



Adoption East Midlands
Statement of Purpose 2024-2025

Our Aims and Objectives

Adoption East Midlands aims to:

- Offer a comprehensive range of adoption services to children and adults in the East Midlands (Derbyshire, Derby City, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City) whose lives have been affected by adoption.
- Deliver services within a timescale that meets the needs of the service users and meets the National Standards for adoption.
- Ensure service users are fully involved and consulted on service delivery and service development.
- Treat all service users with respect and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Maintain confidentiality and security of adoption records.

In addition we are committed to:

- Providing adoptive families for children looked after by Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City, Derbyshire and Derby City where the agency has agreed this is in their best interests.
- Recruiting and supporting sufficient adoptive parents from diverse backgrounds who can offer a stable and permanent home for children.
- Providing effective and efficient Adoption Panels which are appropriately constituted.
- Ensuring all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and trained to fulfil their agency functions.
- Referring children and families to Linkmaker where we are not able to make placements within our own resources.
- Ensuring the best possible match for each child based on individual needs.
- Exploring the potential for post adoption keeping in touch with the birth family, and foster carers, and making decisions according to the child's best interests.
- Provide a programme of adoption support that ensures AEM adopters are fully and appropriately empowered and supported throughout their adoption journey, from preparation through to placement and beyond the adoption order.

- Working in partnership with other agencies to achieve a positive transition for children to their adoptive family.

Named Manager

The responsible manager for the adoption service is Shelagh Mitchell, Head of Service (Adoption East Midlands) who is based at Trent Bridge House, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

Relevant qualifications and experience of head of service.

- Shelagh Mitchell is a qualified and registered Social worker, with over 30 years' experience, in local authority and private sector childcare provision.
- Since the Regional Adoption Agency went live in April 2019, Shelagh has led Adoption East Midlands on behalf of Nottinghamshire as the host authority.

Qualifications are as follows:

- BA (hons) Applied Social Studies, 1987,
- CQSW 1987
- Management level 5, 2010

Organisation and structure of the Adoption Service:

The service has Office bases in Matlock, Nottingham City, and Nottinghamshire, staff work from home, and office bases throughout each Local Authority, on a flexible basis.

The Postal address of the service is County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG 2 7QP

Adoption East Midlands is constituted as follows.

Adoption Support

The adoption support team is responsible for:

- Providing informed and timely support for adoptive families from the start of their adoption journey and through all stages of development post order.
- Designing and providing a universal support offer for all adoptive families which includes access to therapeutic listening conversations, telephone advice, support and signposting, as well as groups for adoptive parents (peer support, learning and social events) and groups for adopted children and young people.
- Assessing the adoption support needs of all eligible parties to adoption.
- Direct work with children, parents, adopted adults and birth parents.

- Providing and where necessary commissioning services for adopted children and adoptive families including therapeutic support packages.
- Providing adoption support service advice to agencies.
- Maintaining archive records and managing access to these records.
- Providing consultation and support to professionals and families to enable keeping in touch arrangements after the Adoption Order has been made, which are flexible to meet the child's need, and including the letterbox scheme which is a confidential postal arrangement between adoptive parents and members of the birth family.
- Supporting Birth Family members on behalf of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Derby, with a dedicated team of family workers.
- There is currently a multi disciplinary project within the support service, providing specialist youth, education, speech and language, and psychology support to families, and professionals.

Adoption Panel

The adoption panel team is responsible for:

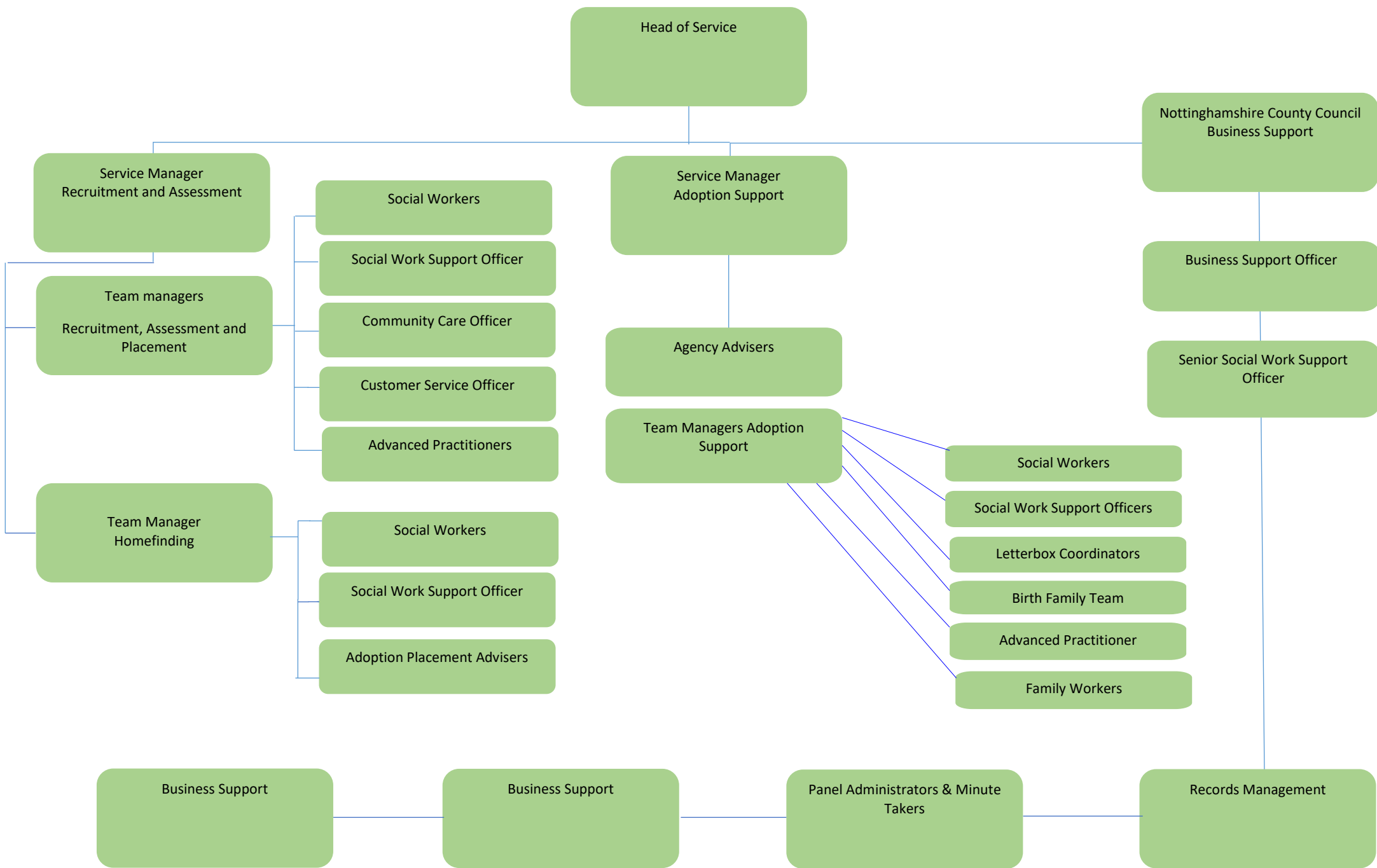
- Organisation and administration of adoption panels and agency decisions.
- Recruiting, supporting and training panel members.
- Providing professional advice to the panel chairperson
- Providing professional advice to the agency decision maker, this includes children's plans for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
- Producing statistical information about adoption activity across Adoption East Midlands

Recruitment, Assessment, Placement and Home Finding Teams.

The Recruitment, Assessment, Placement and Home Finding Teams are responsible for:

- Recruiting, preparing and assessing prospective adoptive parents in line with national regulations and standards.
- Identifying appropriate adoptive parents for children within the region in need of an adoptive family.
- Maintaining a high public profile by effective use of the recruitment and publicity strategy.
- Ensuring all prospective adoptive parents are considered regardless of marital status, racial origin, religious persuasion, health, disability gender identity or

sexual orientation. The primary consideration will be the family's potential to parent a child by adoption



The above structure is further supported by a team of business support staff.

All social workers are suitably qualified and experienced and registered with Social Work England. We have staff trained in Therapeutic life story work Dyadic Development Practice, systemic family therapy, Theraplay, sensory development, and the use of virtual reality tools.

8. Procedures for the recruitment, preparation, assessment, approval and support of prospective adopters

a) Recruitment

Adoption East Midlands has a Recruitment Strategy which is regularly reviewed and updated .

Adoption East Midlands works closely with corporate communications to publicise the need for adoptive parents and design recruitment campaigns, liaising with local media.

Adoption East Midlands has a dedicated phone number for recruitment purposes, in addition to receiving enquiries via the Adoption East Midlands website. All enquirers have the opportunity to discuss their interest in adoption with a social worker

Regular Information events are held virtually, to provide information to people interested in adoption.

Enquirers who indicate a wish to proceed to register an interest will be visited where possible within 5 working days. A decision on accepting the registration of interest will be taken within 5 working days.

b) Preparation

Applicants are required to attend Preparation Groups which are run regularly. Whilst the primary aims are to educate and inform, those who attend are made aware that this is part of the assessment process of stage 1 and that any issues or concerns will be discussed with them.

Preparation Groups consist of several sessions they are based on a model developed by Coram/BAAF. Our aim is for all applicants to complete stage one within 8 weeks.

c) Assessment

As far as possible the same social worker will take applicants through stage one and two, ensuring there is no delay.

Stage Two is undertaken in compliance with the Adoption Agencies Regulations and we aim to complete within 16 weeks.

d) Approval

Applicants are encouraged to attend the Adoption Panel. They are provided with information in advance explaining the panel process and are able to read “pen pictures” of Panel Members before they attend. After the meeting, they are asked to complete a simple evaluation form about their experience. Adoption Panels are virtual meetings.

e) Home Finding:

To provide high quality, child-centred and timely Home Finding Services to the children of our four Local Authority partners.

f) Support:

In addition to the various forms of support outlined so far, support events, social events and opportunities for further training are provided for prospective adopters and their networks once approved and into placement.

Quality of service:

Adoption East Midlands is continually monitored and evaluated to ensure the quality and effectiveness of services. We aim to consult and involve adopters in ensuring the quality of service delivery and in-service developments. This is because feedback from service users is central to the quality and effectiveness of services. We regularly request feedback at trigger points in the process- for example after attendance at panel, after completion of stage one and stage two and following completion of training modules or specific work.

Other ways we evaluate quality and effectiveness are:

- Adoption panel comments on the quality of reports presented to them.
- Regular supervision of all staff which highlights potential areas for development.

- Reflective group discussions, subject focussed.
- Monitoring of issues raised within the complaints' process
- Learning from the conclusions of disruption meetings about what could have been done differently or better
- Routine quality audits.

Complaints:

Nottinghamshire host Adoption East Midlands. Nottinghamshire County Council's Families and Cultural Services Complaints, Representations and Investigations Procedure is followed. Information on this procedure is available from:

CFCS Complaints, Representations & Investigations Services
Nottinghamshire County Council
County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7QP

Telephone: **0300 500 80 80**
E-mail: **Complaints@nottscc.gov.uk**

Contact details for Ofsted

Derby City, Derbyshire, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire subject to inspection by Ofsted whose contact details are as follows:

Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 404045
Website: www.ofsted.org.uk

Reviewing the Statement of Purpose:

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually by the Adoption Management Team, and is formally adopted by the Adoption East Midlands Performance Partnership and Quality Board.