



Allegations Against Prospective Adopters

Guidance



‘Communication is important, so information should be accessible to everyone. People with sensory communication disabilities may need documents in easy read, large print, audio or Braille formats for example. Others may need face to face communication support through a British Sign Language Interpreter, deafblind interpreter, lip speaker or note taker (as recommended by the NHS Accessible Information Standard). If someone speaks (or reads) a language that is not English, they will need to have the appropriate language-spoken language interpreter and / or text translator’.



1 Principles

- 1.1 All children are entitled to the same level and standard of protection from harm including those receiving services from statutory or other agencies. For this reason, enquiries and investigations relating to children in receipt of such services must be dealt with under the principles, policies and procedures of Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- 1.2 Allegations or suspicions that a prospective adopter has caused harm to a child; or that a child placed for adoption or already adopted and in receipt of adoption support services has suffered harm, must be investigated. Investigations must be undertaken thoroughly, fairly and sensitively under the procedures and should involve open and honest communication with, and support to, all those affected.
- 1.3 Historical allegations by children placed for adoption or already adopted and in receipt of adoption support services should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. It will be important to ascertain if the person about whom the allegation is made is currently working with children and if that is the case, to consider whether the current employer should be informed.
- 1.4 The Safeguarding service in the Local Authority area in which the alleged behaviour has taken place is responsible for deciding how a matter should proceed.
- 1.5 Under the National Minimum standards (2014, Standard 22), Adoption services are required to make independent support available to the person subject to the allegation. This may be available from Adoption UK. This should be discussed and agreed with the person at the time.
- 1.6 Clear timescales will be integral to the procedure and those involved must avoid delay unless there is good reason. There should be clarity regarding access to reports and documents relating to the investigation.
- 1.7 Wherever allegations are made in relation to prospective adopters, the welfare and safety of all children in the prospective adopters' household, and children with whom the prospective adopters may have contact, must also be considered during any Section 47 Enquiry.
- 1.8 In relation to any allegations made, it is important to note that, although there may be insufficient evidence to support a Police prosecution, this does not mean that action cannot be taken to protect a child. Neither does it preclude other actions that may be appropriate and proportionate, for example, consideration of the termination of a prospective adopter's approval.

2 Expectations

- 2.1 The expectation is that:
 - a. At the time of a child's placement, prospective adopters will be provided with detailed information as to the child's background and in particular the context of

any abusive experiences of and/or previous allegations made by the child where this is known;

- b. All prospective adopters will receive preparation and guidance to help them provide a safe environment for the child and all members of the adoptive family;
- c. All prospective adopters will receive information about the procedure for responding to allegations as part of the Placement Agreement.

3 Initial Action

- 3.1 Any person who receives information or suspects that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm in an adoptive placement or during an introduction to an adoptive placement must immediately inform the child's social worker.

In these circumstances please refer to the Policy and Procedures of the relevant Local Authority. The links to these policies are as follows;

Staffordshire Council Locality Permanency Hub:

[Allegations and Expression of Concern about Foster Carers and Prospective Adopters](#)

Joint Adoption Service Locality Permanency Hub:

[Allegations Against Prospective Adopters and in Relation to Children Placed for Adoption or Already Adopted](#)

Stoke on Trent Locality Permanency Hub;

[Concerns, Complaints, Procedures for Fostering and Adoption](#)