



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## ADOPTION SERVICE

### **Bracknell Forest Borough Council Adoption Service**

**Time Square  
Market Street  
Bracknell  
Berkshire  
RG12 1JD**

*Lead Inspector*  
Pat McKay

*Announced Inspection*  
7th December 2005      10:00

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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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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](http://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](http://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

<b>Name of service</b>	Bracknell Forest Borough Council Adoption Service
<b>Address</b>	Time Square Market Street Bracknell Berkshire RG12 1JD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 424642
<b>Fax number</b>	01344 351521
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Juliette Thomas
<b>Type of registration</b>	Local Auth Adoption Service
<b>No. of places registered (if applicable)</b>	0
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

**Date of last inspection** This is the first inspection under The Local Authority (England) Regulations 2003

## Brief Description of the Service:

The joint adoption and fostering service is located in the Children's Social Care Branch of the Education, Children's Services and Libraries Department of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

The agency provides a domestic adoption service that includes recruiting, preparing assessing and approving prospective adopters, family finding for children with an adoption plan, placing children with adopters, providing support to adopters, counselling for adopted adults who wish to see their birth records and reports in non-agency adoption cases

A service for applicants wishing to adopt a child from another country is commissioned from Parents and Children Together, a voluntary adoption agency.

The agency is part of the Berkshire Adoption Consortium. This is a joint arrangement set up in 1998 and funded by Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The six agencies work together to facilitate the placement of children in their care. The advisory service operates two adoption panels, recruits and trains adoption panel members, manages the letterbox service, provides specialist advice and training on adoption matters, manages the adoption archive, provides an independent service to birth parents and arranges and supervises direct contact in adoption cases. The advisory service also organises an adopter's conference, information exchanges, life appreciation days and disruption meetings.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection was the first inspection of the adoption service provided by Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

This was a joint fostering and adoption inspection. The inspection was carried out over three days by two adoption inspectors and one fostering inspector. The fostering service is the subject of a separate report. Senior personnel were interviewed, as were front line workers and administrative staff; an elected member of the council was also interviewed. One inspector observed the adoption panel. Three adoptive families were visited. One adopter was interviewed over the telephone. The inspectors examined the adopter's files and children's files. Policies, procedures and professional practices were inspected.

Completed questionnaires from five adopters, one placing social worker and two professional advisors also informed the inspection.

## **What the service does well:**

The support provided to adopters and children was good. Adopter's comments about this included:

"Bracknell have been very helpful and supportive"

"Our link worker has been tremendous, always there for us"

"We are constantly sent details of events that are very good"

The range of training and support offered by the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service enhanced the in house support offered from staff in Bracknell Forest.

The agency had access to good legal and medical advice in adoption cases.

A marketing officer had been appointed to help recruit more foster carers and adopters.

The adoption team were all qualified social workers. It was noted that the staff worked well together, respected each other and were committed to children's needs.

There was a range of services for birth parents. One placing social worker commented that:

"adopters were outspoken about the need to inform the child about his family and maintain his heritage".

The adoption panel and the agency decision maker were very thorough in their work and timely in letting people know the recommendations and decisions.

Staff said that the borough was a good employer with flexible practices and a good training programme.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Not applicable as this is the first inspection under The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003.

## **What they could do better:**

Children's adoption files needed some work to bring them in line with legislation.

There were delays in the assessments of prospective adopters. Adopter's comments about this included:

"This seems to have taken forever"

"Sometimes we didn't feel like we were moving forward"

"The process has taken a long time"

The adoption agency procedures were not detailed enough to help staff in adoption cases.

The fostering and adoption team were undertaking a very wide range of work. Managers needed to review how this work was organised and supervised to make sure that adoption knowledge and expertise was maximised in all cases and at all levels.

Arrangements for quality control, in some areas of adoption work needed to be clearer and more rigorous.

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](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# 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)
- Adopters 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

The agency was matching children with adopters who best met their assessed needs, however, a lack of consistency led to some unsafe practice.

## EVIDENCE:

At the time of the inspection, the agency had approved three adoptive families, and matched three single children with adopters in the last twelve months. There were seven children in the agency with an adoption plan. This was made up of one sibling group of three, one sibling group of two and two single children. The agency had not placed any sibling groups in the last twelve months. Recruitment of families for sibling groups needed to be addressed in a recruitment strategy.

The agency did not have a written recruitment strategy for adopters. A marketing officer had been recently appointed. Part of his role was to develop a marketing and recruitment strategy for the joint adoption and fostering services.

Two returned questionnaires were from families who had children placed from outside the consortium area. Both of these raised issues about the quality of the information and support provided by agencies other than Bracknell Forest. The agency policies and procedures did not give specific guidance to staff in

interagency cases. The agency should consider reviewing the procedures to include reading a child's file as part of the interagency matching process, to make sure adopters have all of the relevant information before children are placed with them. Adopters said they had received good support from link workers in Bracknell Forest during the matching process with children from an agency outside the consortium area. Adopters were accompanied to planning meetings and introductions and felt emotionally well supported by social workers.

The quality of forms E looked at by inspectors was inconsistent. There was evidence of a form E completed to a good standard. However, panel had deferred one form E because it did not contain all of the relevant information. The form E returned to panel three months later after further work had been done. There was a need to ensure management oversight quality assured the work before it left the agency to go to panel. This would have avoided a three-month delay for the child.

All prospective adopters attended a preparation group in one of the adoption advisory service agencies. This was to minimise delay for prospective adopters. Some adopters commented on how useful this process had been. Applicants completed an evaluation form at the end of the course. The course was reviewed regularly to ensure these comments were acted upon. During the inspection adopters said they had found the preparation groups helpful and informative.

The agency had recently completed an adopters survey that invited comment from adopters who had adopted children from Bracknell Forest since 1997. It was hoped that the results of the survey would inform service development

The home study process was undertaken using the British Association for Adoption and Fostering form F format. The policy and procedures did not include guidance on the range of references and checks to be obtained as part of the assessment of prospective adopters. There was evidence that references from previous partners were not pursued. One form F did not include a local authority check and there were inconsistencies in checking applicants with the NSPCC. The use of health and safety checklists was inconsistent. These issues needed to be addressed to ensure safety for children. All of the adopters files looked at during the inspection contained CRB enhanced disclosures. The review of procedures to ensure compliance with The Adoption and Children Act 2002 will provide an opportunity to provide more guidance for staff and greater consistency in assessments.

Five assessments were looked at during the inspection. In all cases the form F was a combination of information written by applicants and comments from the social worker. The section focusing on diversity was routinely poorly presented with evidence that applicant's views were not challenged or expanded upon. The agency needed to modernise the assessment to focus on evidence of

competence for parenting, to ensure that adopters are skilled and competent to safeguard children. The introduction of a new format to comply with the requirements of The Adoption and Children Act 2002 will provide the opportunity for training and development in this area.

Some prospective adopters had experienced long delays in the assessment process. One assessment had taken two years to complete. This was because of staff shortages and the pressure staff were under to complete other work being undertaken in the fostering and adoption team. Some comments from adopters were,

"This seems to have taken forever".

"Sometimes we didn't feel like we were moving forward".

"Six month wait for the preparation course".

One adopter commented that, "the whole process for us was very positive, very quick and we were very satisfied with the whole thing from beginning to end". This assessment was undertaken by an independent worker, commissioned to complete an assessment for a foster carer wishing to adopt. All of the returned questionnaires said that adopters had been kept informed throughout the process.

The inspectors formed the view that the time taken in the assessment of prospective adopters did not have clear management oversight. The publicity information clearly stated that the target for the completion of assessments was six months. With one exception, previously referred to, there were no assessments seen by the inspectors that met this standard.

Adopters were not clear about the matching process. Clear written information was available in booklet form. This information had been recently prepared and was not yet familiar to prospective adopters. There was no evidence that adopters were asked to agree to notify the agency if their child died in childhood or beyond. A system needed to be developed.

The adoption panel had written policies and procedures in place. The east Berkshire panel met monthly, with dates set well in advance. Additional panel dates could be arranged if needed, to avoid delays for children and adopters. The panel had access to medical and legal advice. Written medical and legal advice was available in all cases. The medical advisor was available to meet with adopters. Some adopters said how helpful and supportive the medical advisor had been in helping them to understand the health issues surrounding a child.

Prospective adopters were given the opportunity to attend panel at the point of approval. The practice of attending for matching recommendations was inconsistent. One adopter contacted during the inspection, had attended for matching, other adopters had been asked to attend, arranged annual leave, and then told their presence was not required. One adopter said that "the panel made us feel as comfortable as they could, we were glad we went". The

agency should consider standardising practice for adopters attending at matching recommendations.

The adoption panel was properly constituted as a joint panel. The panel was well chaired by an experienced independent professional. The discussion was thorough and all members were given the opportunity to contribute. There was evidence that conflict of interest and quoracy were properly addressed. The professional advisor was very clear in her advice to panel. Panel members had received training and were clearly committed in their role. Papers were circulated well in advance of the meeting and the minutes were clear and informative. The files of three panel members were looked at during the inspection. The files were of a good standard and contained all of the elements required in the regulations. The files detailed training undertaken by panel members. The advisory service facilitated a series of core training courses each year for staff and panel members. This included panel induction, members update course and legal training for panel members.

Panel addressed quality assurance issues in the paperwork under discussion, as well as the issues surrounding each case. This was recorded in the minutes and verbally reported by the professional advisor to the decision maker in the agency. The panel should consider developing this feedback in written form to assist the quality assurance process and ensure that social workers and managers have an accurate record of the things that need to be addressed as well as compliments about examples of good practice. This could help in raising practice standards across the agencies.

The agency decision maker was the Assistant Director for Children's Services. She received all of the information surrounding each case. The information was carefully considered and the decision was made without delay. The decision maker was in regular contact with the professional advisor. The decision was conveyed orally and in written form to all relevant parties. This was evidenced on case files and ensured that all parties were kept properly informed.

All of the social workers that undertook adoption work were qualified social workers, with knowledge and experience in this area of work. Four members of the fostering and adoption team had completed a PQ award. The agency had experienced recent difficulties in attracting permanent social work staff. There were two permanent vacancies at the time of the inspection. One of these was filled by a locum social worker experienced in adoption work. The other post was vacant.

The service had experienced significant changes in the last twelve months. The adoption manager and assistant team manager of many years standing had both left the agency early in 2005. The current team manager had taken up her post in April 2005. This was her first team manager post. The

assistant manager was recruited from the team, creating a vacancy in the team.

Issues of staff recruitment were being addressed within the agency. Senior managers were optimistic that current vacancies could be filled within a reasonable timescale.

# 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 was providing a good range of support services for adoptive parents and their children.

### EVIDENCE:

The agency was providing a good range of support to adoptive parents.

Adopters made the following comments,

“Bracknell have been very helpful and supportive”

“We are constantly sent details of events that are very good”

“Bracknell Forest has provided information and support with post adoption problems”.

Adopters were positive about the support they received from their link worker in the fostering and adoption team. One adopter had found it difficult to get a service from CAHMS for their adopted child. There was a fast-track system for looked after children. This needed to be developed for adopted children and adoption awareness raised within this service. There was evidence that education services were sensitive to the needs of an adopted child moving into the borough, an appropriate school placement had been provided.

Support to adopters and adoptees was provided in conjunction with the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service. The advisory service produced a useful booklet for adopters that detailed the services available and provided a useful list of addresses of support agencies. Adopters were aware of the services available.

In addition adopters received three years paid membership of Adoption UK and access to the Post Adoption Centre independent and confidential telephone advice line.

Post approval training for adopters in the letterbox service and explaining adoption to children was provided by the advisory service. Adopters described

to inspectors how they had put this training into practice. The adopters contacted during the inspection recognised the importance of keeping safe any information provided by birth families. Memory boxes were established for children and lifestory books were completed for children in placement. Later life letters were in evidence on children's files. One adopter was still waiting for photographs of birth family members for their adopted child. The child's social worker had failed to deliver these. This was raised with managers at the time of the inspection.

One returned questionnaire from an adopter who had moved into the borough, commented on the quality and range of adoption support in Bracknell, compared to the borough the family had previously lived in.

There was an established adopters support group, a group for adopted children and a male adopters support group. These groups were organised under the adoption advisory service umbrella with responsibility for individual services undertaken by one named agency. Bracknell Forest was responsible for the organisation and maintenance of the male adopters support group. This group met quarterly. An annual adopters conference, day out for children and a regular newsletter were also provided. Adopters were aware of the availability of these services and commented on how helpful they were in supporting them in their role and enhancing the lives of their children.

The agency had not had any placement disruptions in the twelve months preceding the inspection. In the event of a disruption the advisory service would independently chair a disruption meeting.

Bracknell Forest had access to a range of specialist advice. The six Berkshire unitary authorities commissioned a joint legal service. This service provided specialist advice in adoption cases and written legal advice to the adoption panel. This was evidenced in panel paperwork and on children's files. The legal advisor was also present at the adoption panel. There were several comments from staff about how useful this service was.

The medical advisor was available for consultation with staff and adopters. She also provided written advice for adoption panel. This was seen on children's files. The medical advisor was available to meet with adopters and provided ongoing support post adoption as needed. Adopters and social work staff said how valuable this service was in supporting adopters and children.

Other staff from the adoption advisory service were available to offer specialist advice on adoption work to the agency.

There were written protocols in place governing the roles of the specialist advisors.

It was the view of the inspectors that the specialist advice and support services provided by the adoption advisory service were central to achieving good outcomes for adopted children in Bracknell Forest.



## **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 agency was providing a support service for birth parents, to ensure they were actively involved in maintaining their child's heritage.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Inspectors did not have direct contact with any birth parents during the course of this inspection. There were no returned questionnaires from birth parents.

The service to birth parents was provided by the adoption advisory service across the six unitary authorities. This provided birth parents with a service that was independent of the agency for their child. This service had been established in 2002.

During the previous year, four birth parents had been referred to the independent service from Bracknell Forest. The service to birth parents reported a seventy five per cent success rate in making contact with those referred from the six authorities.

There was a birth mothers support group. This was organised and run jointly by a worker and a birth mother. A leaflet was available for social workers to pass on to birth mothers.

There was evidence of involvement from birth families on the children's files seen during the inspection. Two forms E had been signed by birth parents. There was also evidence on these files that birth mothers had been referred to the independent service and had made some direct contact. Two birth mothers, one relinquishing and one non-relinquishing had clearly been consulted and had their views recorded about the plans and placements for their children. They had also had the opportunity to read what was written about them in the form E.

Later life letters were in place on children's files. These were clearly presented.

The letterbox and direct contact service was managed by the adoption advisory service. There were forty children in Bracknell Forest with letterbox exchanges in the previous year. This service helped birth family members to continue to contribute to the maintenance of their child's heritage.

The adoption advisory service had a system in place to gather the views of birth parents on all aspects of the services provided. This was used to inform service development.

The service had developed comprehensive written information for birth parents, detailing clearly the range of services provided. This information was easily available for social workers to pass on to birth families.

# 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,

The adoption work was not managed effectively and efficiently. The agency needed to review the organisational arrangements for this work.

## EVIDENCE:

The agency had a statement of purpose that had been agreed and reviewed by the executive side of the council. It contained all of the elements required in the regulations and accurately described the service. The adoption agency

policies and procedures were up to date but they were not specific enough in advising social workers on actions to be taken at every stage of the process.

There was a children's guide developed by the advisory service. This was attractively presented, however it did not contain all of the information required in the regulations. This needed to be reviewed to ensure children had information about the complaints service, the Children's Rights Director and the Commission for Social care Inspection.

As previously mentioned the agency did not have a recruitment strategy for prospective adopters. The recently appointed marketing officer was in the process of developing this work. Statistics suggested that the number of children with an adoption plan was increasing. There was a need to recruit families for sibling groups and children with more complex needs. The agency was comprehensively reviewing their website and had produced clear information for applicants once they made contact with the agency. The upkeep of a supply of leaflets and posters in public places as a constant reminder to the public that adopters were needed had lapsed. This needed to be reinstated if the agency wished to continue attracting adoptive applicants for children. With one exception all of the adopters recruited and assessed in the previous year were white, heterosexual couples. The agency needed to review their point of first contact information to make sure it was relevant to adopters from diverse backgrounds to ensure the widest possible pool of adopters were recruited to meet the diverse needs of children in the looked after system.

The team manager managed the adoption service, with support from the service manager. The service manager was an experienced and qualified manager. The team manager was undertaking a management qualification and was clearly developing management skills. The managers provided clear leadership for the team, however, the team manager and service manager had limited previous experience of adoption work. The assistant team manager recently appointed from the team supervised seven people. The team manager supervised three people. There was evidence that some confusion had arisen about the different requirements for foster carers and adopters. An adopter's file had records of unannounced visits being made. One adopter had been given confusing advice about making an adoption application and seeking legal advice. It was the view of the inspectors that the managers had insufficient experience and knowledge of adoption work to provide consistent detailed guidance to staff in matters of adoption practice.

The fostering and adoption team had a very diverse workload. They were recruiting, assessing and supporting foster carers and adopters, family finding for children with an adoption plan, providing reports for step-parent adoptions, completing assessments of parents and extended family members in care proceedings, placement finding for children in the looked after system, providing a daily duty service, and undertaking section 51 counselling for adopted adults requiring access to their birth records. There were some

specialist workers in the team. One worker was responsible for developing a short break fostering scheme. It was difficult for workers to retain the up to date knowledge and skills needed to do the breadth of work required by the agency. It was reported to inspectors that planned work in either the fostering or adoption field could be overtaken by placement finding or giving support to a placement in difficulties. This may have also affected the length of time taken to complete adoption assessments. The development of specialists or expert practitioners could concentrate the knowledge and skills in a smaller number of practitioners. A review of the workload would inform the need for the number of practitioners specialising in certain areas. Inspectors felt this would benefit the future organisation and management of the service and help to deliver a more efficient service to adopters and children.

Staff had regular supervision every three weeks and regular team meetings. The team had experienced a number of changes in departmental structures and managers in the last year and had demonstrated resilience in their commitment to the work.

Administrative arrangements had also been the subject of recent changes. The dedicated administrative team of two part-time staff had moved into a central administrative team of eleven persons. Staff were getting used to the changes and felt the level of administrative support was sufficient.

There was a good quality training programme for staff. This was provided in house and enhanced by the adoption training programme offered by the adoption advisory service. Staff and managers had recently completed foundation training in The Adoption and Children Act 2002. Further training was organised. Staff reported to inspectors that the agency was a good employer with flexible practices, such as the ability to buy additional annual leave.

The executive side of the council received quarterly written reports through the departmental management team. This included detailed information about adoption activity. The lead member for children's services was a committed member of the joint adoption panel.

The agency was in the process of transferring all records onto an IT system. The vision was to have a paperless system. At the time of the inspection adoption records were not fully transferred and paper records were maintained. The IT system was explained and demonstrated to the inspectors. The adoption component had secure access. The agency was mindful of the need to retain some paper, particularly precious documents, photographs examples of handwriting and signatures in adoption cases and was taking advice from the adoption advisory service and the IT company.

Adoption records were archived in Reading in the Berkshire Records Office. This was organised and managed by the adoption advisory service and ensured that records were stored securely and safely for the future.

The children's files looked at during the inspection did not meet the requirements of an adoption file. The adoption agency policies and procedures did not give clear guidance on the contents of an adoption file. This needed to be addressed to make sure that archived records were accurate and informative for children and adopters.

There was no evidence that decisions by supervisors were recorded on the files seen during the inspection. This needed to be done to ensure that decisions and recommendations could be tracked and linked to management oversight and the professional supervision process.

The agency had not had any allegations about children placed for adoption. However, a record needed to be created and the child protection policies and procedures needed to include specific guidance for adoption cases to make sure that staff would know what to do if these circumstances occurred in the future.

A number of personnel files were looked at during the inspection. There were inconsistencies in the information held on the files. The agency needed to make sure all of the records were comprehensive.

The premises of the adoption agency were modern, well equipped and had secure access. The IT system was backed up at the end of every day. The agency needed to develop a disaster recovery plan to ensure that there was a plan in place for any emergency situations that may occur.

# 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

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

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

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

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

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

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>1</b>	1
<b>3</b>	2
<b>14</b>	1
<b>16</b>	2
<b>17</b>	2
<b>20</b>	1
<b>21</b>	1
<b>22</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>25</b>	1
<b>26</b>	3
<b>27</b>	1
<b>28</b>	1
<b>29</b>	2
<b>30</b>	N/A
<b>31</b>	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	AD1	LAAS 2003 3	The agency must have a children's guide that contains all of information listed in schedule 2	31/03/06
2	AD4	AAR1983 6(1)	The agency must review the policy and procedural instructions to ensure they are comprehensive and provide guidance for staff.	31/03/06
3	AD4	AAR1983 8(2)	The agency must consult with the applicant's local authority.	31/03/06
4	AD5	AAR 1983 2	The agency must ensure that adopters are given accurate, up to date and full information to help them understand the needs and background of the child.	31/03/06
5	AD20AD14	AAR 1983 6	The manager must have the necessary skills and experience in adoption work to manage the adoption agency	31/03/06
6	AD21	LAAS 2003 10	The agency must ensure that there is a sufficient number of staff working for the purposes of the adoption agency	31/03/06
7	AD17	LAAS 2003 9	The agency must prepare and implement a written policy for children placed for adoption in	31/03/06



			the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect.	
8	AD27AD25	AAR 1983 7	The agency must ensure that adoption records contain the relevant information	31/03/06
9	AD28	LAAS 2003 15	The agency must ensure that personnel records contain all of the information required	31/03/06

## 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	AD3	The agency should develop a written plan for the recruitment of adopters.
2	AD3	All written recruitment information for prospective adopters should be clear in welcoming applications from diverse backgrounds.
3	AD4	The agency should ensure that preparation of adopters covers all aspects of diversity and that proper assessment is made of applicant's attitudes in these areas.
4	AD5	The agency should develop a system to ask adoptive parents if they are prepared to agree to notify the agency if their child dies in childhood, or soon afterwards.
5	AD6	The agency should ensure adopted children can access CAHMS services, and that these services are adoption sensitive.
6	AD10	The agency should be consistent in giving adopters the opportunity to attend panel when a match is being considered.
6	AD10	The panel should consider developing a system to routinely provide written feedback to the agency on quality assurance issues in the cases under consideration.
7	AD17	The agency should develop a system for monitoring the quality of adoption work within the agency.
8	AD16AD20	The agency should consider the best way of organising the workload in the fostering and adoption team, to ensure a level of expertise and an efficient service.
9	AD25	The agency should ensure that decisions by supervisors are recorded on case files.
10	AD29	The agency should develop a disaster recovery plan.

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