

Adoption Service

Statement of Purpose 2025-2026



Contents

Legal context	3
Lincolnshire's vision	3
Family Adoption Links vision	4
Service delivery aims and objectives	4-7
Details of the Manager	7
The number, relevant qualifications and experience of the staff working for the agency	8-12
Family Adoption Links	12
Monitoring and evaluation of the provision of services	13
The procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters	14-16
Complaints procedure	16-17
Independent Reviewing Mechanism	17
Further Information	17-18
Appendix 1 The Registration Authority	18
Appendix 2 Structure Chart	19

Legal context

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that an adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives and a description of the service and facilities that it provides.

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011; Care Planning Regulations 2010; Adoption Agency Regulations 2005(amended 2011); Local Authority Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies & Independent Review of Determinations(Amendment) Regulations 2011; Adoption Agencies (Panel & Consequential Amendments)Regulations 2012; Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous cases Amendments) Regulations 2013;Care Planning, placement and Case and fostering services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013; Adoption and Children Act 2002; Care Standards Act 2000, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Education and Adoption Act 2016.

Lincolnshire's vision

Our vision is 'Working for a better future'. We are committed to:

- Supporting high aspirations
- Enabling everyone to enjoy life to the full
- Creating thriving environments
- Providing good value council services

Our values define how we do things at Lincolnshire County Council. They reflect the shared attitudes, beliefs and behaviours we value in each other, the choices and decisions we make and the qualities of how we work together to deliver our vision. Our values are:

- **Collaborative** - we are a team: we help others and work together as one team. Everyone's contribution counts and we make sure everyone feels welcomed and appreciated.
- **Adaptable** - we are open and adaptable: we value ideas and flexibility, learning and adjusting to new situations to create an inclusive and innovative culture.

- **Responsible** - we do what we say we will do: we are transparent, reliable and take responsibility.
- **Eco-conscious** - we are climate conscious: we take responsibility for our impact on the environment and consider our actions.
- **Supportive** - we speak up for ourselves and others: we listen to understand and stand up for what's right. We are kind, caring and create a culture where everyone can belong and feel respected.

Lincolnshire County Council and its adoption agency believe that, wherever possible, it is best for children to be brought up within their birth families. Only where this is not possible, and other appropriate options have been fully considered, then adoption should be considered as a positive alternative for children. Adoption enables these children to grow and reach maturity within a stable and loving family.

Family Adoption Links vision

"We are a dynamic regional partnership aimed at delivering excellence in every aspect of adoption. We strive to ensure the best possible match for children and adoptive parents and to develop a comprehensive range of support services to ensure a positive adoption journey. We seek to develop the widest pool of professionals who engage in innovative and ground-breaking new adoption practices".

Service delivery aims and objectives

Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need a permanent placement.

Meet and comply with the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services.

Ensure that all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised, and developed to fulfil their agency functions.

Identify children for whom the plan is adoption and to work with them and their carers to ensure children enjoy outstanding developmental outcomes, with quick progress to successful placements with their adoptive parents.

Adhere to best practice for permanency planning timescales as set out in adoption legislation and the Public Law Outline, to maximise each child's opportunity to experience a stable and secure family life.

Provide appropriate choice of adoption placements for children within Lincolnshire County Council and beyond where appropriate, making full and prompt use of the regional resources, voluntary adoption agencies and the Link Maker database. Link Maker is a national data base of Children who have a plan of adoption and approved adoptive parents who are looking to be matched with a child or sibling group.

Recruit, prepare, assess, and fully support prospective adopters to meet the assessed needs of the children requiring adoptive families, including those who take a placement via Early Permanence. Early Permanence refers to a situation where children are placed with a family who are approved both as foster carers and Adopters. This means that if the child has a final plan of adoption the child will remain with the family and will not need to experience another placement move.

The focus of assessments will be the applicants' ability to meet the assessed needs of children, promote attachment, improve their understanding of the adoption task and their suitability to be an adoptive parent through on-going quality assurance, and sustain a high standard of assessments. Assessments will be completed within the timescales set out within Statutory Adoption Guidance (2014) wherever possible.

Applicants for inter-country adoption are provided with an appropriate service from skilled and experienced workers.

Ensure that children are well prepared both practically and emotionally for a move to a new permanent family.

Provide links for children, for whom adoption is the plan, with families who can meet their ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs, whilst recognising that no child should wait indefinitely for the "ideal" match.

Provide a comprehensive support package, including financial support where appropriate to achieve stable and successful placements.

Provide effective and efficient adoption panels to enable adoption plans for relinquished children, prospective adopter assessments and links with children to be progressed without delay.

Ensure that children's plans for adoption are agreed by the Agency Decision Maker and Placement Order applications are made to meet court timescales.

Ensure that plans for family time with the birth family including siblings, are carefully considered and meet the individual needs of the child.

Ensure that where possible and appropriate, siblings will be placed together and that decisions to separate siblings are made in a timely manner, following a sibling assessment.

In conjunction with other agencies provide a comprehensive range of support services, pre and post order, as detailed in the Adoption Passport, to children, birth parents, relatives, and adoptive parents and those who hold a Special Guardianship Order and Child Arrangement Order.

Access funding for specialist therapeutic support for adoptive families, via the Adoption Support and Special Guardianship Fund.

Ensure that accurate and up to date records and management information is kept in relation to individual children, adoptive parents, and services and to maintain confidentiality and security.

Ensure that those with lived experience of adoption are fully involved and consulted on service delivery and service development.

Treat all customers with respect and without prejudice or discrimination.

Lincolnshire County Council delivers its adoption service through a dedicated Adoption Team managed by a Team Manager.

The named manager of the Adoption Service

Nicola Brangam– Head of Service, Fostering and Adoption

County Offices

Newland

Lincoln

Lincs

LN1 1YL

Telephone: 01522 552781

Email: Nicola.brangam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Qualifications:

- Diploma in Social Work
- BA (Hons) Social Work and Social Policy
- Post Qualification Child Care Award
- Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Management

Experience : Nicola has 26 years' experience working in the field of social care, within children and families since 1999. Since 2021, Nicola held a Team Manager position with the Local Authority within the Fostering Service before progressing to a Head of Service post in January 2025.

The nominated manager to manage the Adoption Service in the absence of the named manager under Regulation 5 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 is Sharon Clarke.

The number, relevant qualifications and experience of the staff working for the purposes of the agency

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in the Adoption Service
Head of Service Regulated Services Nicola Brangam	Diploma in Social Work BA (Hons) Social Work and Social Policy Post Qualification Child Care Award Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Management	11 years in Regulated Services
Team Manager Adoption Service Sharon Clarke	BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies Diploma in Social Work Post Qualifying Award 1 in Social Work Level 3 Diploma in Leadership and Management Attachment style interview trained	22 years
Practice Supervisor	BA (Hons) Social Work Attachment style interview trained	12 Years
Practice Supervisor	BA in Criminology and an MA in Social Work Practice Educator 1. Attachment style interview trained	7 years
Practice Supervisor	BA Hons Social Work DDP Level one	6 years
Advanced Practitioner	BA (Hons) Social Work Attachment style interview trained	12 years

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in the Adoption Service
Social Worker	BSC in Social Work Attachment style interview trained Theraplay Level 1	0.5 Years
Social Worker	BA(Hons) Social work Practice Educator 1 Attachment style interview trained	5 years
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Social Work Attachment style interview trained	14 years
Advanced Practitioner	BA (Hons) Social & Behavioural Studies MA in Social Work	16 years
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Social Work Attachment style interview trained Theraplay level 1	1 year
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Geography Masters in Social Work Attachment style interview trained Practice Educator level one	1 year
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Social Work	10 years
Social Worker	BA (Hons) Social Work Practice Educator level 1	10 years

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in the Adoption Service
Social Worker	Dyadic Developmental Practice Psychotherapy and Parenting Level 1 BSc(Hons) Social Work Practice Educator Level 1 Theraplay level 1 The BUSS model level 1	2 years
Advanced Practitioner	BSc in Social Work Practice Educator 1 Theraplay level 1	2 years
Children and Families Officer	HNC Business and Finance	26 Years
Children and Families Officer	Certificate in web applications Diploma in Computing and BSc (open) in software languages and astro-sciences	3 years
Social Worker	BA in Social Work	2 years
Early Help worker	Foundation Theraplay Qualified Havening Practitioner Diploma in Therapeutic Parenting BUSS level 1	3 Years
Advanced Practitioner	BA (Hons) Social Work Higher diploma in therapeutic play MA Integrative psychotherapy/ child psychotherapy Level 1/2 and advanced EMDR	13 Years

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in the Adoption Service
	Theraplay level 1 and 2 DDP level 1 and 2 350 hour Yoga Therapy Children & Young People	
Advanced Practitioner	Diploma in Therapeutic Life story work DDP level 1 and 2 Theraplay level 1 and 2 Post Graduate Diploma in Child Care (social Work) PQ levels 1-6 Counselling level 3 and working towards level 4 integrative NLP practitioner Degree is in Applied Social Studies CQSW BUSS level 1 Nurturing Attachments trainer qualification Introduction to Systemic family therapy 1 year training	11 years
Advanced Practitioner	BA (Hons) Social Science CQSW Certificate in Counselling Advanced Certificate in Counselling	20 Years
Early Help Worker	Level one Theraplay Level one DDP BUSS level 1	5 years
Advanced Practitioner	BA [Hons] social work DDP training Level 1	7 years

Position	Qualifications	Length of time in the Adoption Service
	BUSS level 1 & 2 Currently completing Practice Educator level 1	
Early Help Worker	BA (Hons) Psychology and Early Childhood Studies	2 years

Family Adoption Links

Family Adoption Links was established on 1/11/2020 and brought together partners from Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland. The partnership was augmented by Northamptonshire Children's Trust who joined in on 1/01/2022. Family Adoption Links is a 'partnership model' Regional Adoption Agency.

The 5 local authorities and the Northamptonshire Children's Trust continue to be responsible for line management and employment arrangements for their teams. The budget for the central hub staff is pooled and the Agency partners act collaboratively to deliver the stated objectives ensuring that practice is based on consistency and excellence.

The Head of Service reports bi-monthly to a Governance Board, made up of Senior Officers from each local authority partner. The Chair of the Governance Board is Cornelia Andrecut, Director of Children's Services, Northamptonshire Children's Trust. The Governance Board is responsible for setting the strategy. The vision of the RAA is that:

- Children have the widest range of adopters trained to meet the needs of children placed with them.
- Matching delivers the best quality outcomes for all children.

- Adopters receive consistent, high quality and professional service at all stages of the process.
- The same high standard of adoption support for all adoptive families across the region
- Family Adoption Links, Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA) work together to promote and maximize choice for children and adopters.
- That there will be savings for each authority in the partnership with less reliance on interagency placements.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Adoption Service works within the overall Quality Assurance Framework for Children and Families, which sets out a range of general and service specific standards and methods by which these standards are monitored. Children for whom adoption is being considered or who have been placed for adoption are reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers.

Lincolnshire Adoption Service continually monitors and evaluates its service at every stage of the adoption process to ensure quality and effectiveness. Lincolnshire welcomes feedback from all involved in the adoption process.

The activity and performance of the Adoption Service is scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

As part of the Regional Adoption Leadership Board and through our work within the Family Adoption Links partnership, the Adoption Service actively considers and shares good practice and policy development.

The Adoption Service is inspected by Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) under the framework for inspecting local authority children's services (ILACS) for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Performance of the service is monitored and reviewed through the National Adoption Scorecard and a range of performance indicators and measures, including the scrutiny of the adoption leadership board.

The procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters

The recruitment of adopters is currently managed and effected jointly between the RAA Family Adoption Links and the local Fostering and Adoption recruitment activity.

Most enquiries come to the service via our interactive website. The referrals to the Family Adoption Links website are forwarded to the local offices depending upon geographical location. The Recruitment Co-ordinators aim to contact all enquirers within 24 hours of them registering their interest online.

Within 5 working days of applicants completing their initial expression of interest, the enquirers will receive a telephone call from a social worker to start the process and to arrange an individual interview. If eligible to proceed following this interview, applicants will then submit their formal Registration of Interest to the agency.

Adopters are recruited and assessed in line with Family Adoption Links guidance which is based on the National Minimum Standards and Adoption Regulations.

Recruitment involves:

- Utilising social media to reach wide audiences.
- Information events online which are all advertised on the Family Adoption Links website, so that they are available to all and are well attended.

- Information distribution through displays and presentations at events like the Lincolnshire show.
- Word of mouth through existing carers.
- Lincolnshire County Council LCC Connects website/Family Adoption Links website.
- Targeted activity within specific communities in-house if needed.

Adoption agencies must assess and approve adopters within 6 months. The process comprises a two-month initial training and preparation stage (Stage One).

Stage One commences when applicants have formally registered their interest and will end with the agency's decision on whether the prospective adopter can proceed to Stage Two. In Stage One, all required checks and references will be completed.

Stage Two consists of an in-depth assessment and will end with presentation of the prospective adopter report to the adoption panel and the Agency Decision Maker's decision about the suitability of the prospective adopter to adopt a child.

The prospective adopter report is completed by a social worker who is compliant with the restriction on the preparation of adoption reports regulations 2005.

The report is presented to the Adoption Panel for consideration and a recommendation of the prospective adopters' suitability is made. The organisation and composition of this panel is in accordance with Adoption Service Regulations 2011.

Prospective Adopters are invited to attend panel and participate in the panel discussions.

All panels are currently conducted virtually, and all applicants are invited to attend. Feedback is received from those applicants who have commented on the process and have been satisfied with the experience of being at panel.

The Adoption Panel's recommendation is passed, along with the prospective adopter report, panel's final minutes and any other supporting documentation, to the Agency Decision Maker. National Minimum Standards 23.17 sets out the qualifications, knowledge and experience the decision-maker must have. The Agency Decision Maker does not have direct line management responsibility for the adoption panel but has the authority to make decisions on its behalf as to whether the prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child (Adoption Agency Regulation 27).

Adoptive parents are supported throughout their adoption journey by experienced Supervising Social Workers, through to an adoption order being made. Each adoptive family will have their own tailored adoption support plan and will have ongoing access to a range of post order support.

Complaints procedure

The Directorate has a statutory complaints service.

The Complaints Policy sets out how complaints will be dealt with ensuring concerns raised are considered and any resulting adjustments made, where required.

- Stage 1 – Local Resolution
- Stage 2 – Independent Investigator is appointed
- Stage 3 – Independent Panel formal review by an Independent Panel of independent members plus the Complaints Manager.

Staff ensure that all carers know how and to whom to complain.

Complainants have the right to involve a friend or advocate.

The Customer Relations & Complaints Manager is Shagofta Noreen

Email customerrelationsteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Write to Customer Relations Team, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL or customerrelationsteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Call 01522 843322

The Named Manager monitors all complaints and liaises with the Customer Relations & Complaints Manager and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Business Manager. This information is available to authorised persons only. All adopters have access to support and information regarding the complaint's procedures.

The Independent Reviewing Mechanism

Prospective adopters are given written information about the role of the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) as part of their preparation process. They are also provided with leaflets about the IRM when information is being prepared for presentation to panel.

Further Information

The Adoption Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually.

If you require this document in a different language or an alternative format such as large print, audio tape or Braille, please contact a member of the Adoption Service via telephone on 01522 554114.

The Statement of Purpose, Children's Guides and other information are also available on the Lincolnshire County Council website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

A copy can also be obtained from the registered manager:

Nicola Brangam – Head of Service, Fostering and Adoption
County Offices
Newland

Lincoln

Lincs

LN1 1YL

Telephone: 01522 552781

Email: Nicola.brangam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 –The Registration Authority

Lincolnshire County Council is an approved Adoption Service provider. The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 together with the Adoption Regulations form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Adoption agencies and Adoption Support agencies.

The Adoption Service is managed by the Head of Service – Regulated through a Team Manager for Adoption. The Team Manager acts as the Adoption Support Services Advisor. (Standard 15 of the National Minimum Standards)

The Assistant Director for Children Services is the Agency Decision Maker. (Standard 17 of the National Minimum Standards)

Lincolnshire Adoption Panel is constituted in accordance with regulations. (Standard 17 of the National Minimum Standards)

Appendix 2 –Structure Chart

