

Buckinghamshire

www.buckscc.gov.uk

Guide to Adoption For Young People

Adoption Service

Purpose of this guide

The law¹ says that councils have to produce a Children's guide for adopters and all the children and young people who have been or may be placed with adopters, and that it has to include the following information:

- a summary of the adoption service 'Statement of Purpose'²
- a summary of the adoption procedures
- how to tell us if you wish to make a complaint about the service
- how children and young people can get an independent person to speak up for them and help them.
- how to contact Ofsted³
- how to contact the Children's Rights Director⁴

There is another version of this Guide for younger children.

Statement of Purpose

¹ Reg 3 The Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003

² The 'Statement of Purpose' is also required by this law

³ Ofsted is the organisation that inspects adoption and other services

⁴ The Children's Rights Director is someone appointed by the Government to find out what children think about the services provided for them and help make sure things work the way they are supposed to

Buckinghamshire Adoption Service has a Statement of Purpose that describes the services that are provided for children and young people who have been or may be adopted.

The Statement of Purpose has been agreed by elected members (Councillors) and is updated every year.

The full Statement includes the following:

- **what the service aims to do**
- **who is in charge of the service and some information about them**
- **how many staff we have and some information about them**
- **details of services for children and young people and how they work**
- **how we make sure the services work the way they should**
- **how we recruit, train and support our adopters**
- **information about our Complaints Procedure**

You can get a copy of the full Statement of Purpose if you want one by asking your social worker, or carer.

Adoption procedures

These are some of the main things that happen when a young person is going to be adopted.

- **an assessment takes place to see if you need to be looked after by your council because you are unable to stay with your own family**
- **young people can be looked after with the agreement of their parents, but sometimes we have to go to Court and get a 'Care Order'**
- **most children the council looks after are in foster homes (occasionally it can be a in children's home)**
- **every 'looked after' child has to have a regular Review – a meeting to check everything's OK and decide what needs to happen. This is chaired by someone independent (An Independent Reviewing Officer) and you will be invited to attend and can and can say what you would like to talk about.**
- **at the second review (4 months after we have been providing your care) we have to make a plan for how you will be permanently cared for, which could be back at home, or it could mean being adopted**
- **within 2 months of a decision that you are going to be adopted, the social worker has to take a report to a meeting called the Adoption Panel**

- if the Panel agrees that you should be adopted, a different social worker starts to look for a family to adopt you. We always try to find the best family we can for you – what we call the best ‘match’ - and we will ask you what sort of family you would like to be a part of too.
- if you have brothers and sisters we always try to keep you together
- the Panel has to agree the match with your new family too.
- we try to find a family as quickly as possible, but sometimes it can seem to take a long time. We have regular meetings to try to speed things up, and we will keep you informed about what’s happening
- there’s a computer system called the National Adoption Register which helps to find the right family for you by looking all over the country
- adopters are very carefully checked to make sure they will be good at looking after you.
- when you are living with this adoptive family, they will apply to the Court for an Adoption Order. This means you are legally part of the family forever
- You, your adopted family and your birth family can all still get help from us for 3 years after the adoption order has been made and sometimes after that if

necessary, or from the local council if they’re living somewhere else.

Complaints and Representations

Sometimes we make mistakes or things go wrong.

We will always try to discuss any concerns or worries you may have and then work together to sort out any problems.

Sometimes this doesn’t work and you’ll still be unhappy about things.

You have the right to complain, and your parents can also complain on your behalf.

You can get a copy of a leaflet which tells you how to complain by asking your social worker or the Customer care Manager on 01296 382727.

The following is a summary of our complaints procedure:

Step 1

Tell us about your complaint and we have 14 days to respond. If you’re still unhappy you can go to Step 2.

Step 2

Someone not involved directly with you will look into your complaint, sometimes with an ‘independent person’ who will check that the investigation is done properly.

The Manager of the service responsible for your case has to read the investigation report and answer your complaint. This should all happen within 28 days of you taking your complaint to Step 2.

If you're still unhappy you can take your complaint to Step 3.

Step 3

Within 28 days of you asking to go to Step 3, a panel of three people will be arranged to listen to what you and social services say about your complaint. They will read the report written at Step 2 and tell the Director of Social Services what they think should happen. The Director will then give you a written answer to your complaint.

If after this you still don't think your complaint has been dealt with fairly you can take your complaint to:

The Local Authority Ombudsman
21 Queens Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9BU

Tel: 020 7915 3210

Independent Advocacy for Children and Young People

This service is provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service. This is an independent service provided to Buckinghamshire social services by NYAS⁵.

NYAS provides independent visitors and advocates for young people looked after by the council.

Independent visitors are adult volunteers who befriend young people and provide regular support, sometimes by taking them out.

Advocates are also adult volunteers who help young people to be heard by speaking for them or by attending reviews and meetings like that to help the young person speak for him or herself.

Both independent visitors and advocates are independent of the council. They can help you by listening to you, helping you to write letters or make 'phone calls to sort out problems, making sure you know your rights and helping you make a complaint if you need to.

The project co-ordinator is Heather Bulpett, and she can be contacted at:

The Coach House
39 Walton Road
Aylesbury
HP21 7SR

⁵ A charity working with local authorities to help children

Tel: 01296 432540

Email: heather.bulpett@nyas.net

There is also a national free phone telephone number

for children and young people: 0800 6161015 or

Email: help@nyas.net

Ofsted

Ofsted is the organisation responsible for inspecting adoption services and making sure we are doing all we should do in running our Adoption service.

When they inspect Buckinghamshire Adoption Service Ofsted will talk to a selection of adopters and children and young people. Adopters and children and young people can also contact Ofsted at other times at:

OFSTED

Piccadilly gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Children's Rights Director

The Children's Rights Director is someone appointed by the Government to find out what children think about the services provided for them and help make sure things work the way they are supposed to

Office of the Children's Rights Director

Ofsted

Aviation House

125 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

Free Phone: 0800 528 0731

Email: rights4me.org

How To Contact Us

Buckinghamshire Adoption Team
Council Offices
King George V Road
Amersham
Bucks HP6 5BN

Tel: 01494 732134

Email: adoption@buckscc.gov.uk



*This leaflet is available in other fonts, formats, languages
and texts.*

