



FOSTERING & ADOPTION

Statement of Purpose

For Oxfordshire Children
Education & Families

Working
together
to change
Lives...

Adoption Service
2016-2017

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/adoption



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

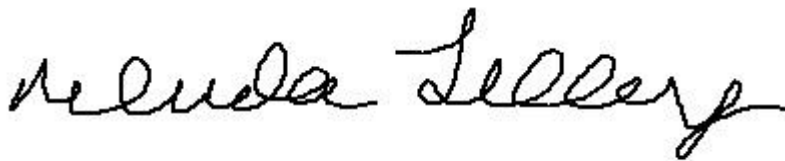
**FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
FOR OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES
ADOPTION SERVICE**

**BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PARENTING
PANEL**

On behalf of the County Council and as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, I am delighted to endorse this Statement of Purpose for the Adoption Service for the coming year.

The Statement of Purpose is available on the OCC website and also at the Oxfordshire Children Information Service office.

Thank you for your care and commitment to meeting children's needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Tilley'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

Councillor Melinda Tilley

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE ADOPTION SERVICE
2016-2017

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of Standard 18 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards revised in 2011 (Care Standards Act 2000)

During 2015-16, Oxfordshire's adoption service has continued to build on the changes since 2013 with new Adoption Regulations and continued funding from the Adoption Reform Grant. This has enabled the service to grow in order to reduce timescales for adopter approval and so that more children can benefit from being adopted into loving homes that meet their needs in a more timely way.

This continues to be something that the government is concerned with and funding has been on-going. Additional legislative changes have occurred in 2015 to drive this including improvements to the support available to adoptive families and the same rights to pay and leave for adoptive parents as birth parents.

As part of the Adoption Reform Programme in June 2015 the Government issued a paper titled *Regionalising Adoption*. The aim of the regionalization agenda was to:

- Speed up matching of children with adopters
- Improve adopter recruitment to make sure that it is more effective and linked to the needs of children waiting
- Ensure high quality adoption support services are available nationally

The paper proposed the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies, which would take the form of Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies joining together to deliver services.

In October 2015, Oxfordshire together with a number of other adoption agencies submitted an Expression of Interest to form a new regional adoption agency. This EOI was successful and the government has allocated funds to support this development. The anticipated timescale for implementation is over the next two years.

The government continues to monitor the progress of local authorities and the third 'Adoption Score Card' has recently been published. This measures the timeliness of children moving to adoptive families and sets targets for local authorities' improvement. Oxfordshire continues to perform well and, along with the Ofsted 'good' rating for adoption in May 2014 (as part of the full children's services inspection), there is evidence that Oxfordshire's response to the changes of recent years has put the authority in a good position to continue to respond in a timely way to the needs of both adoptive parents and children needing permanency via adoption.

We are planning to continue the emphasis on adopter recruitment over the coming year, as well as recruiting some adopters who will be dually approved to both foster and adopt. This will enable the authority to achieve very early permanence for some children for whom a fostering for adoption placement is appropriate. We will also continue to prioritise good planning for all children needing adoption, to ensure that they will be placed in a timely way as has been the case for a significant number of children in 2015-16.

Aims

Oxfordshire County Council Adoption Service aims:

- To achieve good outcomes for children and to ensure that all children living in Oxfordshire have the opportunity to grow up in a permanent, safe and loving home. Where this cannot be provided by the birth parents or extended family without undue delay, adoption will be considered.
- To ensure that the needs, wishes, welfare and safety of the child are at the centre of the adoption process.
- To ensure that people who are interested in becoming adoptive parents are welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information about recruitment, assessment, approval and support services.
- To ensure that birth families are treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process and have access to adoption support services.
- To ensure that all those affected by adoption (including adopted adults) have access to a single point of contact and are provided with relevant information and advice in a timely manner

Objectives of the Adoption Service

- To ensure that adoption is considered for all children in care who are not able to return to their birth family or kin.
- To place children for whom adoption is the plan with adoptive families who can meet their needs.
- To recruit a pool of prospective adopters to reflect the assessed needs of the children needing adoptive families both in Oxfordshire and in the wider community.
- To provide a range of adoption support services as required by the
- Adoption and Children Act 2002, including counselling and advice, support groups and training as well as practical, financial and therapeutic services.
- •To provide a point of contact for people living in Oxfordshire who have been affected by adoption. To comply with the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and provide an assessment of need for adoption support services when required.
- To ensure that applicants for inter-country adoption are provided with counselling and advice, preparation and assessment from Parents and Children Together (PACT). Oxfordshire has a contract with PACT to provide these services.

- To provide a statutory service (as prescribed in the Inter Country Adoption Regulations 2003) for children who are brought into the UK with the intention of adoption and who reside in Oxfordshire, through the services of Parents and Children Together (PACT).
- To ensure that the Adoption Agency employs staff with appropriate and sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to deliver the adoption service.
- To ensure that Oxfordshire's Children, Education and Families Service work in partnership with other agencies to promote the best outcomes for those affected by adoption.
- To ensure that all parties to the adoption process will have access to the Department's Complaints procedure.

Principles and Values

Values – Children

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from good parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills, leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.
- Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of those children waiting to be adopted.
- Children should be placed in adoptive families in which most of their assessed needs can be matched rather than waiting for the perfect match.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- Children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected.

Values - Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives

- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved – adopted adults, birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual's life.
- Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their lives.
- The welfare of all parties involved in adoption should be considered in the way services are provided. The Agency will consider the implications of decisions and actions for everyone involved; the agency will seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views and wishes in decision-making.
- The Agency acknowledges differences in people's circumstances and will establish policies that provide non-discriminatory services.
- Adopted adults should have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family member.

Manager of the Adoption Service

Teresa Rogers, Service Manager, Adoption, Permanence and Fostering

County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

Qualifications: BA (Hons) CQSW, Dip SW, Diploma in Management Studies.

Staff Employed for the Purpose of the Adoption Service **(See staffing list at end of document)**

- Service Manager Adoption, Permanence and Fostering (1 fte)
- Adoption Advisor and Professional Advisor to Panel (1fte)

Adoption Recruitment, Assessment and Family Finding:

- Adoption Team Managers (1.8 fte)
- Senior Practitioners (3.5 fte)
- Adoption Social Workers (5.5fte)
- Adoption Family Support worker (1fte)

Adoption and Permanence Support

- Adoption and Permanence Support Manager/Adoption Support Services Advisor (0.8fte)
- Adoption and Permanence Support Senior Practitioners (1.5 fte)
- Adoption and Permanence Support Social Workers (3.0 fte)
- Birth Relative Support Worker/Letterbox Co-ordinator Senior Practitioner (0.8fte)
- Social Worker for adults affected by adoption (15 hours per week)

Support Service staff:

- Adoption and Permanence Panel Administrator (1fte)
- Adoption and Fostering Recruitment Officer (1fte)
- Adoption and Permanence Support Administrator (1fte)

In addition, the following staff are commissioned by the Adoption Service:

- Independent Chair of Adoption Panel
- Sessional Adoption Manager for permanence planning/assessment of adopters.
- Sessional Social Workers undertaking Adoption Home Studies
- Sessional Social workers undertaking non agency adoption assessments and reports for court
- Sessional workers undertaking in depth Life Story Work
- External trainer providing parenting training courses and workshops for adoptive parents

Organisational Structure and Functions

The **Corporate Parenting Manager** has overall responsibility for the Adoption Service.

The **Principal Social Worker , Head of Safeguarding and Service Manager for Children with Disabilities** share the role of the Agency Decision Maker. The **Service Manager, Adoption, Permanence and Fostering** provides the operational management of the service.

The **Adoption Adviser** manages the work of the three Adoption and Permanence Panels run by the county and in addition, has responsibility for developing policy and managing outside contracts with providers of services for adoption.

The **Adoption Team** is managed by two managers: (with one primarily responsible for recruiting, and assessing prospective adopters, and one primarily responsible for family finding).

The **Adoption and Permanence Support Team** has a part time manager who has the role of Adoption Support Service Adviser (for post order support), and manages all aspects of adoption support including the Adoption Helpdesk, the Birth Relative Support Service and the Letterbox Service

The **Recruitment Team**, which is shared with the Fostering Service, deals with enquiries from the public and the first stages of the application process for adopters.

This team also organises marketing and recruitment campaigns to encourage local people to apply to adopt and to recruit adopters for specific children.

The Recruitment Team, guided by Oxfordshire's Adoption Recruitment Strategy, aims to be transparent and to find adopters who are able to meet the needs of the children waiting for placements both in Oxfordshire and other areas.

The recruitment process for adopters has been altered since 2013, in line with the new adoption regulations and the Action Plan for Adoption. This was in order to comply with the new faster time scales for adopter approval and to provide more approved adopters both for Oxfordshire's children and for children needing adoption in other parts of the country.

Non Agency and Step Parent Adoption Services are currently provided by sessional workers and Adoption team staff.

Sessional Social Workers undertake some adoption home studies when required.

Administrative support staff includes a full time specialist adoption panel administrator, together with team administrators, shared with the Fostering Service. The Adoption Team currently has one full time administrator with a new 0.5 FTE post anticipated. The Adoption and Permanence Support Team has a full time specialist administrator who provides administrative support to the Letterbox Service.

The **Child Care Social Work Teams**, taking advice from the Adoption Team, provide services for children: assessing their needs, planning and preparing children for adoption.

The **Adoption Team** takes the lead in family finding and matching children with prospective adopters, both within and outside Oxfordshire. The Adoption Team keeps approved adopters informed about children needing placement and supports them in finding 'good matches.'

Oxfordshire belongs to the Adoption South Central Consortium along with Surrey, Reading, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Portsmouth, Southampton and the voluntary agencies, PACT and Cabrini.

When there are no suitable Oxfordshire approved prospective adoptive families for a child, a judgement is made about whether a wider search should be made within the Consortium or nationally. The Consortium members regularly share profiles of children waiting for adoption and prospective adopters.

The Team also use resources such as The National Adoption Register, Adoption Link, Be My Parent, Activity Days and Profiling Events to find adoptive families where needed for Oxfordshire children. Likewise prospective adopters are supported to use these resources themselves, if they are not likely to be matched with an Oxfordshire child after 3 months. However, most adopters are eventually matched with Oxfordshire children.

Birth Parents and birth relatives of children being adopted have access to independent support and counselling from a dedicated Senior Practitioner/Birth Relative Support Worker. Information is provided about this service early on in the permanence planning process.

Birth family members are provided with ongoing assistance in maintaining contact either direct or through letterbox and are supported in initial face to face meetings with prospective adopters.

A Birth Mother's Group provides monthly support to birth mothers of adopted children

Oxfordshire's Attach Team (Attaining Therapeutic Attachments for Children) provides help for children and their adoptive families if therapeutic intervention is required. The team includes clinical psychologists, a family therapist and a specialist senior practitioner.

The **Residential and Edge of Care Team** may be available to help if adopters are experiencing extreme difficulties in their relationship with their child or are dealing with complex behaviour. This service offers direct work with children and their parents or carers, including those placed with adoptive parents.

The **Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Programme (MTFC)**

MTFC may be involved in some cases of Looked After Children with adoption plans who are placed with specialist MTFC foster carers before their placement for adoption.

MTFC is part of the Oxfordshire fostering service, offering a specialist foster care treatment programme for children aged 3-11. The programme aims to enable a small number of children who have the most complex emotional, behavioural and developmental needs to be placed in short term treatment foster care placements where they will learn the skills needed to live in families on a permanent basis, either returning to live with birth families or moving on to permanence through adoption or fostering.

When children who are on the MTFC programme are placed for adoption, their new adopters may continue to receive the services of the MTFC team in the transitional period after their move.

Medical Advisers in the Community Paediatric Team based at The John Radcliffe and Horton Hospitals provide specialist medical advice for adopters, social workers and the Adoption Panel.

The **Designated Nurse for Looked After Children** also provides a medical service to children with adoption plans until their adoptions are finalised.

Oxfordshire's Virtual School has a role in supporting the educational needs of children being placed for adoption.

The **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)** and Primary CAMHS can provide specialist mental health services for adopted children and their families.

The **Permanence Planning Meetings**, which now take place monthly in each area, monitor children's permanency plans and provide expert advice to social workers at an early stage in the adoption planning process. This also leads to early identification of children needing adoption placements which helps to plan and begin early family finding. A tracking system undertaken by the Performance Team and monitored by managers also helps to ensure time scales are complied with.

The **Adoption Strategy and Performance Meeting**, held regularly, with senior managers, adoption managers and the Agency Decision Makers, looks at quality assurance issues, monitors progress and plans strategy regarding adoption.

Direct Post Adoption Contact is facilitated and if necessary supervised by members of the Adoption and Permanence Support Team.

Letter Box Contact is facilitated by a specialist administrator and Senior Practitioner/Letterbox Coordinator and managed by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team Manager.

Financial Support may be provided to ensure adoptive families are able to meet the assessed needs of the children placed with them. This may be provided as a lump sum or as a weekly, means tested allowance.

The decision to provide financial support rests with the Service Manager for Adoption, Permanence & Fostering.

The Agency's three **Adoption and Permanence Panels** each meet once per month and have three main functions:

- To recommend that a child should be placed for adoption in cases of children who are not currently subject to Care Proceedings
- To recommend that applicants are suitable to adopt a child
- To recommend the 'match' between a child and prospective adopters

The Adoption Panel also provides advice regarding:

- contact arrangements between the child and their adopters and birth relatives
- the provision of adoption support
- the delegation of parental responsibility to adopters
- the continuing assessment of applicants to adopt
- the age range of children adopters would be most suited to adopt
- the learning that can be achieved through adoption disruption

The **Adoption Panel** receives six monthly updates on all cases heard and reports on any particular issues regarding quality assurance. The panel monitors cases to check if they are compliant with the time frames in the regulations and reports are provided on a six monthly basis to the Corporate Parenting Panel. Plans for adoption in respect of children who are the subject of Care Proceedings are decided by the Agency Decision Maker who is either the Principal Social Worker or the Service Manager for Children with Disabilities.

The **Annual Report on the Adoption and Permanency Panel** is an added mechanism for quality assurance and monitoring of the adoption service.

Adoption Training including an annual training day is provided for all adoption social work staff and panel members and offered to all children's social work staff.

New panel members are provided with an induction and annual appraisals are undertaken with all panel members.

The **South East Regional Group**, of which Oxfordshire is a member, meets regularly to share information on service development and good practice.

Services Provided

The **Adoption Team** recruit, train, assess and provide support to prospective adopters.

The **County Council's website** provides full information on Oxfordshire's adoption service for the public with dedicated pages on adoption for both adults and children.

Oxfordshire's Children's Guide to Adoption has been produced in two versions; one for children under five and one for over five's. This booklet provides information for children on the adoption process. Oxfordshire also produces a separate **Children's Guide to Adoption Support Services**.

Life Story Books and later life letters are given to children placed for adoption and are completed within ten working days of the adoption ceremony.

Information Leaflets are made available for the general public, prospective adopters, adopters and adopted children and birth relatives.

Oxfordshire's information leaflets include:

- Information about Adoption for Birth Relatives
- Information for Birth Parents of children looked after
- Oxfordshire's Information Pack for enquirers regarding adoption
- Information for adopters on the home study process
- Information for adopters on the linking process
- A Children's Guide to Adoption Support Services
- Information on the Letter Box service for birth relatives and adopters
- Information for adopters on Adoption Support Services
- Oxfordshire's Adoption and Permanency Panel Brochure
- Advice on the adopted child in school for teachers and parents
- Oxfordshire's passport for adoption support services

Overseas Adoption

Oxfordshire County Council commissions a service from PACT Adoption Agency for those who wish to adopt from overseas. PACT

also carry out adoption welfare supervision on behalf of the County in respect of children from overseas placed with adopters in Oxfordshire, until an Adoption Order is granted.

The **Child Care Social Work Teams** provide services for children in need, including those in need of protection and accommodation. They work with birth families, where possible, to formulate permanency plans for children including plans for adoption. Where adoption is the plan, children are supported and prepared for placement by their social worker with advice from members of the adoption team

Birth parents who wish to relinquish their children are provided with initial counselling from the Assessment Teams. Relinquishing birth parents and their relatives can also access the services of the Birth Relative Support Worker.

Finding families for children waiting for adoption, matching children with prospective adopters, preparing Adoption Placement Reports and planning introductions is led by a family finder from the adoption team in conjunction with the child's social worker.

Approved adopters are supported by the adoption team to find children who match their family profile. They are also provided with preparation, training and support until a child is placed with them and supported until the Adoption Order is made.

Adoption Support Services

Adopters are made aware of their entitlement to an assessment of their support needs and can be referred for an assessment of their needs for more specialist help where this is indicated, either before or after an Adoption Order is made.

Adopters, children placed for adoption and any other children and close relatives of the adopter's family can be provided with a package of support including:

- Annual Adopter's Picnic

- A Buddy Scheme matching trained adopter buddies to support newer adopters
- A dedicated Adoption Support Helpdesk as front door for adoption support
- An allocated adoption support social worker working to an agreed Adoption Support Plan
- Support with any contact arrangements
- Referral to the Attach team for therapeutic services
- Access to termly advice sessions from an educational psychologist
- Bi-annual Adoption Newsletter
- Assistance with life story work and creation of enhanced Life Story Books
- Occasional activities for adopted children and young people
- Application to the Adoption Support Fund for specialist therapeutic provision

In addition, the Adoption Service provides a range of specialist training and workshops for adopters including:

- A Reflection Workshop (1/2 day) and Adoption Preparation Course (3 days) to prepare adopters during assessment.
- A Recruitment Mentoring Scheme for prospective adopters during their assessment process.
- A specialist 10 week Parenting Course for all prospective adopters on approval.
- 'Adopt' - a 16 week parenting and support programme for adopters with a child aged 3-8 already in placement
- An annual 3 week course on Dealing with Anger and Strong Feelings relevant to adopters of children under 10
- A twice yearly 6 week course on Coping with Teens – followed by termly 'top up' sessions for all graduates of the course
- An annual series of two Lets Play workshops incorporating Theraplay techniques
- A 14 week course on Fostering Attachments run by the Attach Team
- An annual workshop for adoptive parents and older adopted children (16+) to discuss options regarding future arrangements for contact with birth families
- An annual workshop for adopters on social networking and adoption
- Occasional workshops/seminars on topical issues relevant to adoption including Talking to your Child about Adoption/Managing Transitions in Education for Adopted Children

Oxfordshire's Adoption Allowance Scheme provides financial support, where this is necessary, to ensure that adopters can look after

their adopted child in special circumstances. The allowance is paid weekly and is means tested.

There are also arrangements for paying lump sums where this is necessary to meet the assessed needs of a specific child.

Educational Support Services can be provided by the school psychology service accessed through a child's own school and Oxfordshire's Virtual School.

Therapeutic and Child Mental Health Services can be provided through a referral to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service which includes Primary CAMHS.

Birth Parents (and other significant relatives) are provided with information, advice and support through the Birth Relative Support Service and are supported with both indirect and direct contact arrangements through the Adoption and Permanence Support Team and the Letter Box Service. In addition, there is a monthly support group for birth mothers of adopted children. Birth relatives are also supported at introduction meetings with prospective adopters.

Adults Affected by Adoption are provided with a counselling service and access to records by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team via a specialist social worker.

Intermediary Services between adopted adults, their birth relatives and significant others is not currently provided but enquirers are directed to Adoption Support Agencies that offer this service. Birth relatives seeking to make contact with adopted adults are provided with information and signposted to relevant agencies.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Adoption Service

The Agency's performance, including the numbers of adopters approved, numbers of children with adoption plans and timescales for children's progress through the adoption system is reported to Senior Managers regularly, and to the Department for Education on a quarterly basis.

Preparation and Training Courses for adopters are regularly evaluated and the activities of the adoption panel are reported on annually. Evaluations are used to inform the development of the service.

A bi - annual report is presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel of elected members to inform them and enable them to comment on the agency's activity and performance.

The **Adoption Statement of Purpose** is regularly reviewed by members of the agency and presented to elected members annually.

The **Adoption Panel** monitors cases of children who are approved for adoption but not yet placed and checks on timeliness of plans for adoption and applications to adopt coming to panel. In addition, the panel receives six monthly progress reports on all cases heard and monitors the quality of reports presented to panel.

Procedures for Recruiting, Assessing, Approving and Supporting Prospective Adopters

Oxfordshire's recruitment strategy is to progress the recruitment of adopters according to the needs of Oxfordshire's children waiting for adoption and in line with the government's Action Plan for Adoption, to seek to provide adoptive placements for those children waiting for placements in other areas too. This strategy is reviewed regularly in line with the needs of the service and the requirements of the children needing adoptive families.

The recruitment process has been re-structured to comply with the government's Action Plan for Adoption. The new adoption regulations governing this work require a faster six month time frame for recruitment and assessment of adopters. This new system consists of an initial two month first stage while checks and adopter led training takes place, followed by a four month more in depth assessment, during which the home study report is completed for the Adoption Panel. The regulations governing this work were published in the summer of 2013 and implemented later that year.

All enquirers are currently sent an information pack, including information on becoming an adopter and expectations of adopters. Information sessions are held every two weeks which provide enquirers with information about the adoption process, details regarding the agency's policy on adoption and details of children waiting for adoptive families.

If, after making an initial enquiry and/or attending an information meeting enquirers wish to continue, after providing some initial information regarding their suitability, they will be contacted and interviewed by an Adoption Social Worker.

The social worker will discuss the applicants' individual circumstances and invite them to complete a "Registration of Interest" form. Those returning their Registration of Interest form will be considered by the Adoption Team Manager. Prospective applicants wishing to proceed to Stage one of the assessment process will be considered on the basis of the information they provide and will be prioritised according to the needs of the children waiting for adoptive families. At this stage, applicants will receive written confirmation of their acceptance onto Stage one of their adopter assessment.

Prospective Adopter Applicants will be invited to attend a Reflection and Preparation workshop during Stages one or two of the assessment process. These workshops are held on a rolling programme throughout the year and are held over four separate days. Applicants can be progressed to Stage two of the assessment process once their checks and references are returned and are found to be satisfactory. Prospective adopters will be given written confirmation of their successful progression to Stage two.

Prospective adopters can take a break of up to six months between stages one and two of the assessment process. A Social Worker will then be allocated to undertake their assessment as soon as practicable, and according to the needs of the children waiting for placements at the time.

Following the applicant's assessment, the social worker will present a report to the Adoption Panel with a recommendation regarding the applicant's suitability to adopt. The prospective adopters are invited to attend the Adoption Panel considering their approval. The panel makes a recommendation regarding the applicants' suitability to adopt and may provide advice about the number and ages of children the adopters are most suitable to adopt.

The Agency Decision Maker makes the final decision based on the panel's recommendation. If the agency proposes not to approve the applicants as suitable to adopt, the prospective adopters have the right to submit any representations they wish to the agency or refer to the Independent Review Mechanism.

Approved adopters are supported by their social worker throughout the process of linking and placing children with them and are provided with advice and support regarding parenting an adopted child.

Adopters can be referred to the Adoption and Permanence Support Team for post-order support or can self-refer via the Adoption Support Helpdesk. Adoption support services may be provided to adopters after adoption following an assessment of need.

Provision of Adoption Support Services

Before a child is linked with prospective adopters an Adoptive Placement

Report is formulated, which includes a plan for adoption support services. The prospective adopters are given the opportunity to contribute to this report and comment on the support plan before it is presented to the adoption panel.

The **Adoption Support Plan** is reviewed at each review of the adoptive placement and finally before the Adoption Order is made.

If the need should arise, an adoptive parent, adopted child, birth relative or others affected by adoption may refer to the adoption service for counselling, advice and information, a new assessment of their support needs or referral to a more specialist service.

Oxfordshire's Adoption and Permanence Support Team provides:

- A dedicated Helpdesk to take all new referrals and enquiries
- An assessment of need for adoption support where requested
- Direct social work support working with families on parenting strategies, promoting attachment and other interventions post order
- Referral to Oxfordshire's Attach Team for therapeutic services
- Referral to Oxfordshire's REoC Team for services to prevent disruption
- A Letterbox Service to facilitate indirect contact
- Assistance with, and supervision of, direct contact where necessary
- Signposting to other relevant agencies
- Provision of enhanced Life Story books and/or intensive Life Story work
- Access to regular post-order training and social events

- Buddy Scheme
- Education Psychology surgery for adopted children experiencing difficulty in school
- An assessment of need may result in provision of a social work service; referral for a therapeutic service; educational support service or provision of financial support.
- Assessments are transparent and the assessment report is made available to the (parent(s) of the) subject of the assessment.
- Support plans are reviewed with the service provider and service user on a regular basis.
- Adoption support services are managed by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team Manager who shares responsibility for the role of designated Adoption Support Services Adviser with the Adoption Team Manager.

Complaints Procedure

Oxfordshire Children's Social Care is committed to providing good quality services and welcomes feedback about services it delivers and purchases.

We would value feedback of any kind whether that be compliments, comments or complaints about our services and further information is available on the public website or by using the details below.

In the event that someone wishes to make a complaint they should first raise the issue with their social worker in the Adoption Team or the relevant Team Manager or they may contact:

Comments and Complaints Officer
 Joint Commissioning
 Oxfordshire County Council
 County Hall, (4th Floor)
 New Road, Oxford, OX1
 1ND Tel: 01865 810563
commentsandcomplaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk

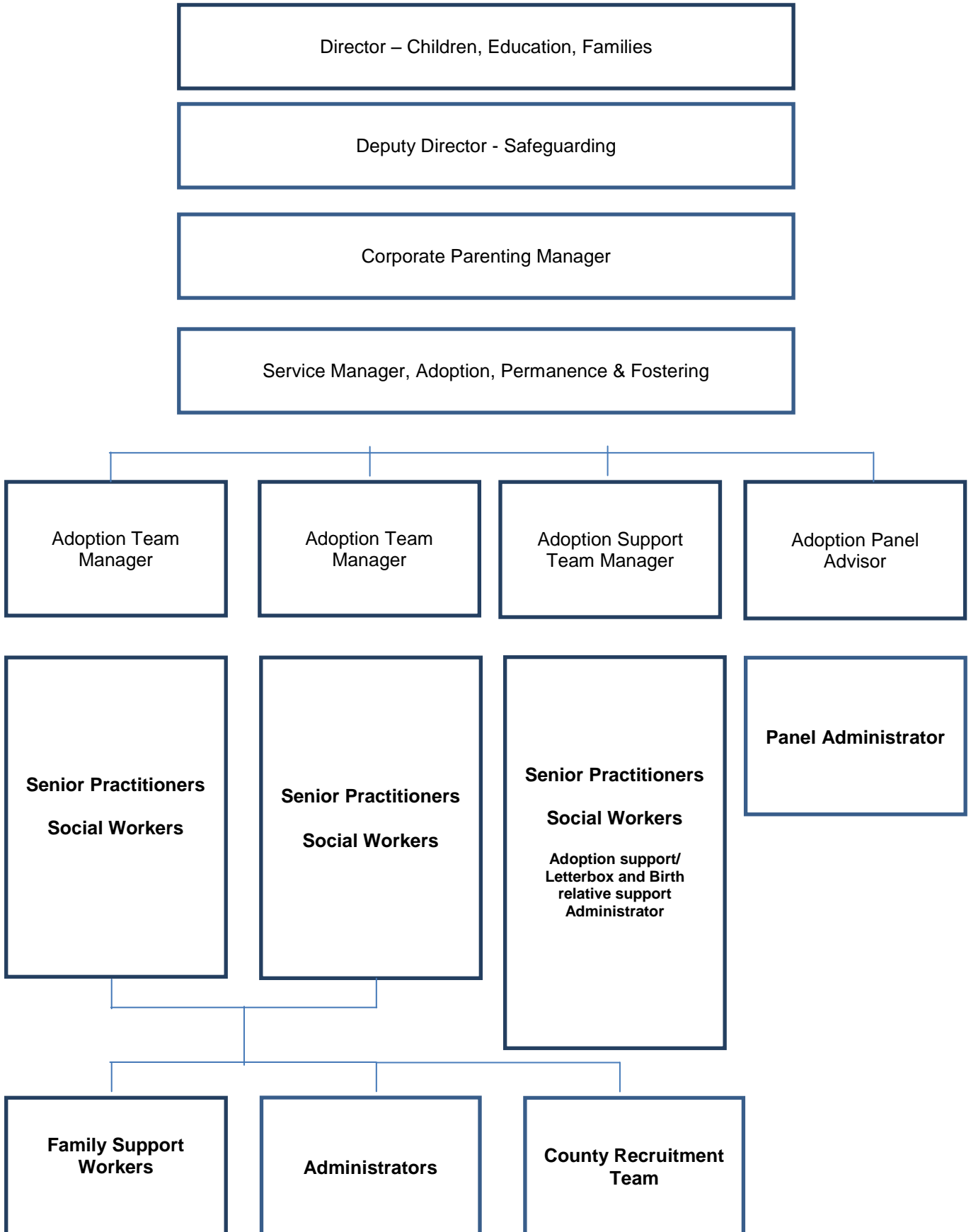
Alternatively the Ofsted Adoption Inspection Team can be contacted at:

Ofsted
 Piccadilly Gate
 Store Street
 Manchester
 M1 2WD
 General Helpline **0300 123 1231**

www.ofsted.gov.uk/

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Adoption and Permanence Management structure



If you need this information in another language, Large print, Braille, on audio cassette, computer disk or by email, please contact the Social and Health Care Team

Tel: 0845 050 7666 or

Email: socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk