



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Region: North East

Date: January 2021

Registered: Adoption Agency

Registration Body: Ofsted

Registration Number: SC048403



**Believe in
children**
 **Barnardo's**

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Introduction

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption that an adoption agency produces a Statement of Purpose. This Statement of Purpose has been written in accordance with;

- The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011)
- The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (miscellaneous amendments) Regulations 2003 – England and Wales as amended by the Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Amendment regulations 2005)
- The Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011)
- The Care Planning Regulations 2010
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children Act 1989
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- The Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Adoption Agencies (Panel & Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

A copy of this Statement of Purpose has been provided to Ofsted and is accessible on the Barnardo's website and is also available on request. This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and at least annually.

Aims, objectives and outcomes

Aims

At Barnardo's, we believe that a child's future should never be defined by their past; every child deserves the chance to fulfil his or her potential.

We recognise that the children we seek to place are among the most vulnerable in our society. Children's views, wishes and feelings will be acted upon, unless it is contrary to their interests.

Barnardo's believes that good parents come from many different backgrounds and are as varied as the children we seek to place. Prospective adopters are required to demonstrate that they can safely and skilfully parent a child to independence and beyond. Adoption is a lifelong commitment and Barnardo's is committed to remaining responsive and supportive throughout that journey.

Barnardo's understands the importance of ethnic and cultural identity in its family placement work and aims, where possible, to achieve placements with adopters who reflect and/or promote the ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language of the children to be placed.

Appropriate support will be offered to each family to enable them to address the child's particular needs. This will include enhancing the parents' ability to understand and promote the child's positive self-esteem, confidence and identity. Barnardo's has access to a wide spectrum of support services which can be accessed to respond to individual need.

Objectives and outcomes

1. To provide children with safe, secure and lasting adoptive families and our policies and services are directed towards achieving this outcome for children in need of adoption.
2. To increase placement choice and to reduce delay in the adoption process for children. The children most likely to need our service are those of black and minority ethnic backgrounds, sibling groups, school-aged children, children who have additional needs arising from learning or physical disabilities and children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

3. To recruit, prepare, assess and support prospective adoptive families. Potential adoptive families will be considered on the basis of their capability to meet the needs of the identified children.
4. To seek and provide a high level of emotional, practical and legal support to children and families post adoption. The agency will look to help families in accessing the appropriate adoption support.
5. The agency offers support and counselling to adults who have an adoption connection and offers an intermediary service to adults for whom Barnardo's is the relevant adoption agency.
6. Barnardo's can offer a range of training and consultancy.

Service Registration Details

Barnardo's is a company registered as a trust corporation on 16 December 1926. Its governing instrument is the Memorandum and limited by guarantee (registered in England under number 61625) and a registered charity (numbers 216250 and SC037605). It was also Articles of Association, most recently amended by special resolution passed on 17 July 2001.

Barnardo's Board of Trustees, by way of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, governs Barnardo's Adoption Agency. This committee meets every four months and receives reports from the Responsible Individual.

An annual report is presented to Barnardo's Board of Trustees with an overview of the agency adoption work. The Commercial Director coordinates the work of the Agency between Corporate management and the Family Placement Business Line.

The Responsible Individual is Brenda Farrell, Head of Business, Family Placement.

The Adoption Agency Manager is Carolyn Oliver, Assistant Head of Business – Adoption.

The Adoption Decision Maker is -

- Carolyn Oliver, Assistant Head of Business, who is a qualified Social Worker with a CQSW and B.A. in Social Studies (1977). She also has a Certificate in Management (2004). She has worked in Family Placement since 1977, specialising in Adoption since 1981.

Barnardo's Fostering and Adoption NE Branch

The Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker can be contacted via:

Adoption England Registered Office

Barnardo's
Barnardo's Youth Village
Hudson St.
North Shields
NE30 1DL
Telephone: 0191 2963355

This is the main registered office for Barnardo's Adoption in England and Wales and for UK management purposes. The Ofsted registration number is SC048403.

In Scotland, the Social Care and Social Work Improvement registration number is CS2005095655.

Branches - England and Wales

There are six branches that place children for adoption and an additional branch offering dedicated adoption support services. An Operations Manager manages each branch.

The Adoption Branches are:

- Barnardo's Adoption Service South East
54 Head Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1PB
This branch also provides adoption support by contract to Kent Local Authority and from an office base at 10 Jubilee Way, Faversham, Kent ME13 8GD.
- Barnardo's Adoption Midlands
Brooklands, Great Cornbow, West Midlands, B63 3AB
- Barnardo's Fostering and Adoption Yorkshire
Unit 6, Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Leeds, LS12 6AJ

Barnardo's Fostering and Adoption NE Branch

This branch also has an office base at 222 Eccles Old Road, Salford, M6 8AL.

- Barnardo's Fostering and Adoption North East
1 Lumley Court, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester le Street, Durham, DH2 1AN
- Barnardo's Cymru Adoption and Fostering
Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD
- Barnardo's Adoption Services South West
The Fulford Centre, Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 9AQ

The Adoption Support Branch is:

- Making Connections
Barnardo's Making Connections, 140 Balaam St, London, E13 8RD
Registration number SC051840

The Scotland Service – registered with SCSWIS is:

- Barnardo's Scotland Adoption Service (BSAS) (incorporating both the Adoption Placement Service and Adoption Support Service)
Academy Park, Building 10,000, Gower St, Glasgow, G51 1PR

This is the statement of purpose for the Fostering and Adoption North East Branch

Name and address of the Managers:

Ann-Marie Henderson – Operations Manager Adoption
Barnardo's Fostering and Adoption North East,
1 Lumley Court,
Drum Industrial Estate,
Chester-le Street,
County Durham,
DH2 1AN

Barnardo's Fostering and Adoption NE Branch

Any conditions for the time being in force in relation to the registration of the registered provider under Part II of the Care Standards Act 2000.

None

The branch is registered to provide:

- Domestic adoption services and adoption support services
- Both birth records counselling and intermediary services
- Adoption support services to children and adults

Service staff

The relevant experience and qualifications of the branch manager:

The relevant qualifications and experience of the Registered Manager

Ann-Marie Henderson

B Sc Hons Social Work
University of Northumbria

ILM /Qualification Lv 4

Job roles and qualifications

Management team

The service management team comprises of the Operations Manager Practice Manager.

The Operations Manager is the branch manager of the adoption service and is responsible for the overall operation of the service. She is responsible for budgetary control and the development and implementation of the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation. She also acts as professional advisers to the adoption panel.

Practice Manager (Part time)

Hayley Ventress is a qualified Social Worker; Sw England registration number SW17799. She is responsible for the supervision, development and management of the social workers within the team. The Practice Manager takes responsibility for developing training and support services for adopters and coordinates training alongside responsibilities for recruitment and assessment. She has significant experience in adoption and wider children's services and a proven track record of delivering successful outcomes for children and adopters.

Qualifications

- BSc Hons Social Work University of Sunderland
- ILM /Qualification Lv4

Practice Manager (Part time)

Lisa Husband is a qualified and SW England registered SW SW54951.

She is responsible for the supervision, development and management of the social workers within the team. The Practice Manager takes responsibility for developing training and support services for adopters and coordinates training alongside responsibilities for recruitment and assessment. Lisa joined the service in January 2020 and has ten years experience as a Fostering Team Manager within an IFA in the region. Prior to this she worked as a social worker in adoption and fostering services in statutory and voluntary settings.

There are 4 qualified Social Workers (3.59FTE) within the team who are all registered with Social Work England. They support the recruitment, preparation, assessment, placement and support of prospective adoptive families. They also provide a post adoption service which is coordinated by the Family Finder for the team.

All social workers undertaking assessments of prospective adopters will either have a minimum of 3 post-qualifying years of social work practice, which includes adoption work or they will be closely supervised by the Practice Manager who has significant experience of adoption and leadership.

The social workers in the team bring a variety of specific qualifications, skills and experiences of working with developmental, attachment trauma.

The service also engages a small pool of external consultants who are available to carry out assessments and provide training and therapeutic, attachment based services for adoptive families.

Family finder

A full time Family Finder supports the linking and matching process for prospective adoptive families who are approved and those in the final stages of the assessment process. This includes working with newly approved families to draw up a family finding profile and plan, liaising with other family finders throughout Barnardo's adoption service nationally, developing relationships with Local Authorities to share information about and promote Barnardo's families. The family finder works closely with the local RAAS and local Authorities to share family finding and also supports prospective adoptive families at regional and national family finding events.

Recruitment Officer

The service has a recruitment officer who drives the recruitment of prospective adoptive families. They are responsible for supporting all aspects of the recruitment process.

Administration

The service is supported by an experienced and efficient administrative team who ensure that all systems run smoothly and that all contacts with the agency are timely and responsive. The Service Administration Manager manages and supervises the Administration team providing quality assurance of the administration of the service.

Services provided

- The recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective adopters
- Learn and share support groups for all those from Stage 2 onwards
- Early permanence placements
- Family finding for prospective adoptive parents in assessment and following approval
- A range of post approval workshops and training days
- A high level of emotional, practical and legal support to children and families post placement
- Encouraging reflective parenting support sessions for adoptive families and support for school
- Out of hours telephone support and advice
- 3 x annual adoption support newsletter
- Therapeutic parenting training for adoptive families
- Access to counselling and psychological support
- Family social events
- Buddying where an experienced adoptive parent provides support to new families
- Responsive support to adoptive families following the making of an Adoption Order including signposting and supporting applications to the Adoption Support Fund

Recruitment, approval, review and support for adoptive parents

This section provides information on the procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adoptive parents.

Initial enquiry

On receiving an enquiry from a prospective adopter, we will respond and take enquirers' initial details to ensure that they live within our geographical recruitment area. We will answer questions enquirers have about the adoption process and send them an information pack which will include further details about adoption and the processes.

Information meeting

If a prospective adopter wishes to proceed, they are invited to an information /coffee morning held monthly on a Saturday morning at the North East office. Here the prospective adopter will be given more information about adoption and particularly the adoption process with Barnardo's and how we can support them.

Initial home visit

The next stage, should the prospective adopter wish to continue and we wish to consider their enquiry further, will be for a social worker to arrange an initial visit/interview. This maybe at the enquirer's home or within one of our offices. This is an opportunity for them to find out more about the adoption process and also allows us to find out more about them. After this, the prospective adopter will have time to consider whether adoption is right for them at this time.

If the enquirer wishes to move to the next stage they will be required to formally complete the Registration of Interest form.

Registration of Interest form and preliminary checks

The Registration of Interest form will request consent from an enquirer for us to make the following checks:

- DBS checks to obtain information about criminal behaviour and convictions. Not all offences will create difficulties with regard to an application but it is essential that any concerns are discussed when we take up the Registration of Interest.
- References from other agencies such as Local Authority (LA) Children Services, mortgage providers or landlord and employer.
- We will request details of six personal references.
- We will also request consent for a full medical check.

When a Registration of Interest form has been completed, we will respond within five working days and, if accepted, we will request that the enquirer be in a position to commence Stage One preparation.

Stage One – The Pre-Assessment process

It is expected that Stage One will normally be completed in two months. During this stage, the prospective adopter will be exploring the extent of their interest in and capacity for adoption, prior to a firmer decision on whether to proceed to Stage Two. For this reason, Stage One will focus on initial training and preparation, and on ascertaining, through prescribed checks and references, whether there is any absolute reason why the enquirer should not proceed further.

Part of this stage will require the enquirer to complete tasks in their workbook such as describing their family, learning about children who may be adopted, sharing their experience with children, etc. All applicants will be expected to complete the First4Adoption e-learning during this time.

We recognise that people come to adoption from many different circumstances and life experiences. We will fully guide the enquirer so that they can discover the strengths and vulnerabilities they may bring to the task of adoptive parenting. We will together draw up a Stage One agreement which will clearly set out what needs to be done in a way that feels right for the enquirer.

Preparation training

During this stage we will invite the prospective adopter to start a preparation course. This involves a series of sessions with other prospective adopters and specialist staff and adoptive parents. This will give the enquirer information and opportunities to thoroughly explore their expectations of adopting.

They will meet other people at the same stage of the process, as well as people who have already adopted and will be given the chance to think more about the children in need of adoption.

During Stage One, we will complete the formal checks and also ask the enquirer to visit their GP for a medical check. We will keep in touch with the enquirer throughout Stage One and towards its completion will review progress with them and highlight any concerns or need for further enquiries.

Stage One ends with the agency decision as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to proceed to Stage Two. If so, and they also wish to continue, the enquirer will be asked to confirm their acceptance within six months and will need to be fully available to engage in Stage Two at that point.

Application to Stage Two

When we receive an enquirer's acceptance of the invitation to Stage Two, a social worker will meet them and together they will complete a Stage Two plan (Agreement). This will indicate a timeline for undertaking the prospective adopter's individual assessment and this stage would normally be completed within four months.

Adoption assessment process

During the assessment process the prospective adopter's assessing social worker will spend more time with them, getting to know them better and exploring their life story and family history. If the applicant has children at home, their social worker will also need to get to know them as part of the family unit.

The assessing social worker will complete a Prospective Adopter's Report (PAR) to be presented to the Adoption Panel. This report is scrutinized by two managers as part of Quality Assurance.

Towards the end of Stage 2 early potential family finding may start with the family agreement. This helps to minimize delay for children waiting for adoption.

The prospective adopter will have an opportunity to see and comment on this report before it is presented to the panel. The Adoption Panel is made up of experienced individuals from a range of professions working with children and may also include someone who has previously adopted and someone who has been adopted. The panel will consider the information provided and the prospective adopter will be invited to meet them in person after which they will make a recommendation as to whether the enquirer is suitable to adopt. The final decision is then made by the Barnardo's Adoption Decision Maker.

Family finding/matching

Once the prospective adopter has been approved by the agency as 'suitable to adopt' we will assist them in family finding. We will meet with the approved adopter and complete a Matching and Family Finding Plan Agreement which outlines the process in identifying a child/ren for whom the approved adopter may be suitable. We will also assist them create a short profile of themselves which will be shared with family finders for children in Local Authorities. We ask that all approved prospective adoptive families prepare a book and/or DVD about themselves to share with the child who may eventually join their family. They will also be referred to the Adoption Register/ Linkmaker

which act to link approved adopters with children who have an adoption plan.

Children needing adoption are referred in a number of ways and the social worker and family finder will support the prospective adopter in looking at profiles of children and expressing an interest in children whose needs they feel they can meet. If the child's social worker feels that the approved adopter may be the right match for a child a series of meetings and information sharing takes place will take place to discuss the child in more detail allowing the prospective adopter to get as much information as possible. If the placing local authority and the prospective adopter agree the potential match at this point the family is linked.

When the approved adopter and the social workers agree that all seems right, a formal 'matching' recommendation will go to the Local Authority's Adoption Panel. Prospective adopters are usually required to attend this panel. This will also involve recommendations about any additional support the adopter may need.

If the 'match' is agreed then a meeting will take place with the adopter to plan the introductions and placement. At Barnardo's we will work closely with adopters throughout these processes and also support them in settling the children into their family.

Once a child is placed, the child's social worker and the adopter's social worker will continue to visit the family regularly to make sure all is well. The adopter will be supported throughout the placement and through to the granting of an adoption order, where regular review meetings will take place until the child is legally adopted. The adopter will also have the opportunity to attend further training, adopter support groups and social events and be part of our mentoring scheme. Once everybody is confident that the placement is going well, the adopter will be able to apply for an Adoption order. The timing of the application will be discussed at the review meetings.

Post-adoption support

Adoption is a lifelong journey and Barnardo's will support adopters every step of the way including in the years that follow. Post-adoption support is assistance or support required for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of the relationship between an adoptive child and their adoptive parents. When a child is placed with an adopter, there will be an adoption support plan drawn up which will reference both of their support needs. Many families need additional support and there are a number of services available to help as the adopter and child build their relationship. Barnardo's offers a range of support and the right option for an adopter will depend on their individual situation. When the adopter gets in touch with us, we will work with them to identify their adoption support needs.

Monitoring and evaluation

- All Social Workers are registered with the HCPC and all staff are subject to DBS checks and references.
- All staff receive regular formal supervision and an annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) which is formally reviewed at least once in the course of the year.
- All adoption panel members will be formally appraised on an annual basis.
- The agency will produce an annual report about the activity and performance of panel including statistics, membership and issues of interest or concern.
- Panel will receive a half yearly update from the agency on the progress of approved adopters in family finding and placements made.
- Panel will provide feedback on the quality of reports to the agency every six months.
- All prospective adopters and social workers will be asked to provide written feedback following attendance at panel.
- Panel considers reports of disrupted placements and cases referred to the IRM to advise on lessons to be learned.
- All approved prospective adopters who do not have placements will have an annual review.
- The service request all approved adopters to complete the annual feedback survey.
- The service collects children and young people's feedback at events.
- Quarterly Performance reviews of the service are carried out by the operations manager.
- A national report on the adoption service is presented three times a year to the board of trustees.
- The adoption service is inspected by Ofsted.

Feedback and Compliments

We are always looking at ways to improve our service and therefore we always welcome your feedback, comments and compliments about any aspect of the service you have received. These will be used to ensure continuous service improvements.

Representation Complaint

Children placed with Barnardo's have access to a complaints procedure and children will be encouraged and supported to raise any concerns and make a complaint when they wish to do so. An advocate, either their Social Worker, adoptive parent or a children's rights worker, or a friend will help and support them in being heard. Children's personal wishes are taken into account, where appropriate, as are their age, ability and understanding.

All prospective adopters have access to Barnardo's complaints procedure and will be given information on how to contact /complain to the relevant inspectorate body.

In England and Wales, once a prospective adopter's application has been considered by a Panel which does not recommend approval, applicants have access to the Independent Review Mechanism through the Panel Representation Procedures (copies of which are available in branches).

In addition to prospective adopters' rights to have access to the IRM if appropriate, adopters can also access the Barnardo's complaints procedures.

Complaints and Representation Policy – summary

The aim of Barnardo's complaints process is to resolve a complaint at the most informal level possible.

Complaints can be made in writing or orally to any member of staff up to and including the CEO.

Complainants and staff subject to complaints are kept informed of the progress of the investigation and any associated procedures subject to normal staff confidentiality.

Who is the Complaints Policy for?

- Prospective or approved adopters.
- Children and young people who are unhappy with the way they have been treated by Barnardo's.
- Other adult service users.

Who are complaints made to?

- To a social worker or manager in the service – verbally or in writing.
- To a senior manager in the region – verbally or in writing.
- To the complaints officer at the national headquarters – in writing.

What happens next?

Barnardo's has a Complaints and Representation Policy (the Complaints policy) for Children's Services and Business Lines:

- To ensure redress for children and young people and their carers through open and fair processes.
- To promote the participation of children, young people, and their families.
- To safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults by providing a process for them to raise concerns about the service they are receiving
- To improve service delivery through learning from complaints and representations

Stage 1 – local resolution of the complaint:

- The complainant is contacted to clarify the complaint.
- The complaint is investigated by an appropriate person within the service or another from the service.
- The investigator and complainant meet to discuss the conclusion and any action that may be advised to put things right.
- The investigation will normally be completed within:

- 10 working days from receipt of the complaint by the responsible manager.
- If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome they have the right to have their complaint re-examined under Stage 2 of the Procedure. The complainant has 20 days after being informed of the outcome of Stage 1 to request a Stage 2 investigation.

Stage 2 - resolution, using someone independent of the service to investigate the complaint:

- An independent person is appointed by a senior manager within the region to work with an investigating officer from Barnardo's (not the investigator from Stage 1).
- They re-examine the complaint after speaking to the complainant.
- They produce reports for the Head of Business for Barnardo's Family Placement services who after considering them will contact the complainant to inform them of his/her decision concerning the outcome and any action if needed.
- A stage 2 investigation is completed within 25 working days

Stage 3 - review

- If a complainant remains unhappy with the outcome a request to progress to a Stage 3 can be made and this must be made within 20 working days of receipt of the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation.
- A stage 3 is a review of the complaints process and can make recommendations for resolutions.
- A Stage 3 review is undertaken at director level independent of the Barnardo's Adoption Agency and will normally be completed within:
 - 45 working days of the request being made and agreed.

Other routes of complaint

Complainants may directly approach the relevant regulatory body; Ofsted at any stage. Ofsted has the power to investigate the complaint itself or require Barnardo's or the relevant local authority to do so.

Registration Authority Details

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Ofsted Information Helpline: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Other relevant contact details

Barnardo's Head Office

Tanners Lane

Ilford

Essex

IG6 1QG

Telephone: 020 8550 8822

Mobile: 07917 187718 (*for text or voice mail about complaints*)

Email: cs.complaints@barnardos.org.uk

The Ombudsman

Complainants have the right to contact the Inspecting body for adoption work Ofsted or the Local Government Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied. The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

COVENTRY

CV4 0EH

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 0610614 (*Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm*)

The Children's Rights Director

A further source of help for a child or young person may be found through the Children's Rights Director;

Ofsted
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
LONDON
WC2 6SE
Telephone: 08456 404040
Website: www.Rights4me.org.uk

Contract Manager
Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)
Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park,
Royds Hall Road, Wortley,
Leeds, LS12 6AJ
0845 450 3956
irm@irm.org.uk
www.independentreviewmechanism.org.uk