



Bradford Children and Families Trust as a Voluntary Adoption Agency
Statement of Purpose 2023 - 2024

Summary

This document provides details of Bradford Children and Families Voluntary Adoption Agency including the division of our adoption agency roles with our Regional Adoption Agency One Adoption West Yorkshire.

Owner

Charlotte Ramsden, Chief Executive
Bradford Children and Families Trust

Date

March 2023

Review date

March 2024

Introduction and Context

Adopt for Bradford is a registered Voluntary Adoption Agency which holds responsibility for discharging the adoption functions of Bradford Children and Families Trust.

The agency's registration permits it to provide the following adoption services:

- Domestic adoption services
- Inter-Country adoptions

Adopt for Bradford (Bradford Children and Families Trust) contracts One Adoption West Yorkshire (Regional Adoption Agency) to provide all services relating to:

- The recruitment, assessment, training and support of prospective and approved adopters at all stages of the adoption process.
- Family finding for children in the care of Bradford Children and Families Trust who require placement for adoption (including those requiring fostering for adoption).
- The provision of support services to all prospective and legal adopters living in the Bradford District who are entitled to receive adoption support services.
- Birth records counselling and intermediary services for adopted adults.

Bradford Children and Families trust adoption agency is subject to the adoption agencies regulations (AAR)2005 and subsequent amendments (2012) and the Adoption National Minimum standards (2014).

The Adoption National Minimum Standards set out the requirement for adoption agencies to compile a statement of purpose explaining:

- what services are provided
- the governing principles, and
- details of the management of the Service.

Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose is for:

- Children and young people who have been or are going to be placed for adoption.
- Birth relatives of children who have or are going to be placed for adoption.

- Potential approved and legal adopters including those who are fostering to adopt.
- Social workers and managers internal and external to the agency
- Adoption panel members
- Elected members
- Bradford Children and Families Trust Board Members
- Ofsted
- Members of the public

This statement of purpose should be read alongside the One Adoption West Yorkshire Statement of Purpose - [About One Adoption West Yorkshire | One Adoption](#).

Legal Context

The Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirement of Standard 18 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 (Care Standards Act 2000) and of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005.

The work of Adoption Services providers in England is governed by the Adoption Agencies Regulations (2005). The Regulations and National Minimum Standards are used in the inspection and registration of Adoption Agencies.

Recent Amendments in the Children and Families Act 2014 update and streamline adoption process and details of this are contained within the statement.

Adopt for Bradford (Bradford Children and Families Trust) is committed to providing a comprehensive adoption service, operating within all current regulations, statutory guidance and best practice principles.

Aims and Objectives

The Adoption Act 2002 promotes adoption as an option for permanence for Children in Care. The Act places the needs and welfare of the child at the centre of the adoption process and makes the welfare of the child the paramount consideration for a court or Adoption Agency in all decisions relating to their adoption.

Adopt for Bradford (Bradford Children and Families Trust) aims to ensure that all children grow up as part of a loving, caring family who can meet their needs for

security, stability and quality care throughout childhood and into adulthood. Where that is not possible, Adopt for Bradford (Bradford Children and Families Trust) aims through its Adoption Service, to find permanent alternative families who will promote the child's wellbeing and development by providing the highest possible standards of care according to his or her individual assessed needs.

- Provide child-centred services.
- Deliver a high-quality accessible service to adopters and potential adopters.
- Provide an accessible independent service for birth families affected by adoption.
- Create strong partnership working.
- Offer a service which is high-quality and provides good value for money.

The purpose of the service is to achieve the best possible outcomes for adopted children and their families. We work to ensure that our children are safe and secure in nurturing homes where they are supported to remain healthy and achieve to the best of their abilities and become positive independent adults.

To achieve the best possible outcomes for children and all of those affected by adoption, the Adoption Service will work to the following values:

- To meet the requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and accompanying standards, regulations and guidance.
- To ensure that the needs, wishes, welfare and safety of the child are at the centre of the adoption process as presented in the Welfare Checklist (Adoption and Children Act 2002: Section 1).
- To promote good practice in adoption and provide good service outcomes to all those involved in the adoption process that are consistent with best practice.
- To contribute to Bradford Children and Families Trust's work and positive outcomes for children, by making timely decisions about permanence for each child, following a thorough assessment of their needs to which all relevant people have contributed.
- To ensure that effective mechanisms are in place that ensure timely decision-making processes, which include ensuring that children with an adoption plan are placed without undue delay.

- To ensure that adoption is considered as a positive option for achieving permanence outcomes for children who cannot be cared for within their family of birth.
- To ensure that birth families members are treated fairly, with respect and openness throughout the whole adoption process and that they can access appropriate adoption support services.
- To ensure that recruitment undertaken by One Adoption West Yorkshire can meet most of the needs of those children who have adoption as their plan. This will include needs arising from race, culture, ethnic origin, religion, language, disability, gender and sexuality.
- To ensure that the adoption preparation process delivered by One Adoption West Yorkshire prepares adopters as well as possible for the task of parenting adopted children.
- To provide a child-centred matching, introduction, and placement process and to provide safe placements for children that will promote equality and value diversity.
- To ensure that One Adoption West Yorkshire provide a range of adoption support services aimed at preventing the disruption of adoptive placements and which assist adoptive families, adoptees and birth families with the lifelong impact of adoption.
- To improve performance in adoptions, including the percentage of children who are adopted from care, to meet national targets.
- To ensure that staff involved in adoption work have appropriate and sufficient skills, knowledge, access to training, experience and appropriate supervision to deliver an effective and efficient service.
- To ensure that One Adoption West Yorkshire provide adopted people over the age of 18 receive appropriate counselling, advice and information.
- To ensure regular review, monitoring and evaluation of services.

Values Statement

Adoption is part of a range of services provided by Bradford's Children's trust, which seek to promote the upbringing of children by their families in accordance with the spirit and provision of the Children Act 1989.

When this is not possible, and where it is seen to be in the best interests of the child, Adopt for Bradford undertakes to find a permanent substitute family in which the

child is given the opportunity of a secure and stable environment, taking into account the child's specific needs and circumstances

Our Commitment to our Children

Providing child-centred services through:

- Placing the child at the centre throughout their adoption journey, including into adulthood.
- Securing early permanence to prevent delay and achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and must be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.
- Creating a sense of belonging for the child, in a secure permanent family and in the wider adoption community.
- Ensuring access to support at the level and time that it is needed.
- Work with One Adoption West Yorkshire to ensure that there are sufficient adopters to promote the best possible match for the child.
- Children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families are respected and valued.
- Ensuring that the service is non-discriminatory and anyone seeking to use the Adoption Service is treated with courtesy and respect, and their enquiry dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner.
- Work with One Adoption West Yorkshire and other organisations, professionals and individuals to ensure that support services are available as needed to all parties in the adoption process – children, adopters, adopted adults and birth families.
- Provide access to complaints procedures and to external complaints mechanisms as set out in legislation, regulations and guidance.

Our Commitment to Adoptive Parents

We work in partnership with One Adoption West Yorkshire to ensure that:

- All adoptive applicants must be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. No applicant should ever be discriminated

against on grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, gender, financial status or marital or partnership status

- All applicants are entitled to know what issues will be considered in their assessment, and to be kept informed of progress throughout. They have the right to receive a copy of their assessment report before the adoption panel meeting where their application is to be considered, and to have the opportunity to comment on the report and to attend the panel and be heard if they wish.
- Children will be matched with approved adopters who can offer them a stable and permanent home. Help and support will be provided to achieve a successful and lasting placement.
- Approved adopters will be given clear information about the matching, introduction and placement process, as well as any support to facilitate this that they may need.
- Before a match is agreed, adopters will be given full written information to help them understand the needs and background of the child. They will have an opportunity to discuss this information with the child's Social Worker, including the implications for them and their family.
- There will be access to a range of multi-agency support services before, during and after adoption. Support services will include practical help, professional advice, financial assistance where needed and information about local and national support groups and services.
- Adoptive parents will be involved in discussions as to how they can best maintain links, including contact, with birth relatives and significant others identified in the Adoption Support Plan. Adoptive parents will be supported in working with the child's family time plan.
- Adoptive parents will be encouraged to keep safe any information provided by birth families via agencies and to provide this to the adopted child age appropriately from placement onwards. Support to enable adoptive parents to discuss their adoption journey with the child will be available from On Adoption West Yorkshire.
- Adoptive parents whose adopted child has decided to explore their birth heritage will be supported to deal with the impact of this decision.
- Where there are difficulties with the placement, or the adoption breaks down, the agencies involved will cooperate to provide support and information to the adoptive parents and the child without delay.

- Adoptive parents will be informed of their right to make representations and complaints.

Our Commitment to Birth Families

Together with our partners in One Adoption West Yorkshire we provide an accessible independent service for birth families and others affected by adoption which will include:

- Support for birth family members whose children have a plan of adoption and enabling them, at any point, to contribute to the child's understanding of their life story.
- Intermediary services to birth family members and adopted adults.
- A Letterbox Service to facilitate ongoing positive contact between birth families and children.
- Facilitation of direct contact where this meets the child's needs.

Regional Adoption Agency Arrangements

Bradford to Adopt (Bradford Children and Families Trust) as a partner with One Adoption West Yorkshire is committed to achieving best outcomes through the continual development and delivery of a range of high-quality services via the Regional Adoption Agency to achieve:

- A culture of early permanence planning in order to identify suitable adopters for children at the earliest possible stage during the care planning process to ensure the timeliness of the child moving in with their adoptive family.
- Marketing activity and recruitment of prospective adoptive families to meet the needs of a range of children.
- Assessment and training of prospective adopters to a consistently high standard.
- Development of services across the range of adoption functions in the RAA through the capturing of stakeholder views and best regional and national practice.
- Matching, linking and adoption support that enables children to live in supportive, safe, settled and family homes with their adoptive families.
- Pre and Post Adoption support tailored to meet the needs of the children and adoptive families.

- Ensure that children are placed, with brothers and sisters wherever possible, within a timescale that is best for them and without unnecessary delay and are matched and placed with prospective adopters who can meet most, if not all, of their assessed needs. Where we cannot meet all their needs there is a robust support plan to fill the gaps.
- To ensure that children's cultural and identity needs are met by promoting equality and diversity in the approach with all service users.
- Effective and easily accessible Birth Family support.
- To ensure that the Adoption Panel and Agency Decision Maker make timely, quality and appropriate recommendations/decisions in line with the over-riding objectives to promote the welfare of children throughout their lives.
- One Adoption West Yorkshire is informed and developed in accordance with the views of children, young people, and their birth and adoptive families through feedback and review of the contract.
- To ensure that children and those affected by adoption receive a service from staff, managers, volunteers, panel members and decision-makers who are carefully selected, trained, supported and managed to deliver an efficient and effective service.
- To ensure that allegations and suspicions of harm are handled in a way that provides effective protection and support of children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time support the person who is subject of the allegation.
- To ensure that records are clear, accurate, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of a child's life.

Roles Responsibilities and Function	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Bradford to Adopt
Recruitment and assessment of adopters		
Marketing and recruitment strategy	X	
Adopter recruitment and enquiries	X	
Assessment of prospective adopters – all stage one and stage two functions including training	X	

Completion of Prospective Adopter Report (PAR)	X	
Agency decision maker for approval of adopters	X	
Post approval training	X	
Matching	X	X
Permanence Planning		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption	X	X
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	X	X
Support and advice to childcare social work teams on the adoption process	X	X
Preparation of the child permanence report		X
Agency decision maker for "Should be placed for Adoption" decisions		X
Matching and Placement		
Family finding	X	
Child looked after reviews		X
Shortlist and visit potential families	X	X
Adoption panel administration and management	X	
Agency advisor role	X	
Agency decision maker for matching prospective adopters and child		X
Placement planning meeting administration and management of introductions	X	X

Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	X	X
Ongoing life story work and preparation and provision of Life Book / Records		X
Independent review officer monitoring of quality of child's care and care plan as well as agreement to lodge an adoption application		X
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for adoption order – including attending at court	X	
Preparation of later life letter		X
Setting up of any agreed post adoption family time arrangements	X	X
Adoption Support		
Assessment for adoption support	X	X
Developing and delivering adoption support plans post order	X	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre- and post- Adoption Order	X	X
Adoption support delivery including: • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption training • Independent birth relative support service • Support with ongoing birth relative contact including Letterbox • Specialist life story work practitioners • Birth records counselling and services for adults affected by adoption	X	

Financial support to adopters including adoption allowances		X
Non Agency Adoptions		
Notified adoption assessments, including, stepparent/partner adoptions	X	
Inter-country adoption assessments and post-approval and post-order support	X	

Organisational Structure and Management of the Service

Within Bradford to Adopt (Bradford Children and Families Trust) the role of the Agency Decision Maker is held by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Review and Commissioning, who is responsible for –

- Should be placed for adoption decisions for all children for whom Bradford Children and Families Trust holds corporate responsibility.
- Adoption matches recommended by One Adoption West Yorkshire for children for whom Bradford Children and Families Trust holds corporate responsibility.

In the absence of the AD, the responsibility for these decisions sits with the Executive Director of Bradford Children and Families Trust.

The role of the Responsible Individual is also held by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Review, Commissioning.

The role of the Registered Manager is held by the Head of Service for Children in Care and Leaving Care.

The RI attends One Adoption Management Board quarterly to have an oversight of strategic matters, including outcomes against key performance indicators, national standards and budgets. This is also in addition to the RAA contributing local authorities receiving quality assurance feedback on a three monthly basis.

The RM attends the operational leads group quarterly to review and discuss practice and procedural matters.

This will be underpinned by quarterly meetings between the two agencies to review performance and service delivery matters.

The Adoption Service is based at –

Sir Henry Mitchell House

4 Manchester Road

Bradford

BD5 0QL

The staffing structure for One Adoption West Yorkshire can be found in their Statement of Purpose which can be accessed at [About One Adoption West Yorkshire | One Adoption.](#)

Adoption Panels

One Adoption West Yorkshire operate adoption panels on behalf of the 5 Local Authorities. There are 8 panels a month who consider children and adopters from across the region.

Panels are constituted in accordance with current legislation, regulations, and guidance. They each have an independent chairperson with significant experience of family placement work, and there is a central list from which each panel is drawn. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, usually a maximum of 6 or 7 attend each panel, including the panel chair. Medical advice to the panels is provided on a rota basis. Panels are serviced by a designated panel administrator, and have access to legal advice if required. The professional advice to the panels is provided by an agency advisor.

Current membership includes individuals with personal experience of adoption (adopters, birth parents and adopted and care experienced adults) and other independent members from legal, educational and therapeutic backgrounds. It also includes social workers with direct experience of adoption work and others based in various related settings, including children looked after and fostering teams. The panels are as far as possible balanced in terms of gender, age, sexual orientation ethnicity, and experience.

The functions of the panels in relation to adoption matters are:

- to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child(ren)
- to recommend whether a proposed match between a child(ren) and prospective adopter(s) is a suitable one
- in circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no placement order is applied for, to recommend whether or not the child should be placed for adoption.

The panels make recommendations based on written reports prepared in advance by the child's social worker and family finder and the prospective adopter(s)' adoption social worker; and on the social worker(s) and/or their manager(s)' contributions to panel discussion. Social workers, and where appropriate their managers, are expected to attend panel to discuss and clarify any issues relevant to the application under consideration. When the approval of prospective adopter(s), or a proposed 'match' between a child(ren) and his/her/their prospective adopter(s), is to be considered, the potential adopter(s) have the option of attending panel in person.

When the panel considers the case of any Bradford child who is subject to an adoption plan, the recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final minutes of the meeting, to the Bradford to Adopt (Bradford Children and Families Trust) agency decision maker, for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

Children's Guides to Adoptions

There are two children's guides to adoption as part of the contract with One Adoption West Yorkshire. These are to be used with children of different ages to introduce them to the concept of adoption and to help them to understand what will happen to them if they have a plan of adoption.

These guides to adoption are given to children who have an appropriate level of understanding regarding the plan for them. Each guide contains an age appropriate summary as well as how a child can contact the children's commissioner for England and/or Ofsted, if he/she wishes to raise a concern.

The guides can be accessed from [About One Adoption West Yorkshire | One Adoption](#).

Notified Adoptions

Enquiries regarding non-agency adoptions (adoption not arranged through the Voluntary Adoption Agency), for example the adoption of a child who is not in the local authority care (step parent) are shared with One Adoption West Yorkshire who undertake the initial meeting and subsequent assessments.

Inter-Country Adoptions

Adopt for Bradford provides an inter-country adoption service in partnership with services provided by One Adoption, providing counselling and services to Bradford residents who wish to adopt from abroad. Once a child is placed in the Bradford area Adopt for Bradford monitor in line with the child's country requirements until the UK order is completed. Where countries require a letter of undertaking from the local

authority Adopt Bradford will state that they will supervise the placement and take responsibility for the child.

Bradford to Adopt (Bradford Children and Families Trust) are in the process of reviewing its position with regards to the RAA undertaking non agency adoption and inter-country adoption applications.

Systems for the Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Services

Children's permanency plans and adoption plans are monitored by the Independent Reviewing Officers, Team Managers, Service Managers and Heads of Service. The audit system also regularly quality assures the child's journey.

The quality of services provided to children who are subject to an adoption plan is also monitored and quality assured via a number of different systems, including:

- Social work supervision.
- Quality assuring of child permanence reports by both the social worker's responsible manager and the adoption adviser as well as the ADM.
- The role of agency decision maker scrutinising the available reports and where required speak directly to social workers and their managers in order to ensure that all appropriate enquiries have been made and actions taken prior to agreeing either the adoption plan for a child [the SHOBPA decision] or any proposed 'match'.
- Audits.
- Feedback from children, young people, birth families and adopters.
- Tracking of children with plans for adoption monthly between One Adoption West Yorkshire and teams responsible for case management by service managers and Heads of Service.

An over-view of the services provided to children who are subject to adoption plans is also maintained through quarterly meetings between the RI / RM / One Adoption West Yorkshire which includes review of the annual and half-year service reports. This meeting also addresses any practice related issues including those related to recruitment of prospective adopters, progressing children's plans, matching and placement support.

One Adoption West Yorkshire internal systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of their services are detailed in their statement of purpose which can be accessed at [About One Adoption West Yorkshire | One Adoption](#).

The Independent Reviewing Mechanism (The IRM)

Access to the IRM is restricted to applications from potential and approved adopters where the agency has decided not to approve them, or to terminate or change the terms of approval. All services relating to the assessment and approval of adopters are provided by One Adoption West Yorkshire under the RAA contract, and One Adoption West Yorkshire is responsible for managing any appeals to the IRM in respect of any aspect of this service.

Complaints

Responsibility for responding to and managing any complaints regarding adoption for Bradford (Bradford Children and Families Trust) services rests with different officers depending on the services to which they refer.

Complaints regarding any services provided by Adopt for Bradford are managed in accordance with Bradford Children and Families Trust procedures which can be accessed at –

- Completing the online form on our website: www.bradfordcft.org.uk
- Telephoning the complaints line on 01274 432090
- Sending us an e-mail: customer.care@bradfordcft.org.uk

Any complaints regarding services by One Adoption West Yorkshire should be directed to –

Freepost

PO Box 657

Leeds LS1 9BS

Tel: 01132224405

Email: feedback.children@leeds.gov.uk

Details of the Children's Commissioner for England

Dame Rachel de Souza

Children's Commissioner for England

The Office of the Children's Commission

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London
SW1P 3BT
Tel: 020 7783 8330
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Details of the Registration Authority

Ofsted National Business Unit

Piccadilly Gate Store Street,

Manchester,

M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Feedback

Adopt for Bradford welcomes feedback from those affected by adoption in any way and other interested parties in relation to all aspects of its service provision and we are committed to learning from any feedback received.

If you have any comments about our adoption services, these should in the first instance be directed to adoption manager at – adoptforbradford@bradfordcft.org.uk