



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

ADOPTION SERVICE

Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Service

**Aneurin Bevan House
Avenue Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8HD**

Lead Inspector
Sean White

Announced Inspection
18th October 2005 09:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Adoption*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Service

Address Aneurin Bevan House
Avenue Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8HD

Telephone number 01429 523983

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable) Hartlepool Borough Council

Name of registered manager (if applicable) Mrs Connie O`Neill

Type of registration Local Auth Adoption Service

No. of places registered (if applicable) 0

Category(ies) of registration, with number of places

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection This was the first inspection of the adoption service.

Brief Description of the Service:

Hartlepool's adoption service is an agency constituted under the requirements of current legislation. It is a small agency with two social workers and a senior practitioner who is a named person for adoption support. It is managed by the team manager, adoption and fostering, within the Children's Services department. It is located close to the town centre in premises that are easily accessible by people with a genuine interest in adoption and has access for people with a disability.

The agency undertakes the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of adopters – both domestic applicants and those who wish to adopt a child from overseas. It offers adoption support, administers indirect contact arrangements and undertakes family finding for those children for whom adoption is the plan. Independent support facilities for birth families are arranged through a contract with a local adoption support agency.

SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The inspection was well prepared for with all required pre-inspection material being forwarded as requested. The agency provided very good facilities and engaged in the process as willing participants. The programme that was arranged was well coordinated and very manageable. This enabled the inspection to be carried out with the minimum of disruption and maximum efficiency.

The inspection was carried out over three days, with an extra half-day being allocated to the observation of the adoption panel. During the course of the fieldwork interviews were held with key managers and staff, specialist advisers and an elected member of the council. An examination of personnel files was undertaken in the offices of Human Resources.

Visits were made to four adoptive families and their views are incorporated into the text of this report. Completed questionnaires were received from adopters/prospective adopters (16), placing social workers (4), placing authorities (1) and specialist advisers (2). No questionnaires sent to birth families were returned.

The case files of the adopters visited were read – and the files of children placed with them. Other case files were also examined. Written materials relating to the operation of the agency were read, including policies and procedures, protocols and information provided for prospective and approved adopters.

What the service does well:

The operational management of the service and its day-to-day responsibilities were well organised. The staff understood their roles and duties and undertook them with demonstrably high levels of skill and competence. This, in particular, was well received by adopters and prospective adopters who almost unanimously praised the efforts and abilities of social workers and the way they delivered the service. “She was great, we could tell her anything”, and “She certainly knew how to get the best out of us, she was very thorough” are indicative of the praise provided by people who had experienced the agency.

The agency recruits sufficient adopters to meet the demands of children requiring placement; most of the enquiries and applications coming from

people who have been recommended Hartlepool, or from other sources that demonstrated satisfaction with the agency. Several adopters stated that they would also recommend the agency to anyone considering adoption.

The preparation training was of a good standard and included all relevant information and enabled prospective applicants to meet and hear the views of experienced adopters. Comments about the preparation were very complementary and included comments such as, "Very informative, we learned a lot", and "Very inclusive and non-threatening".

The thoroughness of adopter assessments was impressive and it was clear that every effort was made by social workers to ensure, so far as is possible, that children's needs were met through adoptive placements; "[the social worker] was able to get us to talk about very painful experiences in a way that was supportive but didn't come across as intrusive", is a good example of how adopters felt about the abilities of the social workers.

There were good working arrangements across the service between adoption workers, children's social workers and foster carers to enable effective matching and placements to be achieved. This was further enhanced by realistic information exchange that provided everybody involved with up to date knowledge of children's and adopters' circumstances and needs.

Support is provided to all adopters approved by the agency on an, 'as needed' basis. Although not formally structured as a support programme, it was clear that the levels and content of support provided was very high and enabled placements to be as secure and permanent as possible. Again, the evidence was supported by praise from adopters who reported, "...we were given a choice about the level of support we might need" and "...they're always there for us". The agency has a very low disruption record.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This was the first inspection of this service.

What they could do better:

The agency would improve upon the quality of the operational, day-to-day work of the service if it were to take action to put in place a more coherent and supportive infrastructure. The corporate management of the service needs to be improved to ensure that, at all levels of the organisation, there is clarity of purpose, and systems in place, to ensure objectives can be achieved

Organisationally the agency is hampered by having policies, procedures and protocols that are either out-dated, or non-existent; other written material, for example the Children's Guide and information for prospective adopters, is also weak. There needs to be action taken to address these shortfalls to enable the service to have clear guidance.

The adoption panel, whilst making generally good recommendations, is not thoroughly enough managed and organised. It is frequently unable to raise a quorum, to the disadvantage of applicants – and with the added possibility for creating delay for children – which is not helped by the permanent absence of one member. There are no effective policies and procedures to inform its operation and conduct, and some members were ignorant or naive about powers and responsibilities. Decision-making is undertaken without full information from the deliberations of the panel.

Human Resources procedures are not as thorough as they should be; staff and panel members' personnel records were not full and complete and there was no corporate, safe system for ensuring that CRB disclosures are renewed every three years.

Resources and opportunities for staff training were poor; there had been no recent training/updates on child protection issues and one example of unsafe practice in respect of child protection was found.

Work with birth parents, whilst satisfactory in many areas, did not include making written records of their contribution to planning for their child's adoption or to inviting them to express their views about what was written about them.

The auditing and monitoring of the agency's performance was generally weak; the arrangements for monitoring content and quality of files were inappropriate for an adoption service and the monitoring of, or measuring work undertaken that was not specifically allocated, was not clear.

Assessment reports (Forms E) in respect of children were inconsistent in quality and content. There had been no training in this area and it was evident that there was some lack of experience in the production of these assessments – and their purpose.

Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Staying Safe

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Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing - There are no NMS that map to this outcome

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements identified during the inspection

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The agency matches children with adopters (NMS 2)
- The agency assesses and prepares adopters (NMS 4)
- Adoptors are given information about matching (NMS 5)
- The functions of the adoption panel are as specified (NMS 10)
- The constitution and membership of adoption panels are as specified (NMS 11)
- Adoption panels are timely (NMS 12)
- Adoption agency decision is made without delay and appropriately (NMS 13)
- The manager is suitable to carry on or manage an adoption agency (NMS 15)
- Staff are suitable to work with children (NMS 19)
- The agency has a robust complaints procedure (NMS 24 Voluntary Adoption Agency only)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19,

Although there were many areas of good and effective operational practice that served children well, the structural inadequacies are such that the safety of children could be compromised.

EVIDENCE:

The operational arrangements for the preparation and assessment of adopters and subsequent matching with children were well organised, thorough and undertaken with great care, skill and commitment.

Preparation groups, which are held twice a year, enabled adopters to be fully informed about the implications of adoption, the processes involved and the kind of children likely to be placed for adoption. Information provided by adopters was unanimous in its praise for the content and presentation of preparation groups – “The preparation groups were very informative and open” and “...they were delivered with professionalism” are two comments that reflect the overall sentiments of respondents to questionnaires. The feedback forms from attendees indicated a commitment by the agency to evaluate its performance in this area.

The assessment process was also of a high standard. Forms F were well written and indicated a very thorough approach to determining the suitability of families to adopt the children of Hartlepool. The agency uses a competency-based approach that is well established and which complements the information gathered about the backgrounds and circumstances of applicants. The social workers' assessments of the information they have produced were, in the main, accurate reflections of the applicant's suitability - but some consideration should be given to the use of 'plain English' when writing these. Comments made about the assessment process by adopters were very complementary and, in many cases, effusive. "The assessment was very thorough and encouraged us to talk openly and honestly" and "We felt that we were able to discuss even the most painful of issues...she was very skilled and professional", were typical comments made.

Other evidence that demonstrated the thoroughness of preparation and assessments included the pursuing of several references - including written submissions from significant children in extended families. Wherever there are concerns, or issues that require advice or direction, the panel is consulted.

The arrangements for matching children with adoptive families were well managed and practice was child-focused and undertaken with due care. Matching reports were joint efforts between adoption and children's social workers and gave clear indications about the appropriateness of the proposed match. Information exchange was thoroughly undertaken and adopters felt that they were fully informed about the children being proposed - "We were told everything about him that we could possibly need to know", said one. There was also clear evidence that social work staff and foster carers worked closely together to facilitate successful placement arrangements.

The agency also demonstrated good practice in its approach to avoiding unnecessary delays through an emerging concurrent placement initiative and by the prioritisation of families able to offer placements for potentially difficult to place children.

The social workers employed in the agency were appropriately qualified and demonstrated significant levels of skill and expertise in adoption matters. They understood the law and current thinking that informs and governs adoption and were clearly felt to be highly competent by those families they worked with: "We cannot praise [our social worker] highly enough" and "She obviously knew her stuff", being typical statements. This level of competence, and the associated conscientious approach, was a significant indicator of the high standards of work undertaken to ensure children's best interests were well served.

There were, however, some significant issues that have the potential to compromise the safety of children that require attention and action by the agency.

Although the service receives sufficient applications from prospective adopters to fulfil its needs in respect of children requiring placements, there was no strategic approach to recruitment and no written strategy – although it is mentioned in the Statement of Purpose. A clearer, more focused and coherent approach would ensure that all children have the same opportunity.

The Adoption Panel, although appropriately constituted, presented several issues that require serious attention and action:

- The Chair of the panel, when appointed, had no experience in adoption.
- There were no policies and procedures in place to inform and direct the functions of the panel.
- One panel member had never attended or provided an apology. This is a serious matter that had not been addressed until recently. The failure to attend had contributed to the panel failing to reach a quorum on some occasions.
- Recommendations were made by panel "subject to satisfactory CRB". Cases should not be presented to Panel until all required information is available.
- Two recent resignations of members, with the added problem of a member never attending, places significant problems on it being quorate. There have been occasions when panel has had to be cancelled at the last minute because it couldn't form a quorum, leaving attending applicants with a wasted journey.
- The panel made a recommendation that was at variance with the applicant's wishes in respect of the age of child being considered.
- Panel minutes are often late in being produced.
- The decision maker makes his decision without sight of the minutes or any written communication from the panel outlining how or why a recommendation has been made.

The information held by Human Resources indicated that one senior manager had not had a CRB disclosure and there was no system in place in HR for CRBs to be renewed every three years – this responsibility being devolved to operational team level with the associated risk of inconsistency.

The Child Protection Procedures did not make specific reference to how to proceed if disclosure/allegations were made against an adopter with a child in placement.

There has been little, if any, child protection training undertaken by social workers in the agency.

In one case a significant child protection issue was disclosed and the agency did not pursue the potential consequences of this disclosure. This was felt to be a very serious matter that was not dealt with in the appropriate way.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The adoption agency provides support for adoptive parents (NMS 6)
- The agency has access to specialist advisers as appropriate (NMS 18)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

6, 18

The agency enables adoptive placements to be successful and permanent by providing dynamic and responsive support. It would be improved, however, by a more coordinated and monitored approach to evaluate and measure its success.

EVIDENCE:

The agency is very committed to providing support services to adopters and it was evident that significant effort is made to enable stable and permanent homes to be realised.

It achieves this by (mainly) informal support methods that involve social workers committing themselves to meeting the needs of adopters and by being available for advice and consultation. This commitment and availability was highly appreciated by adopters – “We feel that she’s always there for us” and “She’s lovely, nothing’s too much trouble” said two adopters who felt that support was always available or accessible. This committed and conscientious approach was clearly aimed at enabling families to feel that they were not alone, that they could rely on the service and feel that they were important. It was also evident that this approach involved workers providing support in their own time.

Such appreciation was also extended to children’s social workers, who, it was said, work closely with adoption workers to enable families to feel confident about placements, “Our child’s social worker is lovely, she visits every week”, commented one satisfied adopter.

The service has a well-established adoption support group that meets regularly and has consistently good attendance. Feedback made clear that these were events that adopters found useful and supportive, and gave them opportunities to explore issues with others who may have had similar experiences.

The support activity, however, is informal in that it is offered and provided on an, 'as required or requested' basis and did not have any strategic or coherent methodology. As such the activity is difficult to monitor and measure which places the management of it at risk of being unable to demonstrate, or find evidence for, its success.

The service provided by the legal and medical advisors was of a very good standard. It was provided in a way that enabled the service to process child care cases and applications for adopters' approvals as quickly as possible, which avoids delays. It was also of a good standard in respect of quality of advice and support. Both are readily accessible and work closely with the service; it was clear that they had a sound understanding of adoption matters and the importance of their contribution.

The agency did not have a written protocol for the use of advisors, however.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Birth parents and birth families are involved in adoption plans (NMS 7)
- Birth parents and birth families are involved in maintaining the child's heritage (NMS 8)
- The Adoption agency supports birth parents and families (NMS 9)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

7, 8, 9.

The provision made to involve birth parents in the planning for children and providing life-story information is of a reasonable standard to enable them to make a positive contribution but the lack of formal recording demonstrates inconsistency.

EVIDENCE:

The agency provides only limited services to birth parents; direct support is informal and responsive rather than being strategic. Independent support for birth families is achieved through a service agreement with a voluntary support agency and although the agreement is appropriately monitored by the agency it was not possible to determine the range or quality of the work being done. Agency managers should ensure that they are satisfied with the work being undertaken on their behalf.

Although it was clear that social workers are committed to enabling birth parents to be involved in the planning for their child's adoption, there was little, if any, written evidence found to demonstrate that they were invited to contribute their thoughts or views. Forms E did not indicate whether their views about contact had been elicited or whether they were given the opportunity to comment on what had been written about them.

Nevertheless, there was evidence - some of it very good - that social workers involved birth parents in contributing to life-story work. It was clear that there is a commitment to working closely and cooperatively between teams - and with foster carers and birth parents - to develop life-story books that have meaning for children. Some of this work was well structured and innovative and demonstrated a conscientious approach to ensuring that children were provided with appropriate and necessary information. The agency should,

however, develop this further and provide training in this area to ensure that all workers involved in adoption are fully aware of its importance and relevance to children and their futures.

Indirect contact arrangements (letterbox) are well managed by the service with a conscientious approach that indicated a commitment to this important aspect of post-adoption work.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- There is a clear written statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption agency and the adoption agency ensures that it meets those aims and objectives (NMS 1)
- The agency provides clear written information for prospective adopters (NMS 3)
- The manager has skills to carry on or manage the adoption agency (NMS 14)
- The adoption agency is managed effectively and efficiently (NMS 16)
- The agency is monitored and controlled as specified (NMS 17)
- The staff are organised and managed effectively (NMS 20)
- The agency has sufficient staff with the right skills / experience (NMS 21)
- The agency is a fair and competent employer (NMS 22)
- The agency provides training for staff (NMS 23)
- Case records for children and prospective / approved adopters are comprehensive and accurate (NMS 25)
- The agency provides access to records as appropriate (NMS 26)
- The agency's administrative records processes are appropriate (NMS 27)
- The agency maintains personnel files for members of staff and members of adoption panels (NMS 28)
- The premises used by the adoption agency are suitable for purpose (NMS 29)
- The adoption agency is financially viable (NMS 30, Voluntary Adoption Agency only)
- The adoption agency has robust financial processes (NMS 31)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 3, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Despite some very good practice at operational level, the management infrastructure is too weak to ensure the service is able to meet all of its responsibilities.

EVIDENCE:

At operational level, which is the provision of direct services that are aimed at preparing, assessing, approving and supporting families – including the

matching and placement of children, the management arrangements are of a good standard. Indeed, it was very clear that the work carried out with adopters and prospective adopters was of a standard that was highly appreciated, and deemed almost faultless, by the vast majority of people who were either spoken with or who responded to questionnaires. Typical comments were, "We cannot fault the service", "We would rate Hartlepool as excellent/highly recommended, 10/10", "The service we received was always 100%" and "They were very efficient".

These practices that warranted such an effusive response were also reflected in the evidence gathered during the inspection. The care and attention given to the processes of adoption by both the team manager and social workers was well considered and clearly aimed at providing the best possible outcomes for children. Casework supervision was thorough, regular and aimed at providing social workers with the support and guidance needed to undertake their roles effectively. The manager was clear about her responsibilities to achieve best outcomes and demonstrated a diligence and commitment to her role – which was, in turn, reflected in the overall conscientiousness of the team. This approach was also highly appreciated by service users – "We feel very lucky and privileged to have been allocated our social worker" and "Nothing was too much trouble" give an accurate reflection of comments made. Similar respect was also expressed by placing authorities, one comment being, "The quality of service is excellent at all times".

The arrangements for, and management of, case allocation and workload were well developed and workers understood their roles and responsibilities. The processes for ensuring work was appropriately prioritised and coordinated were suitably established and everyone appeared to know and understand their roles. Relationships with the wider children's social work service were mutually supportive and lines of communication were reasonably clear. There was some suggestion, however, that the advice and knowledge held in the adoption team was not accessed as frequently or routinely as perhaps it should be.

The structural 'umbrella' of the department/agency, however, was insufficiently robust to provide a managerial context within which the service could operate and develop to its best potential. Although there is a well constructed statement of purpose in place that outlines clearly the aims, objectives and functions of the service, its hopes and aspirations are somewhat compromised by the less than comprehensive infrastructure of the department. It was reported, though, that the statement is not widely circulated – children's social workers, for instance, had not seen it. The Children's Guide to adoption is limited to a BAAF publication with limited information pasted in about Hartlepool's approach to service provision. The manager was aware of the limited use of this guide and was actively pursuing the production of an improved format.

The areas that the agency must address to ensure that the service is appropriately managed at all levels are wide ranging and should be driven by a

developmental strategy to address structural shortfalls. The written information provided by the agency is generally poor and requires a complete overhaul. For instance, the policies and procedures governing the adoption service were either inadequate or non-existent. This does not enable the agency to be informed, or governed, by a coherent infrastructure. A recently devised development plan, whilst giving some direction, did not address the fundamental necessities of sound procedural guidance. Similarly, the written information for prospective adopters is limited in scope and content.

The training and development of workers has been neglected in recent times; there had been very little opportunities to train staff and when such opportunities arose they were lost because of bureaucratic inefficiency: no training plan that addressed current needs was in place.

The auditing and monitoring systems for case recording were not appropriate for an adoption service – some files (although generally well-maintained) contained information that was inappropriately included or misfiled, and supervision records were not routinely placed on case files. This was the case for both adopters' and children's files.

Although some elected members had an enthusiastic approach to meeting the needs of children, and a well-established corporate parenting forum was in place, there was little evidence of 'corporate ownership' of the adoption service; the non-attendance of a councillor at the adoption panel being a clear demonstration of a lack of corporate commitment. The agency did, nevertheless, provide the executive with an annual report and quarterly management information.

Despite what appeared to be a thorough recruitment and selection process, other personnel matters were not so well organised. Staff files did not include all required information (GSCC registration, CRB clearance and evidence of qualifications were missing from some files), and adoption panel members' files were not of the required standard, having very little of the required information.

Quality control of assessment reports, notably in respect of children, was inconsistent and demonstrated a need for training for both authors and supervisors, particularly in respect of the content and purpose of Forms E.

The administrative systems were adequate but there some signs that they are beginning to become over-stretched. The premises, located in a convenient and accessible position close to the town centre, were suitable for their purpose and afforded a reasonably good working environment. The arrangements for the safe storage and back up of information were satisfactory. However, there are insufficient resources for workers, particularly in respect of IT equipment; social workers have to share a computer and there is no access to mobile 'phones. This could compromise safe working when people are away from the office in unfamiliar surroundings. Staff, therefore,

use their own equipment, and in the case of using personal (home) computers – which do not have the facility to link with the agency’s system – there is the danger of confidentiality being breached (there were no home working protocols addressing this).

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Adoption have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
No NMS are mapped to this outcome	

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	2
8	3
9	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	2
4	4
5	3
10	1
11	2
12	2
13	2
15	3
19	3
24	N/A

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
No NMS are mapped to this outcome	

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
6	2
18	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	1
3	2
14	3
16	2
17	2
20	2
21	3
22	2
23	1
25	3
26	3
27	2
28	1
29	2
30	N/A
31	N/A

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

N/A

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Voluntary Adoption and the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2003 or Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1	AD10	6 (1983)	The agency must produce a written policy and procedure about the handling of the functions of the adoption panel.	01/01/06
2	N/A	9 (2003)	The agency must produce a policy and procedure in respect of protecting children in an adoptive placement.	01/01/06
3	AD1	3 (2003)	A children's guide must be produced that includes all required information.	01/01/06
4	AD23	12 (2003)	The agency must establish a training programme suitable to meet the needs of staff. This must include child protection training.	01/01/06
5	AD28	11 & 15 (2003)	Staff and adoption panel members records must include all required information.	01/01/06

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1	AD2	The agency should produce a written strategy for the recruitment of adopters.
2	AD11	The agency should ensure that panel members attend the adoption panel; those who do not attend should be replaced.
3	AD12	The agency should make all efforts to ensure that a quorum can be achieved on every occasion that the adoption panel is scheduled to meet.
4	AD13	The decision maker should only make his decision after being provided with all necessary information, including written recommendations from the adoption panel.
5	AD6	The agency should develop a more strategic way of arranging and providing support to adoptive families.
6	AD7	The agency should ensure that birth parents are given every opportunity to be involved in the planning for their children's adoption and to have the opportunity to express their views on what is written about them.
7	AD3	A more informative information pack should be produced for prospective adopters.
8	AD16	The agency should develop a coherent management strategy that includes policies and procedures to cover the working and functions of the adoption service.
9	AD17	There should be clearer systems and procedures in place to monitor the performance of the agency.
10	AD20	More resources should be made available for staff training.
11	AD22	The agency should provide better resources for its staff, including better access to IT.
12	AD27	The agency should develop dedicated file monitoring systems for the adoption service.
13	AD29	Protocols for workers using their own IT equipment should be produced to protect data and confidentiality.

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