

Guide to the ADM/SHOBPA process in Bradford

This process only applies to children subject to Care Proceedings and Relinquished children who need to be presented to Adoption Panel. Please contact the family finding team manager or OAWY duty as soon as you become aware of a potentially relinquished child.

All relevant documents and templates are located in the relevant section of our Tri-X procedures manual. All forms are available on Trix under practice guides.

Support for Social Workers

Guidance and forms relating to this process can be found in the Bradford children's social care procedures manual which can be accessed online via the link on your desktop or at:

<https://bradfordchildcare.proceduresonline.com/index.html>

If any queries with regards to any aspect of the SHOBPA process, planning, completion of forms etc. please contact Carol Ledgard (Advanced Practitioner OAWY) to request a consultation.

carol.ledgard@oneadoptionwy.leeds.gov.uk

Tel: 01135351931 or 07712216748

You can also attend adoption clinics which are held fortnightly on each of the 2nd and 3rd floors at Sir Henry Mitchell House and at Farcliffe and Keighley

The Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

The decision that a child should be placed for adoption (and therefore the decision for us to seek a Placement Order) is delegated to the ADM.

The ADM is a designated senior manager who is independent of the management of the cases that are presented to them.

In Bradford the ADM is Anne Tully who is employed by the Council specifically for this task.

When it is clear that on the basis of all assessments completed during the proceedings, a child's care plan should be one of adoption, the case needs to be presented to the ADM to enable a decision to be made.

When a decision is made at Legal Gateway Panel to issue care proceedings, and where adoption is a possible outcome, the case will be tracked by OAWY and by management in the locality from this point. It is recommended that the child's social worker books both an ADM Meeting and also an Adoption Medical as early as possible in order to avoid delays later in the proceedings. The ADM can only hear the case when all assessments have been completed.

Prior to the ADM Meeting all relevant documents will need to be submitted. This will include the child's CPR, the adoption medical and also any assessments undertaken during the proceedings. The ADM will need to feel confident that the parents have been given every opportunity to demonstrate that they can care for the child.

The ADM will also need to be assured that appropriate steps have been taken to identify whether it is possible for the child to be safely placed with a connected person. This includes exploring those family members that birth parents may be reluctant to put forward or hold negative views on. They will need to feel confident that you have fully explored the extended family network and that any assessments that have been undertaken have been fair and balanced and do not "set the bar too high" for family members.

The ADM needs to be satisfied that adoption is the *only* safe and appropriate decision for the child and all other possible viable options have been explored.

The regulations require that the ADM must have the benefit of a medical report prior to making a decision. It is for this reason that an early adoption medical should be booked. Failure to do so may result in the ADM having to defer the matter which could impact on court timescales.

The ADM will want to meet with the child's social worker and their team manager to discuss the case and ask any questions. This may be a virtual meeting. If they have sufficient assurance that adoption is the only safe decision that can be made, then they will give approval to application for a Placement Order.

If the ADM does not have this assurance they will defer the decision and recommend further work, which could delay the proceedings. For this reason, it is essential that all the necessary work is undertaken in advance and that were you are unsure about something, you seek advice from OAWY.

A final Care Plan that recommends adoption cannot be submitted to court unless the ADM has given approval for this.

Guidance on processes in Bradford

1. Booking the ADM Meeting

- When there is a possibility that adoption may be the plan for the child you should book an ADM date (meetings are held every Tuesday morning) ensuring that the date fits with Court timescales.
- Both you and your manager need to be able to attend the meeting.
- The ADM meeting needs to be after the LAC review which recommends that adoption is the plan and before the final care plan is submitted to Court.
- **Complete the booking form located in our Tri-x procedures manual**

2. Book an adoption medical

- You should book the medical with the medical advisor's secretary.
- If the child is already being seen by one of the medical advisors, arrange the medical to be undertaken by that person. Otherwise, if the child is placed in Keighley arrange the medical at Airedale, otherwise arrange a medical with one of the two Bradford advisors.
- The medical should take place at least six weeks before the submission date for the paperwork for the SHOBPA decision and no longer than six months prior to the SHOBPA decision. Complete a referral for pre adoption medical form and send that to the medical advisor.
- **Under the Adoption Agency Regulations, the ADM cannot make a SHOBPA decision without the benefit of a medical report.**
- **Complete and submit the adoption medical booking form which is located in the Tri-X procedures manual.**

3. Medical Consent

- Complete and submit the BAAF neo-natal and obstetric forms to the Child Protection Midwives at the hospital where the child was born (Eileen McCardle –Robinson at BRI and Val Henson at Airedale).
- Ensure they are sent off at least four weeks before the medical and ask for them to be returned to yourself.
- Complete health consent forms and adult health forms with both birth parents. If the mother has refused to sign, then a consent form needs to be completed by a Service Manager. In this event only the neo natal report will be completed. If a child was born elsewhere then enquiries will need to be made with the particular hospital as to who to send the forms to.
- **These medical reports need to be presented to the medical advisor who is undertaking the medical prior to the medical taking place.**

4. Information gathering

- Start to prepare for writing your CPR at the outset of proceedings and be aware of the information which needs collecting for the CPR prior to beginning your assessment. It is much easier to gather the required information whilst you are undertaking a parenting assessment than afterwards and some families do disengage.
- **There is guidance available about completing a CPR in the Tri-X procedures manual.**

5. Paperwork needed for ADM

Look at all the paperwork required and ensure that you are aware of what each asks. The forms and guidance on completion can be found in this folder in the Tri-X procedures manual.

You will need to submit all Viability Assessments that have been undertaken as well as any expert reports in the proceedings.

Guidance:

The child's birth parents may not want to disclose details of their extended family and may not wish to put any family members forward as substitute carers. This should not be seen as a reason for us not to explore the extended family. If the ADM is not sufficiently assured that extended family have been explored fully they will not agree to an application for a Placement Order. We need to ensure that family members are appropriately located and assessed during either pre-proceedings PLO or during the care proceedings.

6. Carer's Report

Ensure that the carer's report is given to the foster carers for completion prior to the medical and is available for the medical advisor at the medical. It should also be submitted as part of the Shobpa paperwork, updated if some time has elapsed since the medical.

7. Legal Advice

Legal representation is provided to the ADM at SHOBPA meetings, however during the care proceedings ensure that you liaise with our solicitors regarding the potential for adoption.

8. Attend the Pre-Adoption Medical

- Attend the adoption medical with the child, the foster carer and, if possible, the birth family.
- E-mail the referral form with Part A completed to the medical advisor's NHS e-mail address and ensure that the medical advisor has copies of all the medical information, birth parents consent forms, birth parents health forms and the obstetric (if birth mother has consented) and neo-natal forms.
- If birth parents have not consented to the medical then the consent of a Service Manager is required.
- **Ensure that you retain a copy of all these documents for submission to SHOBPA.**
- Your presence is required at the adoption medical in order to make sure that the medical advisor has the full background history in respect of the child. If provided with all these forms the medical advisor will complete the report and send to you for submission with your Shobpa paperwork.

9. Completing the CPR

- In Bradford we use an LCS Template. This template can be triggered manually by a social worker or a team manager.
- If it has not been triggered already, it will be triggered by the child's IRO at the Decision Making LAC Review.
- Write the CPR providing the fullest information possible, using the guidance described above.
- The CPR must clearly demonstrate why adoption is the only suitable plan for the child and confirm the date of the decision-making LAC review but should also include full details of the child and their family history, not only for the purposes of matching with a family but for the child to read in the future. Ensure up to date photographs are incorporated. Remember that the CPR is a multi purpose document that is used for the ADM, Placement Order application and family finding and is the key document in telling a child's adoption journey. What you write today will stay on file for 100 years.
- **When the CPR needs to be shared with the ADM or any other person, you should use the EXPORT button in LCS to ensure that the report is printed in the correct BAAF format. Panel or court may reject your CPR if it is not exported in this way.**

10. Management approval of your CPR

- Liaise with your manager about booking in a time before the paperwork submission date for them to read and quality assure the CPR, check the paperwork and complete and sign the checklist. Remember to leave enough time for you to do any amendments.
- Also remember that when you have submitted your paperwork, the CPR will be reviewed by the adoption advisor and the ADM and the ADM may request further revisions.

11. Collate the ADM paperwork

Gather all the paperwork as detailed on the checklist and give to your team manager for reading, together with the checklist for the team manager to sign off.

Please note that all paperwork has to be submitted electronically.

12. Submission of Paperwork

Submit all the paperwork to shobpa@oneadoptionwy.leeds.gov.uk 14 days prior to the ADM meeting.

13. Attendance at ADM

Attend the ADM meeting at the time provided by adoption admin (usually between 10am and 12pm depending on the agenda). Your manager MUST attend this meeting with you. The meeting will be attended by the Agency Decision Maker (currently Anne Tully), the agency advisor (usually Carol Ledgard) and a member of the council's Legal team (usually Marion Moraghan, head of children's legal services.)

14. Deliver letter to birth parents

- Following the meeting you will be sent a letter for the birth parents.
- This must be hand delivered to each of them and recorded on the child's file. Only in exceptional circumstances should it be posted and then by recorded delivery. The posting of the letter and the reasons for not hand delivering should be recorded on the child's file.

15. Updating the CPR following ADM

Ensure that you read the ADM Meeting minutes and incorporate relevant sections into the CPR.

Also ensure that all actions on the minutes are addressed and complete an amended copy to submit as the Annex B and provide a copy to the OAWY Family Finder for them to use in the search for a family.

If the ADM and agency advisor have considered that the CPR requires improvement or is inadequate you will be asked for a date to resubmit the CPR to be signed off by the ADM. NB the ADM may still have been able to make a decision.

16. Annex B

Complete Annex B addendum to the CPR to submit to Court. Remember to EXPORT rather than PRINT in LCS.

Finally – remember that when the ADM has made the decision that a child should be adopted, the case needs to be presented to the ADM again if you want to change the plan to one that is *not* adoption. This needs to happen before a new Care Plan is submitted to court.

If you any queries with regards to this, or any other aspect of the ADM/SHOBPA process, planning, completion of forms etc. please contact Carol Ledgard (Advanced Practitioner OAWY) to request a consultation.

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