



## Perth and Kinross Council Education & Children's Services

### Adoption Services Plan 2010

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As required under Section 4 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007, this plan sets out the aims of the Perth and Kinross Adoption Service and describes the range of services which are in place to support children and families. The aims are closely linked to service and corporate priorities of Perth and Kinross Council and to the vision of the Integrated Children's Services Plan: "We will support all our children and young people to be the best they can be".
- 1.2 The Act requires Councils to consult the Health Board and any other relevant partners who have an interest in adoption and the following have been consulted in the production of this Plan:
  - NHS Tayside
  - Integrated Children's Services Planning Group
- 1.3 An Annual Report on adoption work will be produced and the Plan will be reviewed by the end of the third year of implementation.
- 1.4 The Plan and the annual review is linked to the Perth & Kinross Integrated Children's Services Plan.

A range of adoption supports beyond placement is necessary to address continuing needs of adopters, adopted children and natural parents and these are described briefly within this plan.

#### 2. Aims of the Perth and Kinross Adoption Service

- To "get it right" for every child entering the adoption process, placing their welfare, safety and needs at the centre of the process
- To take account of a child's wishes and feelings, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability
- To recruit, assess and provide suitable families within prescribed timescales who meet the needs of children
- To provide clear information to prospective adopters about adoption and children available for adoption

- To provide an adoption support service to enable a child to remain with an adoptive family and fulfil their potential
- To provide information for enquirers who wish to adopt from overseas
- To provide information and support for people who wish to obtain information from their birth records
- To provide information and support for those affected by adoption
- To provide an Adoption Support Plan for every child placed for adoption
- To provide an Adoption Allowance Scheme which takes account of children's needs and adopters' financial circumstances
- To promote contact with natural families, where this has been agreed as appropriate
- To monitor and review the progress of children awaiting placement

### 3. Children Who Require Adoption

- 3.1 Children who are approved for adoption come from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. The principal reason is as a result of parent(s) and extended families being unable to offer the stability and lifelong commitment which a child needs in order to pass successfully through all stages from childhood to adult life. Many children may have experienced trauma due to abuse and neglect. Although this background can affect children throughout their lives, adoptive homes can provide children with the stability and security they need as they grow into adulthood.
- 3.2 The number of children needing adoption in Perth and Kinross is small, with children over the age of two years forming the majority of placements. Many of the older children are adopted within the families of temporary foster carers who had previously cared for them:

Year	Approved for Adoption	Matched for Adoption
2008/09	3	7
2009/10	4	7*

(\* - Please note that more matches took place than children approved due to adoptions of children approved in previous years).

- 3.3 There has been a rise in the numbers of looked after children over the past few years due in great part to the impact of parental substance

misuse and neglect and, as a result, it can be anticipated that more adoptive placements will be required in the future.

- 3.4 The views of children are important to the adoption process and creative, appropriate ways of communicating, taking account of their age and stage, are necessary to inform planning.

#### **4. Range of Services**

##### **4.1 Recruitment, preparation and approval of adopters**

- The effective recruitment of adopters is key to meeting the diverse needs of the children who require adoptive placements.
- On occasion it may be necessary to source suitable adopters from elsewhere; for example where it is seen to be in a child's best interests to be placed at a distance from the natural family or where a child's special needs cannot be met from within the adopters approved locally. In these circumstances placements are sourced either from the North East Consortium of Councils, or from registered Adoption Agencies approved through the Care Commission.
- In accordance with the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007, protocols have been amended to include a wider range of people entitled to apply to adopt (ie unmarried couples of same and opposite genders provided they are in "enduring" relationships). It is hoped that this will help provide a greater range of choice to meet need.
- The assessment and approval process is robust and thorough. Social workers registered with the Scottish Social Services Council use materials from the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) to help prepare adopters and after a thorough assessment involving all members of the family together with relevant references and checks, cases are brought to the Adoption Panel for consideration.
- The Panel has its own Constitution and includes representation from social work, education and independent members in addition to having legal and medical advisers for every case considered. The Panel makes recommendations on approval of adopters, children for adoption and matches to the Agency Decision Maker, who is the Head of Children and Families Services and the Chief Social Work Officer.
- Development and training opportunities are arranged throughout the year to enable the Panel to be up to date and address any issues which have arisen that need examined in more detail than is possible during Panel meetings.

#### 4.2 Supports available to adoptive families, adopted children, adopted adults and those affected by adoption

- On account of the range and complexity of needs of children placed for adoption, most adopters seek ongoing support and advice after adoption orders are made.
- The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 sets out the duties placed on Councils to provide post adoption support. As a result of this, a revised Adoption Allowance Scheme was approved in December 2009 with Adoption Support Plans being introduced into protocols and practice in April 2010. The Adoption Support Plans enable the Adoption Service and adopters to agree how to take forward the necessary supports for children.
- Supports will be made available from resources which can be provided from mainstream services eg Council and Health Board. It is recognised that there will be requests for private services and in these circumstances the Council has the power, but not the duty, to pay for them.
- When an adopted young person reaches the age of 16 years, he or she can seek information concerning their birth parents and families. Prior to 16, an assessment of the young person's capacity to cope with the information will be made, taking into account the views of the adoptive parents. If under 16, no identifying information about parents or relatives will be provided.
- Birth parents and relatives often seek information once the child reaches adulthood and in these instances the Council can get in touch with adopted adults to let them know a relative wishes to make contact. The Council works in partnership with Birthlink After Adoption Service, based in Edinburgh, which manages the Adoption Contact Register for Scotland.

#### 4.3 Medical Services

- Pre-Adoption: all children under 5 years old will have a medical assessment by the medical adviser in the Social Paediatric clinic at Perth Royal Infirmary. This will look at their physical and mental health and also their development. Any issues identified will be addressed appropriately and follow up will be arranged.
- School aged children over 5 years old will be seen by the Nurse for Looked After Children who will assess their physical and mental health. If there are any concerns about their development, they will be referred to the Social Paediatric clinic for assessment.
- Post-Adoption: children with identified developmental concerns will be monitored in the Social Paediatric clinic and appropriate support will be arranged as required. Medical concerns should be addressed in the usual way through primary care services or specialist paediatric clinics.

## **5. Adoption Service Improvement Plan**

The attached Improvement Plan is linked to the Integrated Children's Services Plan and the Children and Families Services Improvement Plan. It seeks to take forward new actions arising from this Adoption Service Plan and new legislation.

## Adoption Service Improvement Plan

## Appendix 1

Key Areas and Desired Outcome	Actions	Timescales	Resp.	Joint Working	Measures of Success	Baseline for 09/10	Current Status	Target for 10/11	Action Complete Y / N? (PROCESS)	Outcome Achieved Y / N/ (IMPACT)	Evidence of Process and Impact (the difference you have made)
Adoption Services	Meet 90% target of having permanence plans in place for children who have been accommodated for at least one year	30 June 2011	ECS		Permanence Plans in place	90%	96%	90%	Y	Y	Early identification of children requiring placement has provided the best opportunity for early placement in adoptive homes
Adoption Services	Ensure every child approved for adoption has an Adoption Support Plan	30 June 2011	ECS NHS	ECS NHS	Supports identified and considered through Panel prior to placement	100% of all children moving to adoptive placements have an adoption support plan	100% of all children who have been to Panel since implementation of the A&C(S)Act2007 have plans in place	100%			Post adoption support plans for recently placed children (prior to Act) are being processed
Adoption Services	Develop and maintain effective communications with adopters, enabling them to contribute to Adoption Service planning and delivery	30 June 2011	ECS	ECS NHS	All adopters have been invited to maintain contact, receive agreed supports and have the opportunity to contribute to service planning		In process of developing website to enable improved continuity of communication				Systems are being put in place by Permanence Team (website etc) to enable improved ongoing contact with adopters
Adoption Services	Collate annual management information on demands made for Post Adoption Services	31 July 2011	ECS		Management information helps to measure outcomes		New indicator				Permanence Team will draw together this information
<b>Comments on Progress:</b>											
<b>Actions to be taken:</b>											