STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

LOCAL AUTHORITY

ADOPTION SERVICE

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE
ADOPTION SERVICE

1. BACKGROUND

Under the Adoption National Minimum Standards and Regulations 2003, every adoption agency has to produce a written Statement of Purpose (Standard 18, Regulation Part 2(I) and Schedule 1) The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulation 2005. This statement accurately describes the aims, objectives and functions of the service and describes the facilities and services provided.

This statement is subject to formal approval and is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Statement of Purpose is provided upon request to anyone working for the purposes of the service, to children who may be adopted and their parents, to anyone wishing to adopt and to adopted persons and their families.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES ADOPTION SERVICE

- The aims and objectives of the Adoption Service in Birmingham Children, Young People and Families Directorate (CYP&F) are to provide a service to all those families and individuals involved in the adoption process consistent with best practice, National Standards and Regulations.

Birmingham's Vision & Outcomes for Children

Our Vision
Our aspiration is for Birmingham to be a place where all children and young people and their families enjoy living, learning, developing and achieving together whilst feeling safe and secure in a city that is child and family friendly.

Our Outcomes
There are three agreed priority outcomes for Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) directorate and our partners, over the next three years:

- protecting children from significant harm;
- improving engagement in learning and achievement in education; and

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• reducing health inequalities.

CYPF aims through a comprehensive adoption service to meet the needs of:

- Children who have been or may be adopted
- Birth parents and guardians of such children
- Persons who have adopted or may adopt and their children
- Adopted persons and their families.

3. PRINCIPLES

The Adoption Service believes that:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

- It is best for children, where possible, to be brought up by their own birth family.

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.

- The child's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages.

- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.

- Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language should be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.

- The particular needs of disabled children should be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made.

- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family should be valued and respected.

- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions and individuals who have to work together to meet the needs for services of those affected by adoption.

- Children have the right to grow up knowing they are adopted and should have access to information about their family of birth.

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4. THE NAME, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE MANAGER

Appointed manager: Janet Denny
Head of Service Adoption
PO Box 16262
Birmingham B2 2WX

Qualifications: 1989 CQSW
2007 Masters Degree – Managing Partnerships in Health & Social Care
2007 West Midlands Regional Post Qualifying C Consortium – Advanced Award in Social Work

Experience:

- Family Centre Worker - Children's Day Care. Children's Society
- Project Worker. Juvenile Justice. Children's Society
- Social Worker and Senior Social Worker in Sandwell Social Services
- Policy Manager for Adoption and Fostering
- Policy Manager for Children's Strategy
- Head of Children's Strategy
- Chair of the West Midlands Family Placement Consortium
- Head of Service, Adoption, CAMHS, Fostering, CP Resources
- Head of Service, Adoption Service

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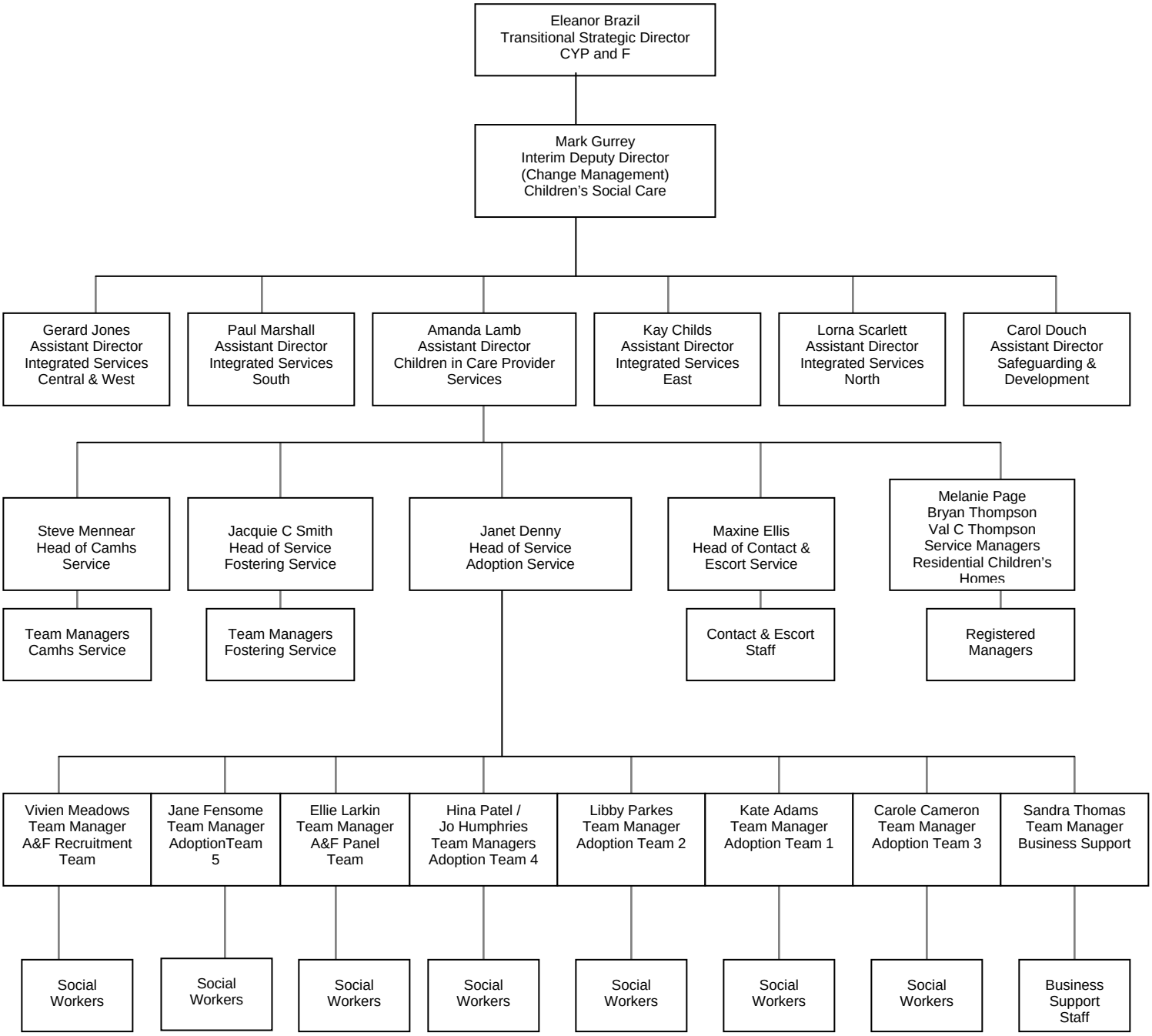
5.

ADOPTION SERVICE POSITION WITHIN PART OF BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE



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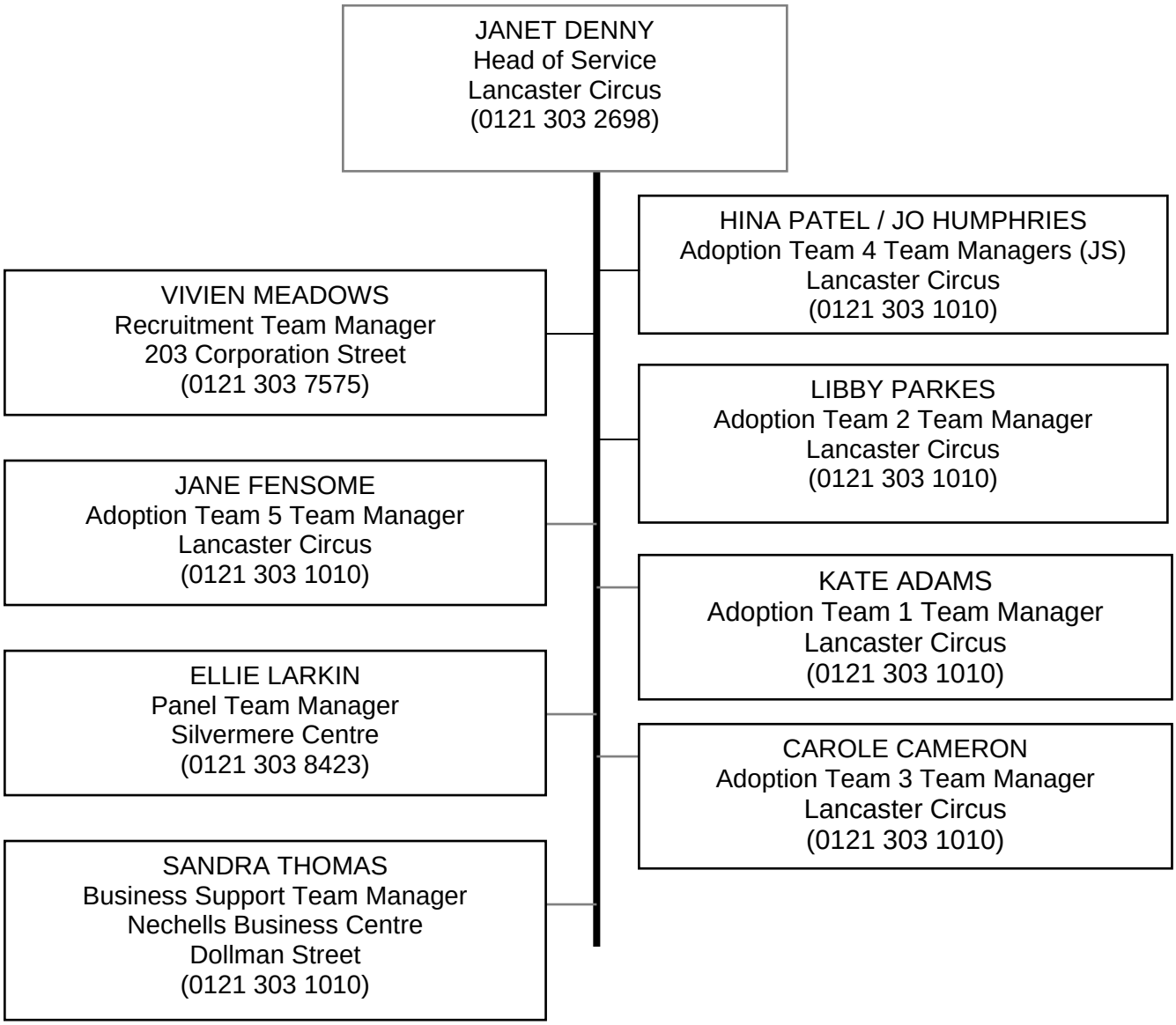
ADOPTION SERVICES – MANAGEMENT TEAM



Staff involved in the Adoption Service have a range of experience: in childcare, in family placement and in the recruitment and preparation of adoptive families. Social work staff have knowledge of appropriate Adoption Legislation and Standards.

- All staff have an understanding of the importance of the Complaints Procedure.
- Staff come from diverse backgrounds and heritage and are able to promote equality and diversity.

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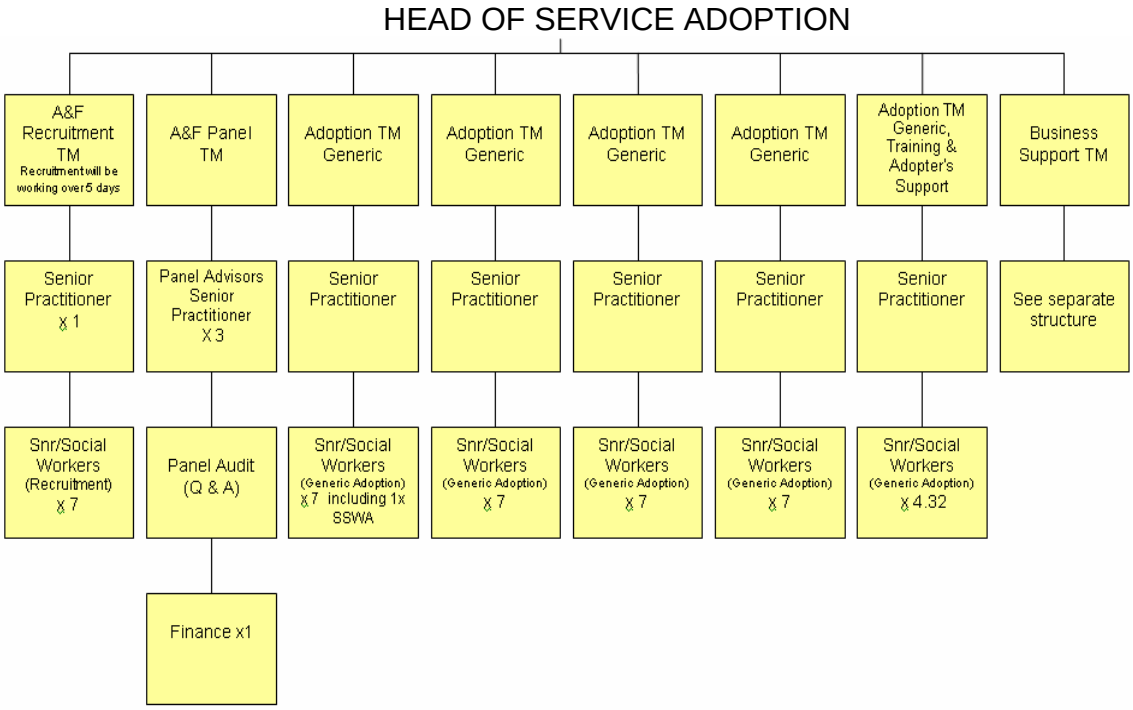
- The Adoption Service benefits from the retention of experienced staff from a wide range of disciplines and all social workers are appropriately registered.
- The Adoption Service has a policy for continuing professional development of both social work teams and administrative staff.
- Each team may carry a proportion of vacancies at any one time; the staffing assignment is on the following page.

Adoption Service Structure Chart



This is the staffing assignment (full time equivalent)

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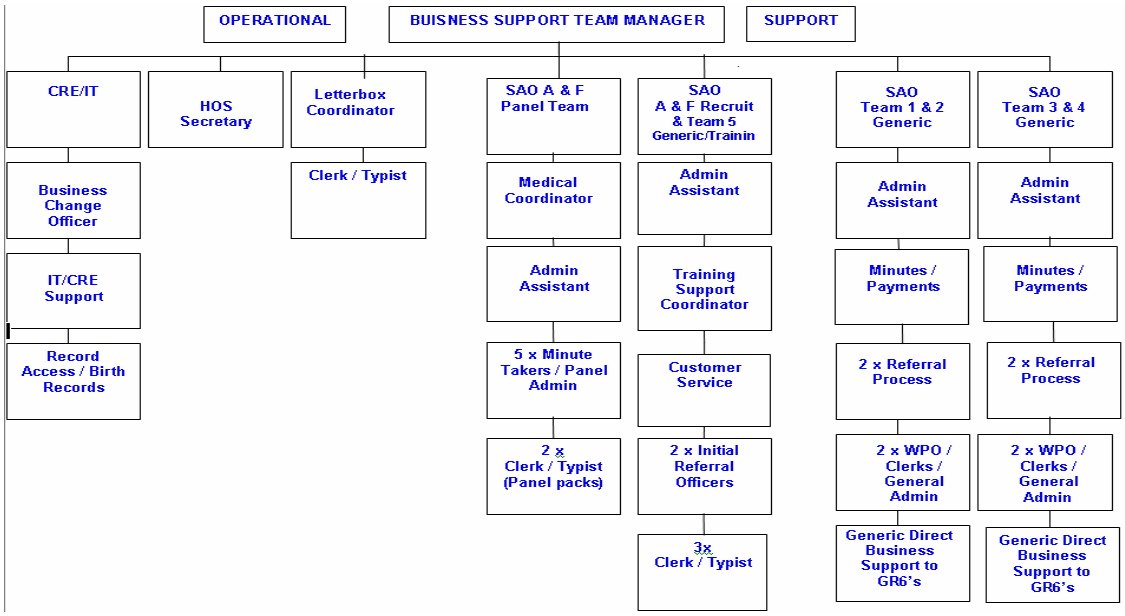

6. The details of the Adoption Service personnel as at November 2011 are as follows:

Head of Service Adoption (1989 CQSW; 2007 Masters Degree Managing Partnerships in Health & Social Care; 2007 West Midlands Regional Post Qualifying Consortium – Advanced Award in Social Work) who is overall manager of the Adoption Service and the Adoption Support Services Advisor, is line managed by the Assistant Director (Provider Services) who in turn is managed by the Service Director for Children's Social Care – see structure chart.

Recruitment Team (also responsible for Fostering front line recruitment, directly line managed by HoS Adoption)

- Team Manager (CQSW, MSc Public Sector Management)
- 1 Senior Practitioner(Part time .58) CQSW
- 8 Social Workers FTE 7 (DipSW CQSW, Bachelor in Social Work, Toronto Canada, Diploma, Bachelor, Masters in social work Zimbabwe, post qualification - PQ1, Enabling Others & PQ2,).
- 1 Outreach Project Social Worker (CQSW, PQ1 & 2, Practice teacher)
- 2 Promotions Officers - part time (Prof. Qualifications include MA in Arts Management and Institute of Marketing – ACIM and one in progress, LLB law degree).

Panel Team (responsible for both Adoption and Fostering Panels, directly line managed by HoS Adoption)

- Team Manager (DipSW/BA Hons, NVQ4 Management 2006). This post holder is the Agency Advisor and IRM link.

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- 3 Panel Advisors (DipSW or equivalent. All have PQ2. There is 1.25 vacant)
- Quality Monitoring Advisor (HNC Business & Finance, CIPS [Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply], HE Certificate of Management & Communication, BTEC Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice, BA Hons Social Sciences).

Adoption Team 1 Generic

- Team Manager (MA Hons, CQSW, Dip Soc Admin Studies, NVQ 4 in Management, PQSW, PAC - Adoption Counselling Expertise)
- 6 Senior Social Workers (5.15 FTE) All have Dip SW or equivalent, 4 have PQ1, and 2 are completing the PQ Specialist Award.
- Senior Practitioner (0.8FTE) (Dip SW,
- Trainee Social Worker (BA Hon., Prelim Certificate-Theraplay Institute), undertaking OU SW Training Course.

Adoption Team 2 Generic

- Team Manager (MA in Social Work, Dip SW, NVQ4 in Management)
- Senior Practitioner (B Phil in Child Care, Dip SW, NVQ4 in Management, PQ1 & 2)
- 7 Social Workers (all have Dip SW or equivalent qualifications, 5 have PQ1, 2 have PQ2 and 1 undertaking PQ Specialist Award)

Adoption Team 3 Generic

- Team Manager (BA Hons in Sociology, CQSW, Practice Teachers Award)
- Senior Practitioner (B A Hons., Applied Social Sciences and a Diploma in Social work)
- 6 Senior Social Workers (all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications, 4 have PQ1, 2 have PQ2 and 1 PQ Full Award).

Adoption Team 4 Generic

- 2 Team Managers – part time / job share (CQSW (1993), PQSW, NVQ4 Management, M Social Science / CQSW (1987), Diploma in Public Service Management and B Social Science Social Administration and Social Work)
- 1 Senior Practitioner (CQSW (1977), PQ1)
- 6 Social Workers (all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications. 3 have PQ1, 1 has PQ2)
- The service also works with a pool of appropriately qualified and registered Independent Social Workers managed by a Senior Practitioner.

Adoption Team 5 - Generic + Adopter Training and Support

- Team Manager - DipSW / CQSW, 1985 Dip Public Service Management 1998
- 1 Senior Practitioner - MSW CCETSW 1998, CIPD certificate in training practice (April 09)

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- 5 Senior Social Workers - all have DipSW or equivalent qualifications. Three have PQ1, and one has PQ1, PQ full award and Practice Teachers award

Business Support (Administration Teams)

- Team Manager (NVQ Management 2006, HNC Business and Finance)
- 44 Business support post support across the whole Adoption Service(includes Adoption and Fostering Panel and Recruitment Teams)
- These teams are integrated into the Operational Teams and are responsible for both direct support to Managers and Social workers and supporting and developing processes and Information Technology systems to meet the standards and regulations.
- There are a number of specialist posts that deal with particular area of work eg: Letterbox contact, financial support means testing, Central Resource Exchange and Audit/Quality Assurance/Freedom of Information post.

7. THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The Adoption Service is a city wide service which is currently delivered by seven teams. There are five generic teams which cover a range of functions including: assessment of adopters, support to adopters both pre and post approval and placements for children approved for adoption, family finding for children. The two remaining teams have a joint function for fostering and adoption. These two teams have the responsibility for the management and delivery of the Adoption & Fostering Panels and the Recruitment team recruits potential foster carers and adopters.

RECRUITMENT TEAM
203 Corporation Street, Birmingham. 0121 303 7575
www.birmingham.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering

The Team provides a welcoming central point of contact for anyone interested in becoming an adopter, including those who make enquiries about intercountry adoption, step-parent and relative adoption. The Team works from a high profile city centre facility, which has shop front facilities, a meeting room for enquiry and information meetings and confidential interview facilities.

The Team provides access for the prospective adopters during the usual office hours and Thursday evenings. The Team devises and delivers projects and promotional campaigns to raise general awareness about the City's need for adopters, and also to generate enquiries from potential applicants. The scope of this brief covers all standard elements of promotional activity including the production and distribution / display of posters and literature citywide, media campaigns, advertising, and networking through community engagement projects and events and co-ordination of recruitment campaigns on a twelve

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month planned basis (including making use of venues, range of media and events and festivals throughout the city).

Enquirers will receive an information pack (including a DVD) and an invitation to attend an information meeting. The Recruitment Team will then offer an individual screening interview and initiate statutory checks.

The Team liaises closely with colleagues in the Adoption Service to develop, arrange and provide media features for specific children and to provide advice and consultation on advertising and promotional work.

The Recruitment Team Customer Services Officer's role is to continually review and improve customer services to prospective adopters / foster carers. This post is responsible for looking at the reasons for drop out rates of adoption applicants, introducing initiatives to combat this, implementing customer service practice, improving processes and the quality of information produced by the team. Collecting feedback and analysing the results in order that the team can make informed decisions is also the responsibility of this post holder.

The team are always very keen to hear views you may have on our recruitment processes and customer service in general. The Customer Services Officer can be contacted on 0121 303 7575.

PANEL TEAM
Silvermere Centre, Silvermere Road, Sheldon, Birmingham, B26 3XA.
(Tel: 0121 303 8423)

The Team administers and manages Birmingham's Adoption Panels and Fostering Panels. We have four separate Adoption Panels. There are at least 13 Panel meetings a month, 8 of which are Adoption and 5 Fostering. We also have the ability to convene a further Adoption Panel, when demand for Panel space is high. This extra Panel can sit up to 6 times a year.

The team has three specialist Panel Advisors who, along with the Team Manager, provide professional advice to Panels. Adoption Panels consider approval of children's Plans, approval of adopters, matches, and termination of adopters' approval. Adopters are invited and supported to attend Panel.

Panel liaise closely with Birmingham's decision-makers for Adoption currently this is a Head of Service and an Area Manager, Children's Services. The Team monitors activities and quality performance of the Service providing an annual report to Panels and monthly statistics to managers via Central Resource Exchange (CRE). Panel Advisors also provide a consultation service to children's workers and others across the Directorate.

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The Panel Team manages the Central Resource Exchange database, CHARMS, which provides family finding matches between children with Plans for adoption and approved adopters.

CRE is the identified link with the National Adoption Register and the West Midlands Consortium Register.

The Panel Manager is also the Agency Advisor and the link between the Adoption Service and Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

ADOPTION TEAMS 1, 2, 3 & 4 GENERIC

PO Box 16262 Lancaster Circus Birmingham B2 2WX (Tel 0121 303 1010)

All generic teams undertake a wide range of tasks including Family Finding where all children who require a Plan for permanency (via adoption or long-term fostering) are referred by children's social workers.

The teams provide a consultation service to social workers when they are planning for permanency for children, and advice and information on options to ensure consistency, particularly for large sibling groups where children can have different Plans.

The teams always consider placements with Birmingham approved families first. If such placements are not appropriate for the child then current West Midlands Consortium Placements will be considered followed by other interagency options. External placements, if appropriate, are spot purchased via interagency agreements. Matches are presented to Panel in partnership with the child's Social Worker, the teams' co-ordinate Adoption Support Plans, Adoption Placement Reports, Adoption Placement Plans and they support introductions and placements.

The teams also provide all the tasks associated with supporting adopters following approval at Panel. This includes support through matching, placement and the Court process through to Adoption Orders. Post adoption support is continued in line with Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005. The teams are responsible for development and finalisation of Adoption Support Plans. Alongside are annual reviews of adopters and preparation of files for archiving. In addition, the teams provide birth records counselling, access to archived adoption files, provision of information to other adoption agencies and Children and Families Teams where appropriate.

The teams facilitate and coordinate direct and indirect (letterbox) contact between the parties to adoption, and provide administration of the financial support service for adopters, outlined in the Adoption Support Services Regulations.

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In addition to supporting families to adopt Birmingham children, the teams facilitate the placement of children from other local authorities throughout the UK, and children from abroad. There are links with the West Midlands Consortium to promote local interagency matches.

ADOPTION TEAM 5 - GENERIC +ADOPTER TRAINING AND SUPPORT
PO Box 16262 Lancaster Circus Birmingham B2 2WX (Tel 0121 303 1010)

The Team co-ordinates all adoption pre-approval training and benefits from a well resourced training facility. The Team has developed a rolling programme of courses, which are designed to prepare applicants for the tasks of parenting an adopted child / children.

The training is structured into a pre-course introduction workbook and seven separate but interlinking modules with accompanying workbooks. The course provides prospective adopters with underpinning knowledge on subjects such as brain development, attachment, interrupted development and the impact of the child's pre-placement experiences on all of these areas. The courses are led by Assessment social workers with input from experienced adopters, adoptee, CAMHS workers and adoption support workers. All courses are well attended and post training evaluation forms are testament to the fact that they are well received.

The Team also organises groups for children of prospective adopters and has developed an interactive workbook for children aimed at giving them an understanding of adoption and what to expect.

Following training, adopters are assessed by an Assessment Social Worker using the BAAF PAR Form, which includes personal reference reports, medical reports and evaluations from training groups. This Team also undertakes the preparation training and assessment of foster carers wishing to adopt children in their care.

In addition to the training function this team also undertakes a generic role covering all aspects of work related to Adoption such as Assessment of Prospective Adopters and Family Finding.

Working together, the teams continue to develop a post approval training programme to equip families touched by adoption to deal with issues which may arise through the life cycle. There is a Welcome Pack for newly approved adopters, as well as hosting and facilitating of support groups for adopters and children. The annual "Summer Event" – a closed event for adoptive families - celebrates adoption for all our families with children up to 12 years. The newsletter is an occasional publication. The Stay and Play Groups for new

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families are popular, as are the monthly coffee mornings, where children are welcome. An adopter's lending library has been established, stocked with relevant books for children and adults. The service also provides a Duty helpline, and participates on the out of hours 'on call rota' for adopters and foster carers. In partnership with Adoption UK, BAAF, and the Post Adoption Centre, access to specialist training such as 'Piece of Cake' is sometimes available, subject to funding. Adopters have access to a starter year's membership of Adoption UK and New Families Social (for lesbian and gay adopters). There is a service level agreement with the LAC CAMHS Adoption Project. There is also a partnership agreement with Adoption Support, to provide sessions of independent support to birth parents.

The philosophy of the service is to provide early intervention to help adopters establish children in placement by proactively promoting attachment and bonding.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY

The Adoption Service's CHARMS database provides monthly performance statistics. The Adoption Service business plan includes service targets and objectives to meet Adoption Standards and Regulations. These are monitored through audits, supervision, management meetings, Performance Development Reviews and Children's Services performance meetings. The Adoption Service provides monthly performance reports to the Heads of Children's Services and the Director.

9. THE PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITING, PREPARING, ASSESSING, APPROVING AND SUPPORTING PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

We aim to find adoptive placements for all the children looked after in Birmingham who require a permanent family through adoption. To achieve this we aim to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a robust and timely manner to meet the needs of the children who are waiting. We positively support disabled people where they meet the needs of children waiting.

Where children cannot be placed within the Agency's own resources, the Service seeks to make appropriate and suitable arrangements with other adoption agencies to secure placements.

Further information is available via:

- Adoption Service eligibility criteria and priority policy (last agreed through cabinet member in Dec 2011)

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- The information pack for potential adopters, which is available from the Recruitment Team.
- Information is also available on line via www.birmingham.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering

The following leaflets and guides are available from any team:

- Information for Adopters on the Matching, Introduction and Placement Process in Birmingham
- Information Leaflet for Adopters
- Complaints and Compliments information and process
- Individual Team information leaflets
- Eligibility Criteria and Priority Policy
- Children's Guide to Adoption
- Information for (Birth) Parents about Adoption
- Adopted Children in School: Information for Teachers

10. INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

In seeking to constantly improve the quality of the Adoption Service we welcome and encourage feedback from service users, providers and partner agencies.

Prospective adopters are advised of the Directorate's complaints and compliment procedures and given information in an appropriate language on how to make a complaint. The Customer Relations Service provides intervention, problem solving, independent investigation, mediation, review and independent advocacy services etc.

Name and address of Customer Relations Manager:

Karen Holland
Room 11, Council House Extension
Margaret Street
Birmingham
B3 3BU
Tel: 0121 303 5161

Children's Rights are managed by the 'Rights and Participation Service'. Their mission statement is:

RAP aims to OPTIMISE and EMPOWER children and young people's involvement in both strategic and local decisions that affect their lives.

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We challenge and champion children and young people's rights to ensure that when decisions are made they are involved, consulted and listened to.

- RAP provides advocacy to Birmingham's children in care and care leavers.
- RAP supports Birmingham's Children in Care Council
- RAP supports Birmingham's children and young people's parliament Voice is Power.
- RAP supports Birmingham's Young Disabled Champions.
- RAP supports Birmingham's UKYP young people.

Lisa Carter is the Head of the Rights and Participation Service and can be contacted on 0121 303 7217 for any further information.

The Children, Young People & Families Directorate has a Rights and Participation Service which will help children and young people by providing an advocate for a young person in need of support. This service also provides a forum for collecting the general views of young people and children about service provision.

Contact: Lisa Carter, Head of Rights and Participation Service
150 Church Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2RT
Tel: 0121 303 7217

Applicants to become adopters who are turned down for approval on the recommendation of the adoption Panel and / or the Decision Maker are able to ask for their case to be reviewed by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). Details of this process, with timescales, are made available to applicants during preparation and assessment.

The IRM has the following timescales:

- Applicants have 40 days from Panel decision to decide to contact the IRM
- The adoption agency (Panel Team Manager) will be contacted to produce relevant documentation within 10 days.
- The IRM will set up a Panel within 3 months of the application.

Contact details are:

Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)
Unit 4,
Pavilion Business Park,
Royds Hall Road,
Wortley,
LEEDS
LS12 6AJ

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Tel No: 0845 450 3956 (charged at local rate)
Fax: 0845 450 3957
Email: irm@baaf.org.uk

11. THE ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR OFSTED

Ofsted are responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting adoption services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000.

Headquarters:
Ofsted
National Business Unit,
Royal Exchange Building,
St Anns Square,
Manchester,
M2 7LA

Tel: 0845 6404040 Fax: 0845 6404049

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Rights Director: Dr Roger Morgan
www.rights4me.org.uk

N.B. Birmingham's 2007 Adoption Inspection Report is available on request or by visiting www.CSCI.gov.uk

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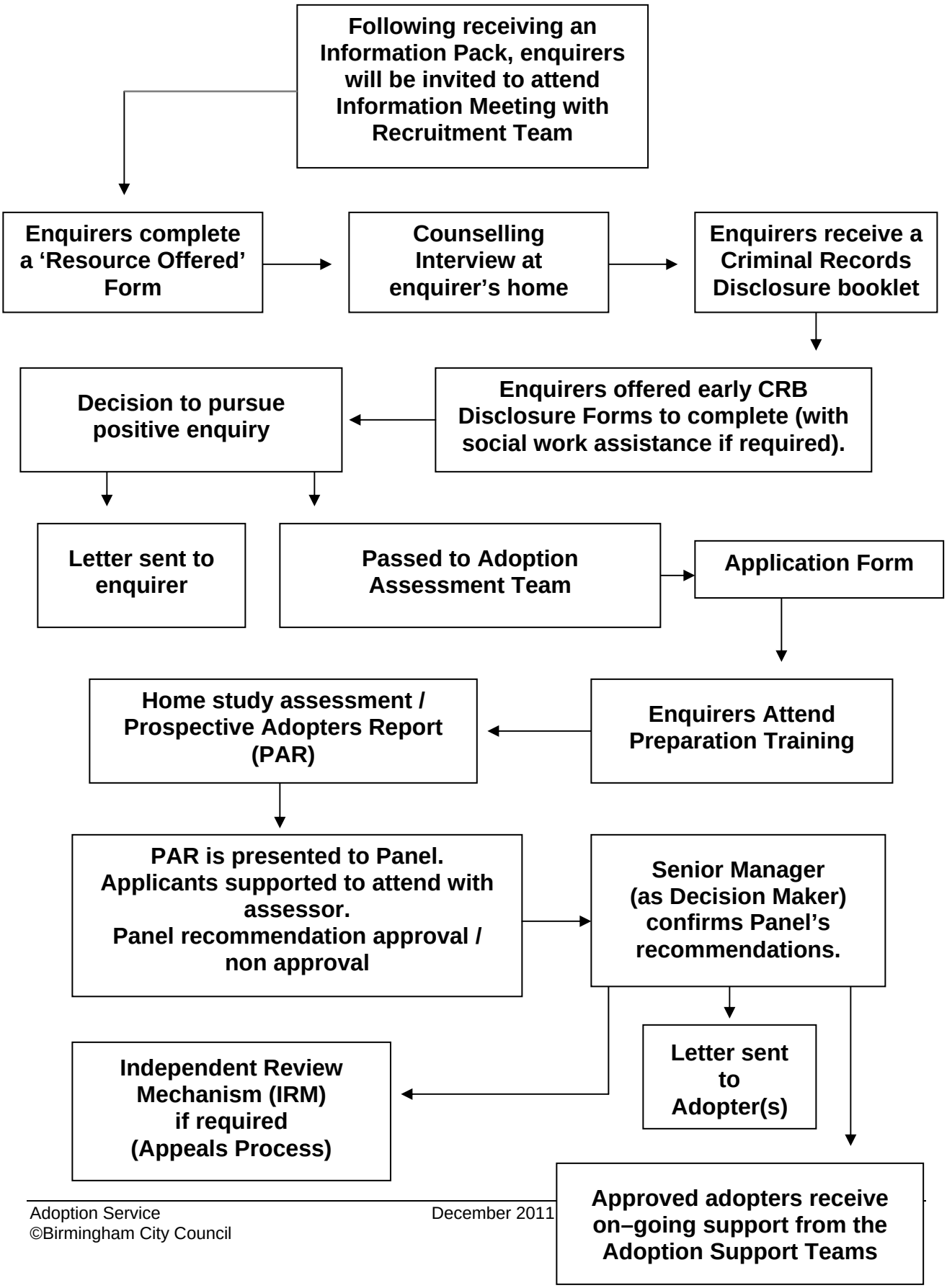
Process of approval as adopters



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