childcare reviews and include process in permanency policy	Adoption team manager and Head of Service	January 14	Draft guides have been circulated to managers, Heads of Service and DMT for comment	A range of materials is available to meet individual children's needs	

1.8	Each child to have a recruitment plan to attract prospective adopters	Schedule of 2014 activity days and promotional activities to be agreed and launched	Adoption recruitment team	February 2014	Meetings have been arranged to discuss initial concepts	A clear record of children matched through interest generated from publicity	
		Audit to be undertaken highlighting outstanding recruitment plans	Adoption team manager and quality assurance manager	February 2014	Team managers to discuss to agree audit requirements	Creation of individual recruitment plans	
<b>Priority 2: Assessment and approval of adopter recruitment</b>							
<b>Accountable Lead: Head of Service and Adoption Service</b>							
Item	Objective	Action	By Whom	By When	Progress	Performance Measure	RAG
2.1	Ensure panel members and adoption staff files are compliant with regulations	Embed 6 monthly audit of supervision files	Head of Service / HR Business Partner / Panel Advisor	Dec 13	Serco HR have completed audit on personal staff files in June 13  An audit of panel members files was undertaken in June 13	All personal files up to date and in line with regulations	
2.2	Ensure annual Ofsted feedback questionnaires are sent to adopters	Embed process for a member of staff to complete this action annually	Adoption team manager	May 14	Action to commence	All current adopters are sent a questionnaire and are encouraged to complete and return	
2.3	Increase coverage of recruitment campaign in the surrounding areas of Peterborough	Data to be analysed following National Adoption week, to include website hits	Adoption service	March 14	Marketing and recruitment strategy has been developed and a new website has been launched  Currently using the Council communication channels to increase	Increase the number of initial enquiries	

					circulation of information leaflets		
<b>Priority 3: Post adoption support</b>							
<b>Accountable Lead: Adoption Team Manager</b>							
<b>Item</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>RAG</b>
3.1	Develop adoption passport	Service to begin developing adoption passport and reporting mechanism to monitor performance measure	Adoption service	May 14	Action to commence	A procedure is in place to ensure adoption passports are sent to all adopters providing them with clear and precise guidance on how to access post adoption support	
3.2	Review of post adoption support services and processes (new legislation is being launched in April 2014)	Start to finish process review of adoption support provision  Training to be provided to adoption service following further guidance from the DfE	Head of Service / Serco	May 14  May 14	Action to commence	A good response rate to questionnaires to enable service to improve services offered	
3.3	Review training services for adopters	Consider ways to improve or increase training courses available for each stage of preparation and post support	Adoption service	Dec 13	Action to commence	Increase in numbers of attendance on training courses with improved feedback	
3.4	Review extending Vivacity arrangements for adopted children (activities)	Head of Service to request commissioning to undertake review	Head of Service and Commissioning Lead	Nov 13	Action to commence	Extension of contract	



Priority 4: Challenge and scrutiny							
Accountable Lead: Head of Service							
Item	Objective	Action	By Whom	By When	Progress	Performance Measure	RAG
4.1	Improve reporting processes	Embed annual review of the Adoption Charter and Statement of Purpose	Head of Service	Jan 14	Service action plan is reviewed by DMT quarterly	All reports are scrutinised by the Departmental Management Team and the Corporate Parenting Panel quarterly and/or 6 monthly	
		Creation of monthly performance adoption report	Head of Service	Jan 14	6 monthly adoption report to be tabled at Corporate Parenting Panel in Jan 14		
		Creation of 6 monthly report on service user feedback	Adoption Team Manager	Feb 14	6 monthly QA report will be tabled in February 14		

71

This page is intentionally left blank