



Adoption Charter

December 2016

Lincolnshire County Council's Adoption Service is committed to providing high quality service to all those who wish to adopt a child. This charter tells you about the support you can expect at each stage of the adoption process, from your first contact through to the making of the adoption order and beyond. We will monitor and report on how well we perform in meeting the commitments of this charter.

We firmly believe that children come first.

Adoption is first and foremost a service for children who cannot live with their birth family. We will help children to understand what adoption means and ensure they are supported throughout the adoption journey and beyond.

Our commitment will include working directly with children to find out their wishes and feelings. We will complete life story work and later in life letters with all children and their families to ensure that this important information is recorded. This will be completed by the time the adoption order is granted.

All our social workers are qualified and experienced, have regular training, and supervision to ensure they provide effective support.

Adoption is a life-changing decision that affects the child and their birth and adoptive families. This decision must be made with the child's best interests, wishes, and feelings at its heart, and assessments will be made on the basis of sound evidence and high quality information.

Lincolnshire County Council will:

- Ensure that children are placed together with brothers and sisters wherever possible, within a timescale that is best for them and without excessive delay.
- Ensure support for those children who are placed apart from brothers and sisters, and a plan regarding contact, will be considered at the earliest stage.
- Welcome prospective adopters at first point of contact with clear information and advice, treating them with openness, fairness, and respect, and ensure no-one is automatically excluded. We will seek feedback from all those involved in the process to monitor our performance, and regularly review our service.
- Support you through the process of becoming an adoptive carer and work with you to achieve the best outcomes for children. We will be clear with you about your responsibilities and expectations for the child.
- Recruit prospective adopters who can meet the majority of the needs of children waiting for, or likely to need, adoption and signpost prospective adopters to other agencies if there is not enough local demand.
- Discuss clearly with prospective adopters the needs of children and share relevant information with them.
- Ensure preparation and training is undertaken as part of the approval process and home study assessment.
- Regularly review progress on matching parents to children and inform adopters about the National Adoption Register.
- Provide counselling and support to adopters as and when needed, throughout the adoption journey and beyond.
- Work in partnership with you and with other agencies, such as the courts, to ensure that all decisions are timely and joined-up. We will keep you as informed as possible by regular visits and phone calls.
- Provide prospective adopters with information about the Independent Review Mechanism, which can be accessed by visiting www.independentreviewmechanism.org.uk, calling 0845 450 3956, or by writing to: Independent Review Mechanism, Unit 4 Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Leeds, LS12 6AJ.

- Participate in opportunities to develop the service and communicate with local adoption support groups. We will respond to local consultations in relation to adoption issues.
- Offer support packages dependant of each child's needs, which can include:
 - Designated adoption support workers
 - Theraplay
 - Safebase parenting training
 - Therapeutic parenting training
 - Education pupil premium
 - Accessed therapeutic support available from the Adoption Support Fund
 - Support groups for adopters
 - Support groups for children
 - Family fun days
 - In some cases adoption allowances may be payable
 - Adoptive grandparents seminars
 - Information and guidance in accessing other services such as education, Children's Adolescent Mental Health Service and the Primary Mental Health Team, both pre and post adoption.

Adoption often brings challenges as well as joy for those who take it up. Be realistic about the needs of children awaiting adoption, and accept that with support you may be able to consider adopting a child with a different profile to your original choice. Make the most of opportunities to develop parenting skills by attending safebase or therapeutic parenting programmes, and seek support when needed at the earliest stage. We will continue to meet with you to support you. What's important is you do all you can to enable adopted children feel loved and secure, and are able to reach their potential.

Please sign on the next page.

In signing this charter, the adoption service and adoptive parent agrees to reflect the spirit and intentions of the charter in their actions.

1 st Applicant Print Name	
1 st Applicant Signature	

2 nd Applicant Print Name	
2 nd Applicant Signature	

Representative of Lincolnshire County Council Name	Janice Spencer
Representative of Lincolnshire County Council Signature	

Representative of Lincolnshire Adoption Service Name	Tara Jones
Representative of Lincolnshire Adoption Service Signature	

Elected Member with Lead for Children's Services Name	Councillor Patricia Bradwell
Elected Member with Lead for Children's Services Signature	