



FOSTERING & ADOPTION

Statement of Purpose

for Oxfordshire Children, Education &
Families

Adoption Service
2017-2018

Working
together
to change
Lives...

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/adoption



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

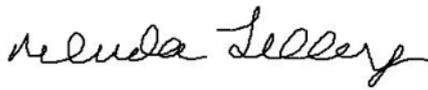
**FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
FOR OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES
ADOPTION SERVICE**

BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Tilley', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Melinda Tilley

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE **FOR THE ADOPTION SERVICE** **2017-2018**

Introduction

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of Standard 18 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014.

The past several years have been exceptionally busy for Oxfordshire's Adoption Service, as we have been both responding to the government's ongoing Adoption Reform agenda and providing adoption services for a growing number of children and families.

In June 2015, the government published the 'Regionalising Adoption' paper aimed at speeding up matching, improving the life chances of neglected and damaged children, improving adopter recruitment and adoption support and reducing costs. In response, a group of agencies, including Oxfordshire, submitted an expression of interest to form a new regional adoption agency in the Thames Valley area and this was accepted by the DfE. During 2016-17, Oxfordshire staff have been involved in the development of this new regional adoption agency along with our partner agencies Adopt Berkshire (Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham), Reading City Council, Swindon City Council, PACT and Barnardos. In November 2016, Oxfordshire's bid to become the host authority for the regional adoption agency - currently named Adopt Thames Valley (ATV) - was accepted. The organisational structure and funding arrangements will be finalised in 2017-18 and a service lead appointed in May 2017.

It is currently anticipated that ATV will become operational from 1st November 2017. The new agency will recruit, family find, match children with families and deliver adoption support services across the region and enable collective working to pool resources. It will also undertake non-agency adoptions.

It is anticipated that demand will remain unchanged under the new arrangements (or possibly increase) – so we will need at least as many Panels as we run at the moment. The ATV board are committed to maintaining local Panels and there is also strong recognition of the skills, knowledge and commitment of the current Panel members and Independent Chairs which we do not want to lose. We are working to achieve a seamless transition from the current arrangements using existing Panels to deliver services on behalf of ATV.

The outcome of a bid by ATV to the DfE Practice Improvement Fund is awaited, with a view to investing in the development of a centre of excellence for adoption support in the region.

The most recent Adoption Score Card was published for children adopted from April 2012 to March 2015. Oxfordshire met the current A1 scorecard threshold - the

average time between children entering care and moving in with their adoptive families should be less than 487 days. Oxfordshire exceeded the A2 scorecard threshold by 12 days - the average number of days between receiving court authority to place a child for adoption and the agency making a decision on a match should be less than 121 days. These are challenging targets for all local authorities and Oxfordshire continues to perform very well being ranked amongst the top performing authorities.

The most recent Ofsted Inspection was in May 2014, where the adoption service received a "Good" rating.

In 2015-16, like many local authorities, Oxfordshire saw a decrease in the number of children needing adoption. However in 2016-17, there was an increase, although not to the previous very high numbers. We continue to need a steady recruitment programme for adopters for those children under the age of two who are currently developing well but who, due to the child's experiences and family's medical history, are at an increased risk of developing some difficulties later in life. Our pressing recruitment needs are for more black and minority ethnic adoptive parents and for more adoptive parents who are ready to adopt sibling groups, children over the age of 5 years, and children with some degree of special needs.

From July 2015 to the end March 2017, the government provided funding to enable local authorities to claim back the fee for inter-agency placements in certain circumstances. Oxfordshire has made a number of inter-agency adoptive placements which were eligible for this funding. This scheme is now coming to an end.

Oxfordshire has developed a concurrent planning scheme for prospective adopters and for Oxfordshire children. Prospective adoptive parents are provided additional training and support regarding the fostering role in a concurrent planning placement. Over the past two years we have recruited a small number of families able to have children placed under this scheme and have placed young children who have gone on to be adopted by those families. Our plans are to continue this scheme and to make this resource available to more children in future.

The government's commitment to supporting adoptive and Special Guardianship families has continued through the Adoption Support Fund (ASF). The ASF was extended to Special Guardianships in April 2016

and 20% more funding has been committed for 2017-18 with up to £2500 available per child for a specialist assessment in addition to the £5000 p.a. fair access limit per child for therapy (instituted since October 2016). We will continue to ensure that use of this Fund is maximised for Oxfordshire's children both pre- and post-order by appointing a specialist administrator with an additional remit to provide support and training to workers making applications to the ASF.

In 2017-18, it is planned that Adoption and Permanence Panels will begin to provide scrutiny of Special Guardianship assessments initially for children on Care

Orders already in placement. This is with a view to improving placement stability and a reduction in disruptions of Special Guardianship placements. Consideration will also be given to the eventual inclusion of children still in care proceedings where the plan is for Special Guardianship.

Aims

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

Objectives

- To ensure that adoption is considered for all children in care who are not able to return to their birth family or kin
- To place children for whom adoption is the plan with adoptive families who can meet their needs
- To recruit a pool of prospective adopters to reflect the assessed needs of the children needing adoptive families in Oxfordshire (and within the wider ATV region from November 2017)
- To provide a range of adoption support services as required by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, including counselling and advice, support groups and training as well as practical, financial and therapeutic services
- To provide a single point of contact for people living in Oxfordshire who have been affected by adoption
- To comply with the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and provide an assessment of need for adoption support services when requested

- To ensure that applicants for inter-country adoption are provided with counselling and advice, preparation and assessment. Oxfordshire has a contract with the Inter Country Adoption Centre (IAC) to provide these services
- To provide a statutory service (as prescribed in the Inter Country Adoption Regulations 2003) for children, who are brought into the UK with the intention of adoption and who reside in Oxfordshire, through the services of IAC.
- To ensure that the Adoption Agency employs staff with appropriate and sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to deliver the adoption service
- To ensure that Oxfordshire's Children, Education and Families Directorate works in partnership with other agencies to promote the best outcomes for those affected by adoption
- To ensure that all parties to the adoption process will have access to the Directorate's Complaints procedure

Principles and Values

The County Council has committed to do the best we can for residents with the resources available.

This means we:

- work together in a supportive and honest way
- strive to find the best solutions
- are open to change and doing things differently.

Values – Children

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from good parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills, leading to a successful adult life
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process

- Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of those children waiting to be adopted
- Children should be placed in adoptive families in which most of their assessed needs can be matched rather than waiting for the perfect match
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account
- Children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected

Values - Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives

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

Organisation and Management

The **Corporate Parenting Manager** has overall responsibility for the Service:

Matthew Edwards
County Hall
New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND

The **Service Manager, Adoption, Permanence and Fostering** provides the operational management of the Service:

Teresa Rogers
County Hall
New Road Oxford OX1 ND

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

The **Adoption Team** is managed by 2fte managers: one primarily responsible for recruiting and assessing prospective adopters and one primarily responsible for family finding.

The **Adoption and Permanence Support Team** has 1fte manager whose role incorporates Adoption Support Services Adviser (for post order support) and responsibility for managing the Adoption Support Helpdesk, services for Adults Affected by Adoption; the Birth Relative Support Service and the Letterbox Service.

Staffing Structure

Recruitment, Assessment and Family Finding:

- Senior Practitioners (4.5fte)
- Social Workers (5.5fte)
- Family Support worker (1.5fte)

Adoption and Permanence Support:

- Senior Practitioners (1.5fte)
- Social Workers (3.5fte)
- Birth Relative Support Worker/Letterbox Co-ordinator Senior Practitioner (0.8fte)
- Social Worker for Adults Affected by Adoption (15 hours per week)

Support Staff:

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

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

- Independent Chair of Adoption Panel
- Sessional Manager for permanence planning/adoption home studies
- Sessional social workers undertaking adoption home studies
- Sessional Senior Practitioner supervising non–agency adoption assessments and reports for court
- Sessional Social workers undertaking non-agency adoption assessments and reports for court
- Sessional workers undertaking enhanced Life Story Work
- External trainer providing parenting training courses and workshops for adoptive parents

Plans for adoption in respect of children who are the subject of care proceedings are decided by the **Agency Decision Maker** who is either the Service Manager for Children with Disabilities or the Principal Social Worker.

The **Recruitment Team**, which is shared with the Fostering Service, deals with enquiries from the public and the first stages of the application process for prospective adopters. This team also organises marketing and recruitment campaigns to encourage local people to apply to adopt.

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

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

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

Functions

The **Adoption Team** leads on recruitment, training, assessment and support to prospective adopters in Oxfordshire. The Team takes the lead in family finding and matching children with prospective adopters, both within and outside Oxfordshire. **Finding families** for children waiting for adoption, matching children with prospective adopters, preparing Adoption Placement Reports and planning introductions is led by a family finder from the Adoption Team in conjunction with the child's social worker.

Approved adopters are supported by the Adoption Team to find children who match their family profile. The Adoption Team keeps approved adopters informed about children needing placement and supports them in finding 'good matches'. They are also provided with preparation, training and support until a child is placed with them and supported until the Adoption Order is made.

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

The Adoption Team also use resources such as Adoption Match, Adoption Link and organises profiling events to find adoptive families where needed for Oxfordshire children. Likewise prospective adopters are supported to use these resources themselves. However, currently most adopters are eventually matched with Oxfordshire children.

The Adoption Team's family finding social workers are frequently called on to prepare Family Finding Court Reports and to give evidence during the final hearings for children where adoption is the care plan.

The agency's three **Adoption and Permanence Panels** each meet once per month and have three main functions in relation to adoption:

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

The Adoption Panel also provides advice regarding:

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

The Adoption and Permanence Support Team provides post-order adoption support services ensuring adopters are made aware of their entitlement to an assessment of their support needs. The team works in partnership with parents and assessments and support plans are shared and reviewed on a regular basis. The team also provides support to birth relatives and to adults affected by adoption and is a single point of contact to all those affected by adoption.

Procedures for Recruiting, Assessing, Approving and Supporting Prospective Adopters

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Before a child is linked with prospective adopters an Adoption Placement Report is completed which includes an Adoption Support Plan. The prospective adopters are given the opportunity to contribute to this report and comment on the support plan before it is presented to the Adoption Panel.

The agreed Adoption Support Plan is reviewed at each Adoption Review and finally before the Adoption Order is made.

Support and Training

Adopters, children placed for adoption and any other children and close relatives of the adopter's family can be provided with support and this could include:

- A dedicated Adoption and Permanence Support Helpdesk providing the front door for all new referrals and enquiries
- An assessment of adoption support needs where requested
- An allocated Adoption and Permanence Support social worker when a specific piece of work is agreed as part of an Adoption Support Plan
- Direct social work support (individual or group) focussing on parenting strategies, promoting attachment and other interventions post-order
- To be part of adopters' mailing list to receive relevant information in relation to Adoption and Permanence Support
- Annual Adopter's Picnic
- A Buddy Scheme matching trained adopter buddies to support newer adopters
- Support with contact arrangements
- Referral to therapeutic services and other relevant services
- Access to advice and support from an Educational Psychologist
- Support with sharing an adoptive child's life story throughout their childhood and support with tools such as enhanced Life Story Books for older children
- Occasional group activities for adopted children and young people
- Application to the Adoption Support Fund for funding of specialist therapeutic provision

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

- A Reflection Workshop (1/2 day) and Adoption Preparation Course (3 days) to prepare adopters during assessment.
- A Recruitment Mentoring Scheme for prospective adopters during their assessment process.
- A specialist 10 week Parenting Course for all prospective adopters on approval.
- 'Adopt' - a 16 week parenting and support programme for adopters with a child aged 3-8 already in placement
- An annual 3 week course on Dealing with Anger and Strong Feelings - relevant to adopters of children under 10
- A twice yearly 6 week course on Coping with Teens – followed by termly 'top up' sessions for all graduates of the course
- Play workshops incorporating Theraplay techniques
- A 14 week course on Fostering Attachments run by the Attach Team
- Workshops/seminars on topical issues relevant to adoption: Talking to your Child about Adoption; Managing Transitions in Education for Adopted Children; Behaviour & Medical Conditions; Building Attachments; Managing contact workshop; Physical and Sexual Abuse; Internet Safety; Matching workshop;

Understanding the Adoption Application and process; Getting ready for Introductions; Sibling workshop; Developmental Needs of Adopted Children; and Concurrency & Fostering for Adoption.

Letter Box contact is facilitated by a specialist administrator and Senior Practitioner/Letterbox Coordinator and managed by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team Manager. Birth relatives and adopters are supported with indirect contact arrangements through the **Letter Box Service**. **Direct Post Adoption Contact** where necessary is supported by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team and sometimes the Supervised Contact Team.

Birth relatives of children being adopted have access to independent advice, support and counselling from a dedicated Senior Practitioner/Birth Relative Support Worker. Information is provided about this service early on in the permanence planning process. In addition, there is a monthly support group for birth mothers of adopted children. Birth relatives are also supported at introduction meetings with prospective adopters.

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

Adults Affected by Adoption are provided with a counselling service and access to records by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team via a specialist social worker. A facilitated evening support group for adopted adults meets every two months.

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

Oxfordshire's Adoption Allowance Scheme provides financial support, where this is necessary, to ensure that adopters can look after their adopted child in special circumstances. The allowance is paid weekly and is means tested. There are also arrangements for paying lump sums where this is necessary to meet the assessed needs of a specific child.

Oxfordshire County Council commissions a service from **Inter Country Adoption Centre (IAC)** for those who wish to adopt from overseas. IAC also carry out adoption welfare supervision on behalf of the County in respect of children from overseas placed with adopters in Oxfordshire, until an Adoption Order is granted.

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

Additional Services

ATTACH (Attaining Therapeutic Attachments for Children) is a therapeutic team embedded within Children, Education and Families. Working as part of the placement stability service, ATTACH provides therapeutic support for adopted children and young people and their families where there are concerns about behavioural, emotional or psychological functioning.

The work of ATTACH is underpinned by the principles of attachment together with an understanding of the importance of early relationships on all aspects of development; physical; psychological; neurological; emotional; cognitive and social. ATTACH offer consultations to adoptive parents and carers, moving to involve a child or young person in this work if necessary. With older adolescents or where appropriate, individual therapy is offered to young people. The team also provides group-based programmes.

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

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

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

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

Educational Support Services can be provided by the School Psychology Service accessed through a child's own school. **Oxfordshire's Virtual School** has a role in supporting the educational needs of children being placed for adoption and their carers. Training for schools on attachment and consultation for professionals in relation to the needs of adopted children can be accessed from the Education Psychologist in the ATTACH Team.

Medical Advisors in the Community Paediatric Team based at The John Radcliffe and Horton Hospitals provide specialist medical assessments of children and prospective adopters and advice for adopters, social workers and the Adoption and Permanence Panel.

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

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

Information and Advice

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

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

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

Oxfordshire's information leaflets include:

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

Monitoring and evaluation

The agency's performance, including the numbers of adopters approved, numbers of children with adoption plans and timescales for children's progress through the adoption system is reported on regularly. Reports on Panel business are provided bi-annually to the Corporate Parenting Panel to inform them and enable them to comment on the agency's activity and performance.

Statistical reports are submitted to the Adoption Leadership Board on a quarterly basis.

The **Annual Report on the Adoption Service** is an added mechanism for quality assurance and monitoring of the Adoption Service.

The **Adoption Strategy and Performance Meeting**, held bi-annually, with senior managers, adoption managers and the Agency Decision Makers, looks at quality assurance issues, monitors progress and considers strategic issues. The Panel Chair reports on any particular issues regarding quality assurance to these meetings.

The **Adoption and Permanence Panel** receives progress reports on all cases after 6 months and monitors cases for timeliness and compliance with regulations. In addition, the Panel monitors the quality of reports presented to Panel. Feedback from attendees at Panel are collated and used to improve service-user experience.

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

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

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

Preparation and Training Courses for adopters are regularly evaluated which are used to inform the development of the Service.

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

Complaints Procedure

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

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

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

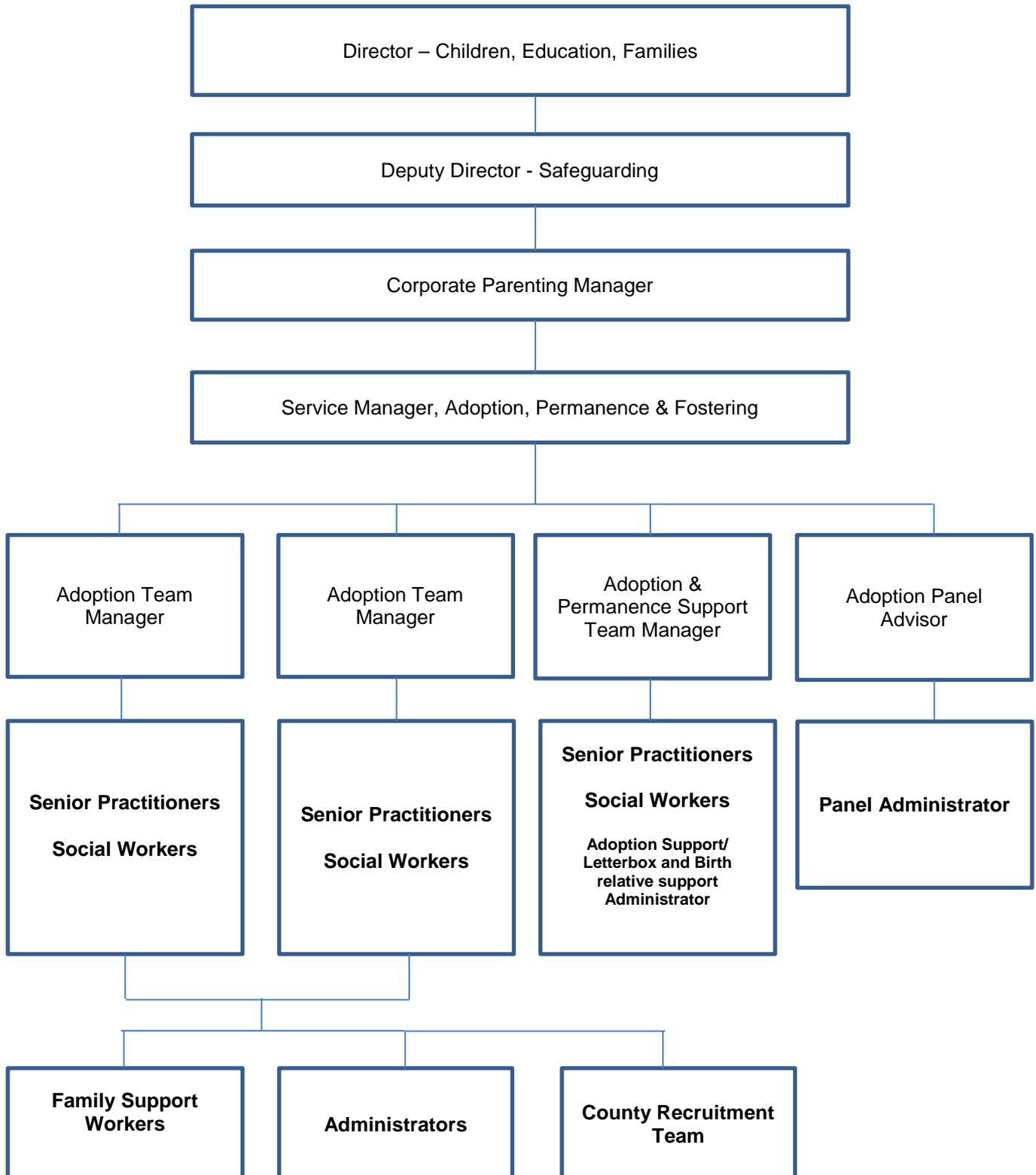
Comments and Complaints Officer
Joint Commissioning
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall (4th Floor)
New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND
Tel: 01865 810563
commentsandcomplaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Alternatively the Ofsted Adoption Inspection Team can be contacted at:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD
General Helpline **0300 123 1231** www.ofsted.gov.uk

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Adoption Service



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

Tel: 0845 050 7666 or

Email: socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk