

Derbyshire County Council Adoption Service

Statement of Purpose

2019/20

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of Standard 18 of the Adoption Services Minimum Standards 2014 (Care Standards Act, 2000) and regulations 2, 3 and 4 of the Local Authority Service (England) Regulations 2003. Regulations 3 and 24B and Regulation 4 of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 and Regulation 5 of the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 and the Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011/2012 require an Adoption Agency to produce a Statement of Purpose, which contains a range of detailed information. This Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with the above requirements and will provide a source of information to all areas of the Children's Services Department, partner agencies, adoptive parents and prospective adopters, children who may be adopted and their parents or guardians and adopted people, their parents, birth family and former guardians.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed no less than annually.

The Adoption Service of Derbyshire County Council is now a part of Adoption East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency (AEM) and this statement of Purpose should be read in conjunction with that of AEM.

Pending Submission and agreement at the Corporate Parenting Board 18th
June 2019

1. Aims, Objectives and Principles of the Adoption Service

The primary aims of Derbyshire County Council's adoption service are to:

- Provide high quality child-centred legally permanent placements either through adoption or special guardianship. Legal permanence is a positive alternative for children to enable them to grow and reach adulthood, within a stable and loving family environment; this process is to be kept within an agreed timescale and all parties involved will be kept fully informed throughout.
- Have sufficient adopters who are best able to meet the needs of children referred for adoption who are recruited, trained and prepared by AEM. Derbyshire County Council's adoption service acknowledges that successful outcomes for children can be found with married couples, couples in a relationship, couples in a same sex relationship, single people and people with or without birth children. Where this cannot be achieved within AEM, every step will be taken to find suitable adopters outside our own resources.
- Provide training, advice and support to social workers, who are working with children and families, where adoption is the plan.
- Provide support services, advice and guidance for children being adopted and birth families, before, during and after the adoption process, where appropriate and applicable. Support to adoptive families during and after the adoption process will be provided by AEM.
- Ensure provision of support services to adopted adults and their families through AEM.

The primary objectives of Derbyshire County Council's adoption service are to;

- Ensure that, prior to the matching process commencing, the child and their needs have been fully assessed and considered before planning for adoption. Full consideration will be given to family and friends as possible carers, who are able to meet the needs of the child through a legally permanent order.
- Ensure that the views of children and young people have been heard and acted upon before any decisions concerning their future are taken – that full consideration is given to the welfare, safety and assessed individual needs of the child for permanency. These considerations are the core of the process and come before the needs of anyone else involved.
- Work with birth families so as to achieve, wherever possible, an effective partnership to assist the child in making a successful transition to an adoptive placement and to maximise the opportunities for the adoptive placement to remain stable.
- Ensure that where adoption outside the birth family has been identified as the care plan, an appropriate match is found at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise delay.

- Seek the following, where a child has been matched with adopters, unless they are inconsistent with promoting the best interests and welfare of the child:
 - Consideration in placing siblings together.
 - Contact, either direct or indirect, with the birth family and individuals significant to the child is undertaken, where appropriate and applicable.
 - All needs, including education and health care, are met by the adoptive parents.
 - A period of introduction prior to placement commencing appropriate to the child's age, abilities and understanding – the introduction will be child rather than adult led.
 - The views of the child to be sought prior to, throughout and following the placement process, on a regular basis and in a manner appropriate to their age, abilities and understanding.
- Ensure, through AEM, the recruitment of a wide range of prospective adopters able to meet the diverse needs of children – while matching does not rely upon exact ethnic or cultural counterparts, adoptive parents and prospective adopters will respect diversity in gender, abilities, ethnicity, religious and spiritual needs, culture, language and sexuality in society, and in the backgrounds of the child they adopt, and choices the child may make in later life. Furthermore, through training, supervision and personal development, all adoption service staff members, in Derbyshire County Council and AEM will be expected to value diversity and counter any discriminatory practice.
- Have prospective adopters from all sections of the community, through AEM promoting the service in a positive fashion and providing a timely and well informed response to any and all enquiries.
- Provide to relatives and friends approved by the Department as adoptive parents or special guardians, the same support and assessment of needs as any other adoptive parent would receive.
- Work with AEM to find alternative placements; where none can be found 'in house' through Adoption Match, Link Maker and any other appropriate service
- To ensure that at all times Derbyshire County Council's adoption service is fully compliant with all legislation and policy requirements, relating to the running of the agency and that all written materials are informative, up to date, fit for purpose and freely available in a variety of media.
- Provide innovative and high quality training packages, covering all aspects of the adoption process, for adoptive parents and staff members.

Furthermore, Derbyshire County Council's adoption team will;

- Counsel, prepare and assess people who wish to adopt a child from outside the United Kingdom.
- Undertake welfare supervision and prepare reports for the Courts, for non-agency and inter-country adoption applications.

- Prepare reports for the Adoption Panel and the Courts on any aspect of adoption that is required.
- Assist in the arrangements for direct contact between adopted children and their birth families where this is deemed appropriate.
- Ensure there is safe contact between adopted children, adoptive parents and birth families through the Letterbox Contact system, run by AEM, which will be reviewed regularly.

The main principles and values which underpin Derbyshire County Council's adoption service are to:

- Place the needs of the child at the heart of the adoption process, act in their best interests at all times and make sure that the service works in a way that avoids both disruption and delay. Wherever possible, a child should be brought up by their own birth family but where this cannot be achieved, the child's safety, wellbeing and future development is the primary concern of the adoption agency. Adoption and/or legal permanency is primarily a service for children and no adult has the automatic right to become an adoptive parent or special guardian.
- Treat every individual, within the adoption process, with respect and courtesy. We will, wherever possible and appropriate and according to age and ability, consult and listen to children we are responsible for and explain to them what is happening in a way they may best understand. We will treat adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents as valued and crucial stakeholders in our service and, in turn, they will respect the principles and values that guide our service. We will work sensitively with birth parents whose children are to be adopted.
- Work in partnership with others, including AEM, other adoption agencies and colleagues in the fostering service, to find the best possible outcome for the child. Derbyshire County Council's adoption service acknowledges that the adoption process is an ongoing and continually developing responsibility, one which we and partner organisations and co-professionals will support for as long as is necessary.
- Commit to anti-discriminatory practice – we recognise the gender, abilities, ethnicity, religious and spiritual needs and cultural origins and background of the child for whom we are responsible and, whilst not having this as the sole criteria for matching a child and adoptive family anticipate that AEM will welcome enquiries from prospective adopters irrespective of gender, abilities, ethnicity, religious and spiritual needs, culture, and sexuality.
- Fully recognise and take into account the needs of disabled children when making decisions about them.

- Consult and ensure quality assurance, to continually look at ways of improving the services. Children and young people, with an adoption plan will be consulted in a way appropriate to their age and understanding. The views of people adopting through the non-agency route and intercountry adopters will also be consulted on the delivery of the service. It is anticipated that AEM will encourage adoptive parents to express their views throughout both the approval and the matching process and when participating in adoption support after the adoption order.
- The principles and standards within this Statement of Purpose apply to all agency placements, including inter-agency placements, as well as non-agency and intercountry adoptions.

2. Standards of Care to be followed by Derbyshire County Council's Adoption Service

Derbyshire County Council's adoption service aims to provide safe, secure and loving permanent home for children who are unable to live with their birth families, through adoption or permanent fostering, which will meet that child's needs until they reach adulthood and beyond. This will be achieved through compliance with, but not limited to, the standards, regulations and requirements below;

- The Adoption Act 1976
- The Children Act 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children Act 2004
- The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre and Post Commencement) Regulations 2005
- The Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005
- The Adoption and Children Act 2006
- Equality Act 2006 and 2010
- The Independent review of Determinations (Adoption) Regulations 2009
- Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012
- Statutory Guidance on Adoption 2013

- The Care Planning, Placement and case Review and Fostering Services (Misc. Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

3. Status and Constitution of Derbyshire County Council's Adoption Service

Derbyshire County Council is an approved adoption agency under Section 2(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and will be inspected against the Care Standards Act 2001.

4. Improving Outcomes for Children

Derbyshire County Council's adoption service pledges to constantly improve the care provision it offers and consistently achieve the best possible outcomes, for all children and young people in its' care. Our intent is guided by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards, as well as more recent governmental guidance to ensure a genuine partnership between all those involved within the adoption process, including AEM which can be summarised through best outcomes from the Government, local government and other statutory agencies. This pledge can summarised as;

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are paramount and central to all aspects of the adoption process
- 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 should be actively sought and taken into account at all stages of the adoption process
- Delay for children waiting to be adopted can be seriously detrimental to their health and development
- A sense of identity is an important part of children's well-being. As such, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be recognised and positively promoted
- The needs of disabled children and those with complex needs are fully recognised and taken into account
- Inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family for those children who cannot be appropriately cared for in their country of origin
- Children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive families will be valued and respected
- Successful outcomes for children require a genuine and effective partnership between the Government, Local Authorities, Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA's) Voluntary Adoption agencies(VAA's) and Adoption Support Agencies

- Adoption is a life-long process for children, adopted adults, and birth and adoptive relatives. To reflect this, information and services must be provided to take account of the different or specific needs of all parties. Similarly, in any decision making process due account should be taken of their wishes and views.
- Adoptive parents are encouraged, through AEM, to consider these outcomes for their children:
 - Enjoy good physical and emotional health – all children and young people have the right to live a healthy lifestyle. The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully met and recognised and taken into account.
 - Feel safe – all children and young people have the right to be safe and secure, protected from harm and neglect, and to live in an environment that enables them to develop to their full physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social potential.
 - Have fun – all children and young people have the right to time and support to pursue appropriate leisure interests, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful life.
 - Do well at school, college or work – all children and young people have the right to the best possible education and training, growing up in a loving environment which meets their identified needs and equips them to live full adult lives.
 - Stay out of trouble – all children and young people have the right to enjoy improved life chances, which will minimise the risk of offending behaviour or involvement with the police or judiciary.
 - Contribute to their communities – all children and young people have the right to family life wherever possible and to be supported to play their part within the wider community. They have the right to a continuity of care, wherever possible, and to develop and preserve their own identities. They also have the right to have their wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account as well as being provided with information that will enable them to make choices about their lives, subject to their age and understanding and so be capable of making a positive contribution to the community and to society.
 - Achieve well as adults - all children have the right to live above the poverty threshold and to be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will help them overcome socio-economic disadvantage where necessary. All children should feel valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.

5. Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People Awaiting Adoption in Derbyshire

Derbyshire County Council Children's Services Department works in partnership with other child care agencies and professionals, across the county and region, to deliver a comprehensive range of services aimed at ensuring children do not become accommodated, or remain so, except where this is consistent with their assessed needs.

Derbyshire County Council has an adoption and permanence team whose role is to:

- Work with children for whom adoption is the most appropriate plan,
- Assist children in understanding the process and why they are being adopted,
- Prepare children for placement with an adoptive family and
- Support them in the transition.

Derbyshire adoption team also provides the following services:

- A contracted adoption service to Derbyshire residents wishing to adopt from overseas and outside the United Kingdom.
- A court and welfare service to children adopted from overseas and outside the United Kingdom.
- A service to step parents and others wishing to adopt a child living with them (non-agency adoptions)

All recruitment is undertaken by AEM, who use a variety of methods to recruit prospective adopters. Workers in AEM undertake all preparation and assessment of prospective adopters, approval and, in conjunction with workers from Derbyshire County Council's Adoption & Permanence Team, undertake the matching of children to adoptive families and support adoptive families up to the time of the Adoption Order and beyond if required.

AEM will make use of the Adoption Support Fund in order that adoptive parents can access appropriate therapy for their child as and when needed. A Derbyshire adopted child will also be entitled to additional financial support at school through the Pupil Premium.

5.1. Fostering for Adoption

Fostering for Adoption is for children who are in our care where the plan is likely to be adoption, but who still have a chance of being reunited with their birth family. It allows children to be placed with their potential permanent family on a fostering basis while the authority seeks a Placement Order from the courts. Prospective adopters are encouraged to consider this option as it means that children and their adoptive parents can develop attachments while the legal process is being followed. Children have contact with their birth

family whilst being fostered for adoption and there is a possibility they may return to live with them.

The fostering for adoption carers will be assessed and supported by a social worker from AEM and will also receive additional training. The worker will continue to offer support until an adoption order is made. They will receive a weekly fostering allowance for the child and will be entitled to adoption leave. The fostering allowance will cease once the placement has been agreed at adoption matching panel or the child returns to their birth family or is placed in an alternative placement with family or friends.

It remains the central tenet of Fostering for Adoption that the child's needs and welfare are paramount.

5.2 Foster Carers Adopting the Child in Their Care

In some circumstances a child already fostered may not be able to return to their birth family and a permanent option will be explored. Adoption is often the preferred form of legal permanence and Fosters Carers may apply for an Adoption Order for the child they are currently fostering – this protects children from experiencing multiple moves and provides them with a permanent family. Once the child has been adopted by the carers it may be possible for the child to retain supervised contact with birth family members

Foster Carers can make a formal application to adopt a child in their care under the 2013 Regulations (1st July) to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Care Planning Regulations'), Where foster carers are accepted to adopt a child in their care, consideration will be given to the specific long term needs of that child to include: the quality of attachment between the child and their carers, the child's wishes and feelings, the ability of the fostering household to provide permanent care and the impact on the child of being adopted into that household.

The preparation and assessment of the Foster Carers will be undertaken by AEM workers, as will any support needed after the adoption order is made. It is recognised that Foster Carers who adopt may still foster for Derbyshire County Council and support for them in their fostering role will be provided by Derbyshire County Council's Fostering Service.

5.3 Other Permanence Options

Derbyshire County Council, also supports a range of permanence planning options for looked after children. These include Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Orders

It is the aim of the authority to ensure that children we care for are, whenever possible and appropriate, returned to their family and community networks as soon as it is safe to do so.

Where this is not possible, we will work with everyone concerned to see that child is part of a stable and permanent family. This may be resolved through adoption but there may be some situations where this is not possible. Where this occurs, a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangement Order may be the most appropriate alternative.

Derbyshire County Council has a commitment to supporting families who have a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order in respect of a child who was in care immediately prior to the making of the Order and to supporting the birth families of such children.

These alternatives should not be seen as being separate from mainstream services and children and families involved within them should be assisted to access mainstream services, if necessary.

Support available includes:

- Counselling, advice and information
- Financial support where appropriate and applicable
- Assistance, including mediation services, in relation to contact between the child and their birth parents or any other individuals significant to the child, with whom contact would be in their best interest
- Therapeutic services for the child and family

5.2. Support

Derbyshire County Council recognises the need to provide support to adoptive families from the beginning of a placement and on an ongoing basis, recognising that adoption is a life time relationship. Such support is provided by AEM. The authority similarly recognises the need to give financial support in some adoption situations. To meet this need, the Agency has a scheme for the payment of adoption allowances in specified circumstances.

Children placed for adoption will be subject to statutory adoption reviews under the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005. This will involve an Independent Reviewing Officer who will ensure that all aspects of the child's welfare and plans for the future are progressing satisfactorily. Where an adoption placement ends in an unplanned way, the Team Manager responsible for the child, assisted by the adoption social worker, will convene a disruption meeting to consider what has happened and assist in planning for the future. The meeting will be chaired by someone independent of the case. Minutes of the meeting will be shared with relevant personnel in Derbyshire to facilitate learning.

6. Overseas Adoption

Derbyshire Adoption Team will undertake home study reports for people wishing to adopt a child from a country outside the United Kingdom. This will include the home study/assessment; presenting to the Adoption Panel, following up references and statutory checks; submitting papers to the

Department of Education and supporting the family in decision making when a match is offered. A charge, equivalent to one sixth of the Inter-agency fee, is made.

When a child is brought into the country for the purpose of adoption, the Assessment and Placement team will undertake the welfare supervision and prepare the Schedule 2 report to the Court.

When a progress report is required after adoption by the country of origin a worker from the Derbyshire Adoption Team will visit and provide a report.

7. Services to Adopted People, Birth Families, Children and Letterbox

AEM will provide support to adoptive families, through training, social events and support groups as well as individual support when necessary. A “letter-box” (indirect) contact facility will be provided by AEM, through which birth families and adoptive children and families can communicate as part of an agreed plan. This is facilitated and monitored by adoption support workers. Assistance in writing letters is provided if requested.

AEM also provide a counselling service for adult adoptees in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Adoption Act 2002.

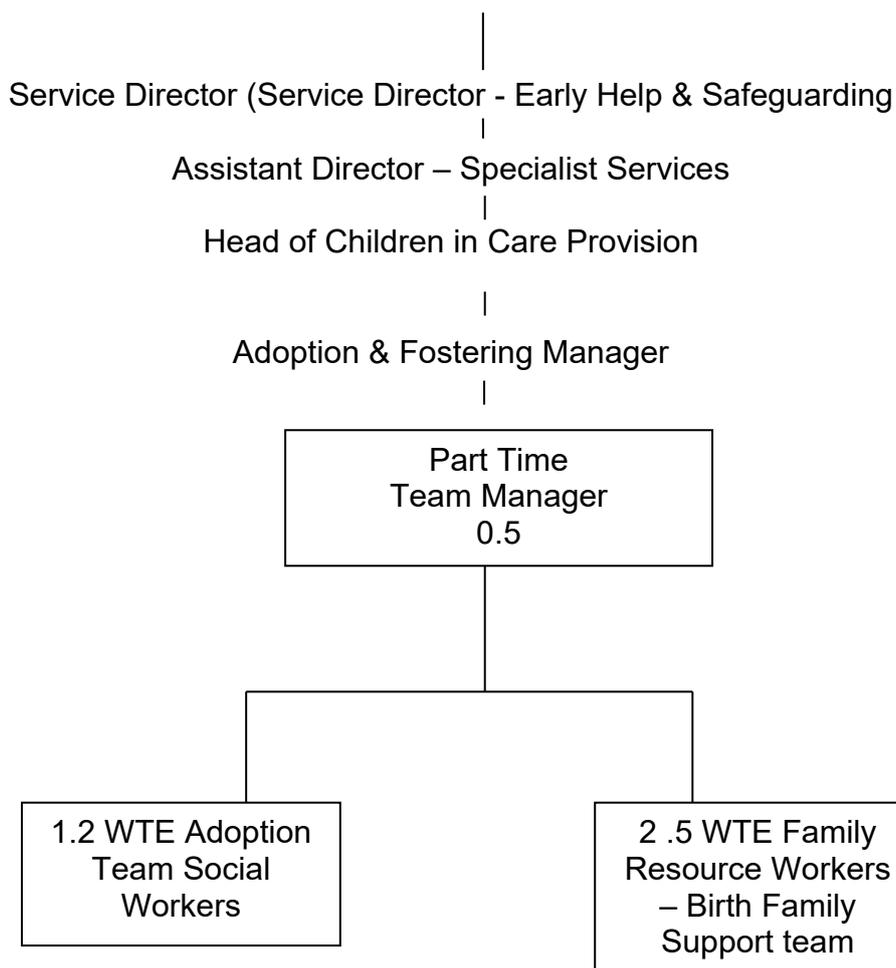
Support is provided to birth family members by Derbyshire County Council’s Birth Family Support team from the time that a Child in Care review decides that adoption is the appropriate care plan for the child. There are dedicated workers in the Derbyshire County Council’s adoption team. This service is independent of both the child’s and the adopter’s social worker. Workers provide support, advice and details of other appropriate resources.

8. Structure and Staffing

See appendices 1 and 2 for structure charts of AEM

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Director of Children's Department



8.1. Registered Manager

The Service Director, (Early Help and Safeguarding) Children's Services is the Registered Manager with OfSTED. The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for the performance of the adoption service. The Registered Manager is;

Alison Noble
 Service Director, Children's Services
 County Hall
 Matlock

Derbyshire
DE4 3AG

8.2. Agency Decision Maker

The Agency Decision Makers are responsible for all adoption panel decisions and provide independent oversight of panel business including approvals, incidents, complaints, allegations, disruptions, resignations and de-registrations.

Oversight includes;

- Adopter carer approval – recommendation by AEM Adoption Panel – decision ADM
- Fostering to adopt – decision ADM
- Match - recommendation by AEM Adoption Panel – decision ADM

The Agency Decision Makers are;

- Service Director, Early Help & Safeguarding, Childrens Services
- Assistant Director, Early Help & Safeguarding, Childrens Services
- Assistant Director, Childrens Services, Specialist Services
- Head of Children in Care Provision, Childrens Services, Specialist Services

They may also comment on plans relating to siblings being placed together, contact with birth family members and adoption support needs.

Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the overall quality of case planning and decision making for children and young people in the care of the authority.
- Maintaining the focus on safeguarding through line management.
- Providing service performance reports to the Council and elected members and Strategic Director.
- The development of policy in line with national standards and developments.
- The organisation and preparation of inspections and reviews.
- To consider the payment of an adoption allowance.

8.3. Adoption Manager

The manager of Derbyshire County Council's Adoption Team (Birth Family support and Non –Agency adoptions) is Gwen Roe

(gwen.roe@derbyshire.gov.uk – tel. 01629 532250), BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies, MA Applied Social Science, CQSW and DMS

The Interim Head of Service, of Adoption East Midlands is Shelagh Mitchell
BA (hons) Applied Social Studies, CQSW and Management level 5

8.4. Staffing Summary

The Derbyshire Adoption Team consists of 0.5 team manager; 1.2 social workers who complete non-agency and intercountry adoptions and 2.5 family resource workers who work with birth parents whose children have got an adoption plan.

Please see Appendix 1 for staffing in AEM.

8.5. Functions Undertaken by AEM

- Recruitment of prospective adopters, including publicity campaigns.
- 'Family finding' to specifically find families for children with an adoption plan.
- Assessment and preparation of prospective adoptive families, to include home visits, home studies, reference and statutory checks and running preparation groups, to include relevant and up to date training.
- Offering ongoing support for approved families awaiting a placement.
- Offering advice, guidance and support to adoptive families during the matching process and post placement.
- Providing guidance for staff members who are preparing children for adoption and advising birth families and foster carers of children awaiting adoption.
- Providing support services to adoptive families and birth relatives.
- Providing specialist advice and consultation, where requested and appropriate.
- Counselling, information and advice in relation to the following;
 - Prospective adopters
 - Adults who have been adopted, including birth records counselling
 - Relatives of adult adoptees who may want information or advice

8.6 Functions Undertaken by the Derbyshire Adoption Team

Counselling, information and advice in relation to the following;

- Birth parents whose children may have been adopted
- People who wish to adopt children from another country

- Non Agency adoptions, including step-parents who wish to adopt their partner's children
- Completion of enquiry reports on people wishing to adopt their step children. Workers will assist applicants in considering alternative courses of action. An enquiry will not be started until an application has been made to the court.

9. Performance Data

Derbyshire County Council's adoption service presents performance management information every year to our Corporate Parenting Board, on the previous financial year's performance. This information can be found in the document 'Annual Report of Derbyshire Adoption Service' and the six monthly report made under Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014. From April 2019 this information will be provided in collaboration with AEM.

10. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

AEM will develop their own systems to monitor and evaluate the provision of services which will be shared with Derbyshire County Council.

Arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of services from AEM to ensure that services provided by Derbyshire's Adoption Team are effective and that the quality of those services is of an appropriate standard. (See Appendix 2).

The partnership board will:

- Recommend the annual budget and approve the business plan, improvement plan, workforce plan and the commissioning plan.
- Ensure that the views of all stakeholders are represented effectively including engagement with service users and voluntary adoption agencies.
- Monitor performance and assure the quality of the service.
- Monitor budgets and financial management and planning.

The performance and quality assurance group will:

- Set out the professional advice to the partnership board to enable it to effectively set the strategic direction for the RAA and in its role of scrutinising the operation of the service.

The Chair of the performance and quality assurance group will provide officer interface and support to the lead member who chairs the partnership board.

Arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of services to ensure that services provided by Derbyshire's Adoption Team are effective and that the quality of those services is of an appropriate standard.

All staff members have regular supervision.

All individuals receiving a service from the Adoption Team or Birth Family Support Team are asked to complete an evaluation form about the service they have received.

Individuals receiving a service from the Adoption Teams are advised of the department's complaints procedure and given information about how to make a complaint as appropriate. Complaints are responded to and are seen as an opportunity for the service to consider ways of improvement.

Children's permanence plans are generally made at the four month review and are monitored through the Children in Care Review Process.

As outlined in the Adoption Minimum Standards 2011, Derbyshire County Council prepares a report, for the Corporate Parenting Committee, on a six monthly basis, to provide the executive of the authority with relevant data informing them of service activity and performance.

The Derbyshire Adoption Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually - the Registered Manager is responsible for the annual revision of the Statement of Purpose; it may be revised at any time throughout the year and staff, and stakeholders, will be advised and consulted with regards proposed revisions where appropriate and applicable.

Any revisions to the Statement of Purpose will be presented to the Adoption Panel for their consideration, prior to annual review.

The Statement of Purpose will be made available to OfSTED annually and, when any significant changes have been made, within 28 days of approval, by the Registered Manager.

The Statement of Purpose is freely available to all staff, carers and members of the public via the www.derbyshire.gov.uk – hard copies can be made available upon request'

11. Complaints and Allegations

Derbyshire County Council maintains a statutory complaints service, and the leaflet "Comments, Compliments and Complaints" is made available to any individual expressing dissatisfaction with the service they receive. Any complaint made verbally or in writing is taken seriously and responded to, without the need to be on the complaints leaflet. The complaints process is a three stage process;

Stage 1

The authority and the complainant seek to resolve the concern with the involved local manager with direct responsibility, within ten days. Complainants should initially make their complaint to the team manager for the team involved.

Stage 2

If the complainant is unhappy with these findings, they can go to Stage 2, where the Quality Assurance Department will appoint an investigating officer and an independent person to respond to any concerns. If this is unsatisfactory, they may be entitled go to **Stage 3**, an Independent Complaints Panel.

All complainants have the right to involve a friend or advocate and all staff members must ensure that anyone understands how to make a complaint, and to whom it should be directed. At any stage, they may contact their Councillor, MP or consult with a solicitor.

Complainants should refer their concerns to Children's Services Quality Assurance on 01629 523042 or email CS.Complaints@derbyshire.gov.uk If they are still dissatisfied with the findings, they can contact the Commissioner for Local Administration in England (The Ombudsman) at;
The Commissioner for Local Administration in England
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Telephone; 0300 061 0614

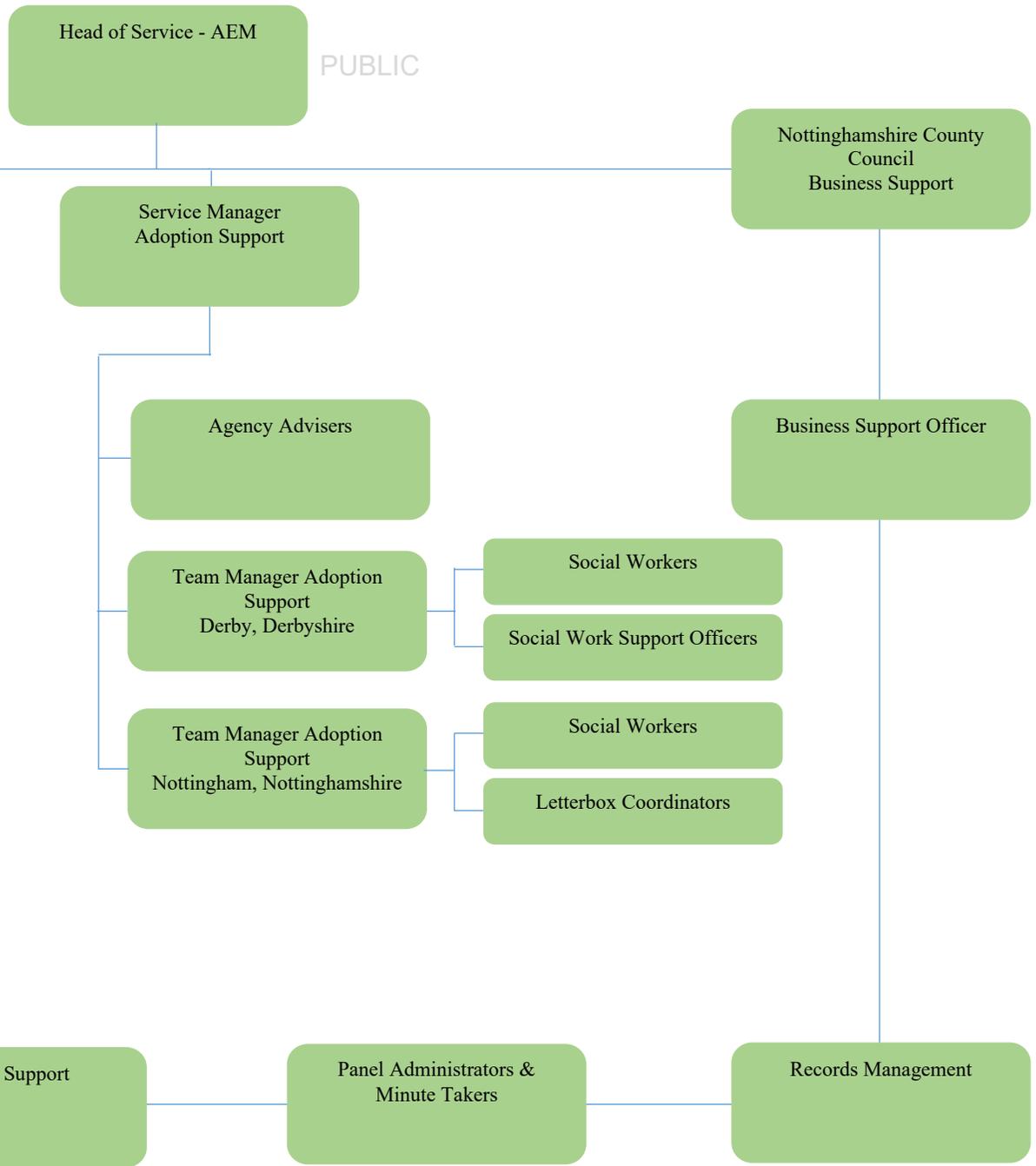
If anyone has any concerns about the service, which they feel it is in the public interest to make known, the authority provides complete guidance on confidential reporting (also known as 'Whistle Blowing') in the Adoption and Permanence Procedures.

Derbyshire County Council actively monitors and reviews all complaints, incidents and allegations to identify patterns and trends within adoption which it may then seek to address within a wider context and so improve the quality of service for both Children in Care and young people and for adoptive families.

12. OfSTED

OfSTED is the single, independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting adoption services, including Derbyshire County Council, under the provisions of the Care Standards Act (2000). Should an adopter need to contact the service, with any questions, queries or complaints, they can be reached on 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or in writing to;

OfSTED,
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD



APPENDIX 2

AEM BOARD MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

