

**Birmingham Children’s Trust and HM Courts and Tribunals Service**

 **Adoption Application Process Protocol**

This process relates to Agency Adoption only, all correspondence relating to Non-Agency Adoption must to be sent to BCT.Legal@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.

* Adoption application received by the court from prospective adopter. This will usually be via the digital application process. From October 2024 the child and adoption social workers will upload their Annex A report and Annex A checklist when completing their part of the digital application.
* Any information or supporting documentation missing upon receipt of the adoption application at court, the Court Adoption Team (CAT) will return to the adopters to complete.
* The initial form will be sent by the CAT to Court Business Support (CBS) CourtBusinessSupport@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk along with adoption serial number, child’s name and date of birth and previous care proceedings case number.
* The CAT will send a letter to adopters confirming receipt of the adoption application and advise that a request for further information has been sent to CBS and the next steps (draft template to be agreed by Judiciary).
* CBS will check the allocation and send the initial court form to the allocated Social Worker, Adoption Social Worker and Team Manager for completion also requesting that they make a further check for current address of parents so that in most cases the Trust will not be stating on the form that this was last checked more than 3 months ago.
* CBS will monitor and chase if a response is not received in 4 days (Form to be completed and returned to Court in 7 days).
* Once the completed form is received from the Social Workers CBS will email the CAT on Birminghamcountyadoptions@justice.gov.uk .
* The application will be referred to Judiciary for first directions only upon receipt of the initial form being completed and received.
* Where the address of parents has not been verified the CAT will seek DWP or HMRC checks which should be returned within 48 hours. CAT to advise CBS of outcome of checks. CBS to advise social work team.
* The first initial court directions are served on the parents by CAT and also sent to CBS CourtBusinessSupport@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.
* Amendment to current template court order(s) to be considered by Judiciary to include directions to the birth parents that any application to oppose shall be sent to both the court and the CBS.
* On receipt of initial order CBS will send this to the social worker and adoption worker along with Annex A template and court checklist only when the Annex A report has not been uploaded with the application advising of the report completion date and filing date and instructing to send the completed report and checklist to CourtBusinessSupport@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk. When not already filedthe report and checklist will require QA and to be signed by Team Managers in Adoption and CiC service before filing.
* CBS to note filing date and monitor compliance.
* CAT to send CBS any response received from parents.
* If parents indicate that they seek to oppose in their response form or make an application to oppose the adoption, then they should send this to both CAT and CBS.
* If the CAT receives the application from parents, this should be sent to CBS immediately.
* Where parents have indicated that they will seek to oppose the application at any point CBS will forward to legal team and the application will be allocated to a lawyer in Trust Legal Team.
* If parents arrive at Court for the hearing and the Court accepts an application to oppose even if no application or indication prior to this then the court order following the initial hearing is sent to CBS who send to legal team to open and allocate to a lawyer.
* Where the Court orders a statement in response to the parent’s application this will be handled by the allocated lawyer and the social worker.
* CBS will continue to monitor progress and file the Annex A report and Checklist where not filed on issue
* All subsequent orders are sent by CAT to CBS and the allocated lawyer.
* If the social work teams seek an extension for filing of Annex A this is to be requested via CBS.
* Social worker sends Annex A report and checklist to CBS following sign off by team managers in the CiC and adoption service.
* CBS file the Annex A report and Checklist at Birminghamcountyadoptions@justice.gov.uk but do not serve parties.
* Any other administrative and judicial enquiries in respect of the case will also be sent to CBS and the allocated lawyer E.g., such requests may be to request contact details for remote hearings or request amendments to annex A reports or any other enquiry for the progression of the proceedings.

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