

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

Recommendations

Standard	Recommendation	Current Position	Proposed Action	Timescale
(NMS 2.6, 2.7, 2.8)	Ensure that the format of the life story book is appropriate to the child's age and understanding, that the book is given in stages and that prospective adopters are encouraged to update it with the child as their understanding develops. Ensure also that the completed life story book and later life letter are given at the latest within 10 working days of the adoption ceremony.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is currently being undertaken by LAC social workers and support staff some of whom lack the skills and training needed for this piece of work. 2. Life story book in some cases is not completed and handed to prospective adopters prior to the making of an Adoption Order. 3. Post Adoption social worker undertakes this piece of work where it is realised child has being adopted without a life story book or the language is inappropriate for his/her age. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life Story work training to be provided to all IRT & LAC social workers, Adoption social workers & support staff. 2. Life story book to commence once a child aged 0 – 5 becomes LAC. Social Work Team Manager to ensure this takes place. 3. Following referral to the Adoption team the Adoption team manager is to check if the life story book has started during the Adoption notification meeting with the child's social worker. To notify the relevant team manager and service manager if this piece of work has not 	<p>October 2012 More work needed to ensure this is fully addressed. RM to speak to WA use of possible additional resources</p> <p>Implementation from now, but fresh initiative and monitoring to follow training</p> <p>Immediate and on- going.</p>

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

		<p>4. IRT social workers do not start the life story book when child is taken into care.</p>	<p>started. 4. All Social workers and support staff undertaking life story work with children being prepared for adoption to meet with Post Adoption social worker for guidance prior to undertaking this piece of work 5. Post Adoption social worker to joint work with LAC social worker or support staff where necessary. 6. Adoption Planning Placement meeting to fix date for hand in of part completed Life story book to the prospective adopters when a placement date is agreed at the meeting. 7. Life story book to be finalised once the adoption ceremony has taken place in court and handed to the adopters within 10 working days. LAC Team manager</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Team Manager to implement from June 2012 Team Manager to check whether this has been followed</p>
--	--	--	---	---

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

			<p>& Adoption team manager to oversee this. In case of any difficulties the adopters are to be informed when the book will be available and the reason why recorded on the child's ICS records.</p>	<p>through in most recent cases</p> <p>Adoption Team Manager to follow up with telephone call to adopters after celebration event to check this has happened</p>
(NMS 12.3, 12.6)	<p>Encourage birth parents to use a support worker who is independent of the child's social worker from the time adoption is identified as a plan for the child. Help birth parents to work through their concerns through the counselling they receive and help them to understand how their child will benefit from their involvement in the adoption process</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child's social worker is responsible for advising birth parents to contact the Adoption team for counselling support. 2. Child's social worker is provided the BAAF leaflet by the Adoption 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adoption Social worker to write to the birth parents with offer of counselling within 0-5 days of referral to the Adoption team, and "should be placed decision" has been made. This service will be available throughout the time the care plan is adoption. 2. BAAF leaflet "If your child is being adopted" to be sent together with letter inviting the parents to 	<p>Immediate implementation</p> <p>As above</p>

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

		<p>team to be given to the birth parents and to obtain their signature acknowledging receipt of the leaflet.</p> <p>3. Adoption social worker offers to meet with the birth parents for counselling once contact has been made with the team. This meeting takes place at the office.</p> <p>4. Some parents get support from Open Doors Advocacy Service (however the workers have no training/experience in adoption)</p>	<p>contact the Adoption team for counselling. Revised accompanying Template letter to be developed</p> <p>3. Birth parents to be given the option of having the counselling at their home address 10-15 working days from receipt of interest in counselling (a risk assessment is to be undertaken prior to any appointment being offered).</p> <p>4. Support group to be set up for birth parents whose children are being adopted or have been adopted. To explore a joint initiative with Open Doors Advocacy Service.</p>	<p>Revised Template letter Oct 2012.</p> <p>As above</p> <p style="color: red;">Target date deferred to early 2013 because of recruitment delay</p>
(Adoption Guidance 3.12)	develop the recruitment strategy to ensure it addresses the recruitment of prospective adopters from minority ethnic	1. Thurrock & Havering & Southend adoption consortium has a recruitment strategy in	1. Monthly statistics on enquiries to be collated with ICS staff and to review recruitment strategy	Monthly – To start in June

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

	backgrounds	<p>place. However, this document makes reference to black and ethnic minorities and not specialist or disabled or same sex adopters.</p> <p>2. This strategy document is reviewed at the consortium adoption managers meeting which takes places every 2 months.</p>	<p>accordingly.</p> <p>2. Business Development Officer to attend the Adoption team meeting once monthly to discuss recruitment trends/activities.</p> <p>3. Recruitment to target specific groups' i.e. ethnic minorities; same sex groups by attending their local group forums or meetings to share information on adoption.</p> <p>4. Financial support to be considered for prospective adopters seeking to care for children with special needs or from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p> <p>5. Foster carers to be supported to care for</p>	<p>Has already started.</p> <p>Programme to be devised and rolled out from Sept 2012 Discussion has already taken place with Thurrock Diversity Officer about means to access BME groups,</p> <p>Case by case discussion where needed</p>
--	-------------	--	---	---

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

			<p>children with special needs or from ethnic minority background who are already in their care if they apply to adopt. Appropriate support including financial support to be provided with regular reviews.</p> <p>6. To fast track allocation of all PAR for prospective adopters interested in caring for children from black and ethnic minority backgrounds or children with special needs or disability.</p> <p>7. In undertaking item 6 above, where necessary an independent social worker is to be used for the assessment with the consent of the service manager in order to minimise delays.</p>	<p>This is on going.</p> <p>Immediate – acknowledging vacancy situation This has occurred in two cases already</p> <p>Not necessary so far</p>
(NMS 17.7)	ensure that the adoption panel's recommendation about the suitability of the prospective adopter is made within eight	1. Applications are accepted after the initial home visit. This affects timescales as the	1. To accept applications 3 weeks prior to attendance of Adoption workshop.	This has started. To be reviewed on 6 monthly basis.

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

	<p>months of the receipt of their formal application</p>	<p>adoption workshop does not always take place soon afterwards.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. 2 Adoption workshops are held in the year. Although prospective adopters can attend workshop provided by consortium partners this is sometimes not possible due to the travelling distance causing delays. 3. Delays in allocating PAR's due to staffing vacancies (the team is presently down by 1.5 posts). 4. Staff vacancies (i.e. 1.5 posts) have affected work to be allocated as staff can only carry a limited caseload. 5. Delays in completing allocated PAR have also affected the early allocation of prospective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Independent assessors to be used where necessary. 3. An additional adoption workshop is to be held in June 2012. 4. Adoption workshop dates to be flexible and to be organised in line with the demands on the service rather than sticking to the current practice of holding the workshop strictly in January & November of each year. 5. Any vacancy in the team to be advertised without delay. To use external sources such as BAAF when necessary (this has already taken place with the vacant 1.5 posts). 6. Social work supervision to be used to critically 	<p>Next review will be in Oct 2012</p> <p style="color: green;">Done</p> <p style="color: green;">Team almost fully staffed from Sept 2012</p> <p style="color: red;">Service</p>
--	--	--	--	---

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

		adopters awaiting assessments.	<p>review/monitor assessments deadline. Reasons for delay to be recorded on ICS records and staff individual supervision notes.</p> <p>7. Performance against timescales to be made explicit criterion for Competency Review Payments.</p>	<p style="color: red;">Manager to audit Supervision notes to ensure these discussions have been recorded Oct 2012</p>
(NMS 15.1)	<p>Review partnership working with other adoption agencies so that arrangements most effectively meet the needs of children and adopters. Where support is provided by another agency on behalf of this agency, ensure that written records clearly demonstrate that children and adopters are being appropriately supported</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Placing Local Authorities social workers have infrequently sent in recordings of statutory visits to the child in placement. 2. Placing Local Authorities have sometimes delayed in sending in review notifications and minutes 3. Placing Local Authorities social workers have sometimes not provided the prospective adopters with the child's life story book and later life letter. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion at consortium managers' level to ensure a consistency in practice in the consortium. 2. Discussion at team meetings 3. Supervision and case file audit by Adoption Team Manager and brief report to be provided to Service Manager on findings by 31.10.12 4. Discussion at Adoption Placement Planning meetings to ensure all parties clear of expectation 	<p>This has already taken place, however because of management changes within Consortium partners this issue to be revisited October 2012</p> <p style="text-align: right;">31.10.12</p>

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

(NMS 16.1)	ensure that you provide birth parents and adopted adults with full information about the Adoption Contact Register in a form that suits their needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Birth parents counselling does not cover the Adoption Contact Register given the sensitivity of the matter once a primary plan decision of adoption has been made. 2. This area of work is currently provided by a Post Adoption support worker (she has now left the service) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Birth parents counselling to include information on Adoption Contact Register. 2. Birth parent to be provided with details of Adoption Contact Register once an order has been granted. To be done together with notification that counselling can be offered on how to access the register. 3. All adopted adults to be provided with details of the Adoption Contact Register following their initial contact with the Adoption team. 4. All Adoption social workers to be provided with training on post adoption support services in order to extend their range of expertise and be able to offer such services 	<p>Immediate</p> <p>0-5 working days of the granting of an Adoption order.</p> <p>0-5 working days following contact with the adoption team.</p> <p>Oct/Nov 2012 (once all vacant post have been filled). This may require funding for external training.</p>
---------------	---	--	--	---

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

(NMS 18.5)	ensure that all of the information in the children's guide is written in a style that is appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a children's guide which is given to any child who is to be adopted. There are different guides for male and female children. However, this is a single guide for all children and not age specific. 2. The guide does not specifically consider specific needs such as disability and special needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new children's guide to be developed to reflect specific age groups between 0-10. 2. Above task to be completed by the Post Adoption social worker with an input from team colleagues and consortium partners. To reflect child's needs including disability 	<p>Autumn 2012</p> <p>AT/NB to lead.</p> <p style="color: red;">Team Manager to check progress by 31.10.12 and report to Service Manager</p>
(NMS 17.5)	Ensure that the manager exercises effective leadership so that the service is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible child care and service provision for service users, including birth parents and relatives, adopted adults, children and adopters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the time of the Inspection the team had a vacancy of one worker. A part time worker was also in the process of leaving the team. 2. The part time staff who dealt with post adoption support work was off sick at the time of the inspection. 3. There is presently no 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All adoption social workers to have training in post adoption support services such as access to records and tracing of birth relatives. 2. All adoption socialworkers to undertake generic work rather than restricting their skills to either recruitment and assessment or post adoption support services. 	<p>Oct/Nov 2012 (once 1.5 vacant posts have been filled)</p> <p>As above</p>

February 2012 Adoption Inspection Action Plan

To be reviewed by Team Manager and Service Manager: Sept 2012, Dec 2012, Feb 2013.

		<p>support group for birth parents although a support group exists for adopters and prospective adopters.</p>	<p>3. Vacant post to be advertised without delay. To use external sources such as BAAF where necessary (this has taken place with the current vacancies in the team)</p> <p>4. Service Manager and Team manager to work closely with HR to ensure vacancies are filled without delays.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Not currently relevant following appointments</p>
--	--	---	--	--