



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Region:

Midlands and South West

Date:

January 2022

Registered:

Adoption Agency

Registration Body:

Ofsted

Registration Number:

SC434885



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

Barnardo's Board of Trustees, by way of the Family Placement Scrutiny Committee, governs Barnardo's Adoption Agency. This committee meets every four months and receives reports from the Agency Adoption Manager and 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 Unit.

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

The Adoption Agency Manager is Jo-Ann Swanston-King, U.K Adoption Manager.

The Adoption Agency Decision Maker for Adoption and Early Permanence is Jo-Ann Swanston-King.

Jo-Ann Swanston-King

Jo-Ann qualified as a social worker in 1995 and is registered with Social Work England. Jo-Ann has worked in both Local authority and in the voluntary sector. She has worked in adoption services since 2005, in various roles as a practitioner, Practice Manager, Service Manager and Adoption Agency Registered Manager. This has also included acting as Adviser to adoption panel. Jo-Ann was the Operations manager for Barnardo's Adoption North West between April 2019 – March 2021.

Jo-Ann holds the following qualifications:

- B.A Honours degree in Applied Social Studies (1995)
- Diploma in Social Work (1995)
- Post Qualifying Award in Social Work (2010)
- Certificate In Professional Studies – Management and leadership (2013)

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

Adoption England Registered Office: Ofsted Registration is SC048403.

Barnardo's - North East
1 Lumley Court
Drum Industrial Estate
Chester Le Street
County Durham DH2 1AN

This is the main office for Barnardo's Adoption UK management purposes.

Adoption Branches England:

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

- Barnardo's Adoption Service South East -Ofsted Registration SC051838
54 Head Street, Colchester Essex CO1 1PB.
This branch also provides adoption support services via LINK and the CAFIS service at 10 Jubilee Way, Faversham, Kent ME13 8GD.
- Barnardo's Adoption Yorkshire – Ofsted Registration SC051836
Unit 6, Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Leeds, LS12 6AJ.
This branch also has an office base at 222 Eccles Old Road, Salford, Manchester, M6 8AL

- Barnardo's Adoption Midlands and South West - Ofsted Registration SC434885
Fulford Centre, Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol BS13 9AQ
- Barnardo's Adoption North East - Ofsted Registration SC051835
1 Lumley Court, Drum Industrial Estate, Chester le Street, Durham DH2 1AN.

Adoption Support Branch England:

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

Adoption Branch Wales:

- Barnardo's Cymru Adoption - CIW Registration_CS2005095655
Barnardo's Cymru, Britannia House, Van Road Caerphilly, CF38 3GG

Adoption Branch Scotland:

- Barnardo's Scotland Adoption Service (incorporating both the Adoption Placement Service and Adoption Support Service).
CIS Registration CS2005095655
Academy Park, Building 10,000, Gower St, Glasgow G51 1PR

Adoption Branch Northern Ireland:

- Barnardo's Adoption Northern Ireland - RQIA Registration 020764
230B Belmont Road, Belfast, BT4 2AW

This is the statement of purpose for the Midlands and South West Branch

Operations Manager: Clare Liribu, The Fulford Centre, Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 9AQ

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 qualifications and experience of the manager and branch manager are:

Clare Liribu is a qualified Social Worker with a BSC in Biology, DipSW and MA in Social Work in 1996. Currently registered with Social Work England.

Clare has specialised in Adoption work since 2012 having previously worked in the field of Child Protection and emergency duty work.

Job roles and qualifications

Management team

The service management team comprises of the operations manager and 3 practice managers. The operations manager is the registered 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.

Practice Managers

The three practice managers are qualified Social Workers registered with Social Work England and are responsible for the supervision, development and management of the senior practitioners and social workers within the team. They have significant experience in adoption and wider children's services and a proven track record of delivering successful outcomes for children and adopters. Practice Managers take responsibility for developing training and support services for adopters and coordinate training alongside responsibilities for recruitment and assessment. Between them they have qualifications and training in Dyadic Developmental Practice, Practice Education and Trauma Informed Practice.

Clinical Lead

The Clinical Lead (a child psychotherapist) works with the Service 2 days a week with a role to focus on promoting an integrated therapeutic approach throughout the region. She works with the

front-line workers through Reflective Practice Meetings, arranges training for therapists and adoption team practitioners and provides consultancy for staff and therapists on ongoing ASF work.

She provides consultation for social workers placing children, early intervention to adoptive families and crisis intervention when required.

All managers have significant experience in adoption and work closely with the Operations Manager to provide day to day operations and management of the service as well as work together to develop and improve Service provision.

Senior Practitioners

There are 2 senior practitioners within the team who are qualified Social Workers registered with Social Work England. Between them they share qualifications in specialist areas of practice e.g. Dyadic Developmental Practice, Trauma Informed practice and have experience in complex "Keeping in touch arrangements" and early permanence.

Social Workers

There are 6 qualified Social Workers within the team who are all registered with Social Work England. They undertake the preparation, assessment, and support of adopters. 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 supervised by a senior practitioner or manager who has significant experience of adoption.

The service also engages a pool of independent consultants who are available to carry out assessments and provide training and therapeutic services for adopters.

Family finder

The family finder focuses on linking and matching children with our approved adopters. This includes working with newly approved adopters to draw up a family finding profile, liaising with other family finders throughout Barnardo's adoption service nationally, developing relationships with Local Authorities to share information about and

promote Barnardo's waiting families and representing the service and supporting prospective adopters at regional and national family finding events.

Project workers

There are 2 Project workers who work with the Family Finder to undertake family finding, duty, direct support to families and children, assisting in the running of support groups and attending Exchange days and events.

The Project Workers also enjoy ensuring the participation of children, young people, and adopters in shaping the service, and working alongside children and young people where possible to help improve family and school life.

One Project Worker's role has developed to oversee the work with post adoption support as well as running reports and monitoring statistics.

Administration

The service is supported by an experienced and efficient administrative team who ensure that systems run smoothly and that all who make contact with the agency have a positive experience. The Service Administrator manages and supervises the Administration team.

Services provided

The agency provides:

- The recruitment, preparation, and assessment of prospective adopters
- Early permanence placements
- Family finding for approved adopters
- A range of post approval workshops and training days
- Early Placement Therapy at the point of matching with a child
- A high level of emotional, practical, and legal support to children and families post placement
- Therapeutic parenting courses for adoptive families
- Out of hours telephone support and advice
- Adopter support groups and regular social events
- Mentoring scheme where an experienced adopter provides support to another adopter
- Assessment of need for post-adoption support, including supporting applications to the Adoption Support Fund
- Post adoption counselling and psychotherapy services provided by Barnardo's Mandala Service, LINK, or external consultants
- Dyadic developmental therapy
- Support and counselling to adults who have an adoption connection and an intermediary service to adults for whom Barnardo's is the relevant adoption agency.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, services have provided support and assistance through a combination of face to face and virtual engagement. Barnardo's have adhered to government guidance and instigated full health and safety and risk assessment processes to ensure ongoing delivery of services during the pandemic.

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. If they wish to progress further, one of our workers will respond to undertake an initial consultation call 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 one of our social workers to visit the enquirer at their home or virtual visit. This is an opportunity for them to find out more about the adoption process and 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 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 a number of personal and family references per applicant.
- We will also request consent for a full medical check.

When a Registered of Interest 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 involve 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.

We recognise that people come to adoption from many different circumstances and life experiences. We will fully guide an 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. 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. This is a compulsory part of the adoption process.

During Stage One, we will complete the formal checks and 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 worker will spend more time with them, getting to know them better and exploring their life story and family history. If the enquirer has children at home, their social worker will also need to get to know them as part of the family unit.

Towards the end of this stage the worker will complete a Prospective Adopter's Report (PAR) or an Adoption Assessment Report (AAR) to be presented to the Adoption Panel.

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 Plan Agreement which outlines the process in identifying a child/ren for whom the approved adopter may be suitable. We will also assist them to draw up a short profile of themselves which will be shared with family finders for children in Local Authorities. We ask that all approved adopters prepare a book or DVD about themselves to share with the child who may eventually join their family. The approved adopter will be assisted to put their information on Linkmaker which acts to link approved adopters with children who have an adoption plan. Currently, the national Adoption Register is no longer functioning.

Children needing adoption are referred in several ways and an approved adopter's social worker and /or family finder will support them 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 individual/family then meetings will take place to discuss the child in more detail allowing the adopter to get as much information as possible.

When the approved adopter and the workers agree that all seems right, a formal 'matching' recommendation will go to the Local Authority's Adoption 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 okay. The adopter will be supported throughout the placement and through to the court hearing 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 Social Work England and all staff are subject to DBS checks and references.
- All staff receives regular formal supervision and an annual Performance and Development Review (PDR).
- 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 Assistant Head of Business.
- A report on the adoption service is presented three times a year to the board of trustees.
- Our initial enquiry service is subject to 'mystery shopping' carried out by First4Adoption.
- The adoption service is inspected by Ofsted.

Complaints and Representation

Children placed with Barnardo's adopters 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 considered, where appropriate, as are their age, ability and understanding. Children who are placed for adoption through Barnardo's can make a complaint or representation at any time in the present or into the future including complaints about any form of historical abuse.

The aims:

- To ensure redress for children and young people and adoptive parents through an 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

All prospective and approved adopters have access to the Barnardo's complaints procedure and will be given information on how to contact /complain including a complaint to the relevant inspectorate body through written information provided from enquiry and beyond. Barnardo's has a designated lead manager/advisor for complaints to ensure that all concerns are fully supported and managed in a way that is helpful and complies with the complaints procedure and policy.

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 (IRM) through the Panel Representation Procedures (copies of which are available in branches).

Complaints and Representation Policy – summary

Who is the Complaints Policy for?

- Prospective adopters before consideration by panel.
- Approved adopters post panel.
- Adopters at any time within 12 months after formal contact with Barnardo's has ceased.
- Children and young people who have been placed through Barnardo's and are unhappy with the way they have been treated by Barnardo's.
- Other adult service users.

Who are complaints made to?

- To a 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.
- To the support relations team via the Barnardo's website- verbally or in writing

What happens next?

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 worker from the service.
- The investigator and complainant meet to discuss the conclusion and any action that may be recommended to put things right.
- The investigation standard is to complete 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:

- A senior manager from Barnardo's independent of the service and the Stage 1 is identified to undertake the Stage 2 investigation.
- An independent person not employed by Barnardo's is appointed to work alongside the investigating senior from Barnardo's ensuring due process is followed according to the procedure and policy and is fair to the complainants.
- They re-examine the complaint after speaking to the complainant.
- They produce reports for the Head of Business for Barnardo's Family Placement services and the lead complaints manager/advisor for 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
- 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 Registered Office

Barnardo's

Youth Village

Hudson Street

North Shields

NE30 1DL

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