

inspection report

ADOPTION SERVICE

The London Borough of Greenwich

**Looked After Children
147 Powis Street, Woolwich
London
SE18 6JL**

Lead Inspector
**Ros
Chapman**

Announced
19th -22nd July 2005

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	The London Borough of Greenwich Adoption Service
Address	Looked After Children, 147 Powis Street, Woolwich, London, SE18 6JL
Telephone number	0208 921 2749
Fax number	0208 921 2790
Email address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Greenwich Council
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mary Moralee
Type of registration	LAA
No. of places registered (if applicable)	N/A
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	N/A

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

None

Date of last inspection 1st inspection

Brief Description of the Service:

The adoption team is based within the Children and Families Resources of the Directorate of Social Services for the London Borough of Greenwich. The office premises are on Powis Street in Woolwich. The agency provides a comprehensive adoption service which includes placing children in need of adoptive families, recruiting, preparing, assessing and approving adoptive families, both for domestic and inter country adoptions and providing assessments for, and a variety of, post adoption support to adoptive children and families. It provides counselling and support to birth families, assistance and counselling to adopted adults who wish to see their birth records, intermediary services, assistance with indirect and direct contact arrangements and provides court reports on non-agency adoptions.

SUMMARY

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

This is the first inspection of the adoption service provided by the London Borough of Greenwich. Prior to the inspection fieldwork taking place, a large number of supporting documentary evidence was sent to and read by the lead inspector. Questionnaires were received from 3 birth parents/family members, 10 prospective and approved adopters, 9 placing social workers, 1 placing authority and the medical and legal advisers.

Two inspectors spent 3.5 days in the agency and interviewed 4 sets of adopters, an adopted adult, 2 birth parents, staff from the attachment project, care planning social workers, administrative staff, adoption social workers, post adoption support social workers, the specialist adoption worker, team managers and service managers, the agency decision maker, and an elected member. The panel was observed, the panel chair interviewed and a selection of files, including personnel files, adopters' and children's files were read during the course of the inspection.

The inspectors would like to thank the managers and staff for their cooperation during the inspection and the hard work which they put in when organising both the pre-inspection material and the inspection programme.

What the service does well:

The agency is very open and welcoming to all prospective adopters, regardless of their backgrounds. The initial contact with the agency is very warm and one adopter said "they were so lovely and so encouraging". Another adopter commented: "I felt listened to, they were very friendly and answered all my questions" and another made reference to the "can do" attitude.

Adopters commented very favourably about staff with whom they had contact. Comments included: "I was impressed by their professionalism", "all the social workers we have had contact with have been excellent", "the social worker was fabulous – she was a credit to her profession" and "our social worker was fantastic – very open and informative". Adopters felt they had undergone a fair but thorough assessment: "it was stretching and rigorous but she did it beautifully".

Adopters generally felt they had a good experience: "I couldn't have wanted a better experience" and "it was a fantastic service". Adopters also felt the assessment groups were very good – "we found the programme excellent in its quantity and quality of information provided". The majority of the adopters

said the process was quick and quicker than their expectations, even if there had been delays in the allocation of a social worker in some cases.

The adoption team work closely with the care planning social workers and provide regular training on adoption issues to try and improve practice in relation to direct work with children and attachment. The post of specialist adoption social worker, based in the care planning team, is important in facilitating links and providing easily accessible expertise and advice on adoption work, as well as joint training with the adoption team. Communication across these teams is good, as are working relationships. Placing social workers clearly valued the adoption social workers and said they provided "an excellent service" and were "really helpful".

The agency makes good placements and takes into account the cultural, religious and ethnic needs of the child, but does not wait unnecessarily long to try and make a perfect match.

The attachment team provides a very good resource for children with attachment difficulties and undertakes long-term work with them and their families, to keep placements intact. Other support is also available from social workers and other professionals. Adopters were aware of the support available: "we have been given information about lots of post adoption support for the future".

The respective agencies place an important emphasis on providing good legal and medical advice and senior members of the professions are allowed a considerable amount of time to fulfil their roles.

The agency decision maker is very thorough, yet timely, clearly takes his role very seriously and makes very pertinent comments when he makes the decision.

The agency is well managed, with good leadership, good communication and regular supervision of a high standard. Staff respect their managers and value their knowledge and skills. They commented that: "we are a well managed team and we are proud to work in this team, with a high level of practice and supportive colleagues. Staff are knowledgeable and skilled, as comments from adopters detailed above indicate.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the first inspection of this service.

What they could do better:

Although there are examples of good work with birth families, this is an area which would benefit from improvement to ensure that all birth families receive a consistently high standard of service. Their involvement in information giving about their and their child's history needs to be evidenced in the form E.

Direct work with children also needs improvement. Again, there are examples of very good work, particularly undertaken by the attachment team, but this is not consistent. Some social work staff need to be more aware of attachment issues and assessment of a child's needs.

Record keeping in some areas needs developing. Case files should be audited and there should be evidence of supervisors' decisions on case files. The content of the child's adoption file must comply with the regulations.

The files of staff, sessional workers and panel members must have all the necessary information as detailed in the regulations.

Although staff are knowledgeable and skilled, their specialist training needs should be assessed and child protection training in relation to children placed for adoption offered.

The IT systems are in need of upgrading and the premises which the adoption team occupy are not suitable for 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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Achieving Economic Wellbeing - There are no NMS that map to this outcome

Management

Scoring of Standards

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)
- 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 standard(s) 2,4,5,10,11,12,13,15,19

The agency prepares adopters well to meet the needs of children placed for adoption.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has a clear and written recruitment strategy and there was evidence that children were placed in appropriate placements, which met their cultural and religious needs, but this was balanced within appropriate timescales. Siblings were placed together where possible and there was evidence of strenuous efforts being made to facilitate this for some children. Not all files inspected had clear evidence of the assessment involved in the decision making in relation to the separation of children, or the explanation of this for the child in later life and this needs to be improved upon so that children will understand why they were placed apart from their siblings. Other files gave good and clear evidence of this and had involved psychological assessments to aid the decision making process. There was clear evidence of children's views being taken into account and work being done with them to enable them to move on. This was not universally the case, however, and there was evidence that some social workers and their managers in the placing side of the agency had not got a good understanding of attachment issues or the assessment of children's needs, which may affect the long term success of placements. One social worker said "direct work with children is a luxury" and

although this is disputed by the manager, it was clearly the case that more needs to be done in this area. The adoption team and the specialist adoption worker have recognised this as a need and are involved in training with the placing social workers to improve this area and provide regular sessions covering direct work and attachment. The service manager informed the inspectors that a lot of money has been spent on providing resources for social workers to work with children.

The agency has a specialist adoption worker who is based in the care planning team and managed by a care planning team manager. This role is a very useful one, but the current post holder, who is covering the post on a temporary basis, is only working the equivalent of 1.5 days. She felt this was an inadequate amount of time to manage the work and this could affect outcomes for children, as the role is highly valued by the child care social workers and a number of recommendations made in this report have a direct impact on this post. It is hoped this will be a full time permanent position.

There was evidence that prospective adopters generally undergo a thorough preparation, assessment and approval process. Adopters made positive comments about the assessment course: "child-focussed and challenging but they explain why and you feel safe"; however one adopter felt it was "scary". The assessment group is thoroughly recorded and this forms part of the home study assessment and form F presented to panel. Again adopters thought the recording was "accurate and sensitive". The inspectors found a varying level of analysis in the forms F inspected and varying levels of emphasis on competencies, although the more recent forms F seen were better. Placing social workers commented that "the form F was well done and informative" and that there was an "excellent assessment". Adopters said the assessments were "fair, non-discriminatory and sensitive". Adopters said the social workers were very good at keeping them informed of the progress and took the assessment at their pace.

The agency undertakes a minimum level of checks on adopters to comply with the regulations but this could be improved upon to obtain more evidence to validate the information given by prospective adopters. The agency does not uniformly interview family members or ex-partners, unless there are children involved in the previous relationship, in which case they always make enquiries, and these are areas which could be useful in providing more evidence of competencies.

Adopters spoken with felt they received as much information about the child as the agency had but given that children sometimes have a number of social workers during their time as a looked after child, the use of life appreciation days could be of benefit in providing first hand and more quality information about the child's life to adopters. There is a form for the notification of adopters and birth parents about deaths in the respective families but this

needs to be made more explicit in terms of the notification of the agency by the adopters.

The panel has policies and procedures in place but needs to tighten up on the procedure to ensure quoracy, as there was evidence in the panel minutes seen that the panel had co-opted the adviser as an emergency member for one panel and during the panel observed, one case would have been inquorate if it had gone ahead. Likewise, the panel could be more proactive in asking for progress reports on cases, as there was evidence of some drift in some cases seen. They receive regular statistics on the progress of cases, but not specific reports unless they ask for them, and this is only usually done if they think there may be issues in finding a suitable family.

Adopters who attended panel generally had a positive experience and said the panel chair made them feel welcome and at ease, although one person had found it a bit intimidating. One adopter said: "the panel was professional, open and challenging but appropriately so" and this was the majority view expressed. The panel is appropriately constituted and meets every 2 weeks, is well organised and the minutes are full.

The decision maker clearly takes his role very seriously and the inspectors were impressed by this. He is very thorough, child focussed and timely, reads all the papers before the panel and writes appropriate comments about his decision on the decision sheet. There is an acknowledgment that systems need to be improved to ensure these comments are actioned and ways of doing this were already being considered during the inspection.

Managers have the appropriate checks and references taken on them, as do staff but the personnel files need to reflect this more accurately, as discussed in the management section of this report. All staff are qualified, registered with the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and many have done their Post Qualification (PQ) award. They are knowledgeable and skilled and the only recommendation would be that they undertake child protection training in relation to children placed for adoption as the corporate child protection training is at a fairly basic level and does not specifically relate to children placed for adoption, where there can be significant and difficult issues to consider.

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 standard(s) 6,18

The agency provides a variety of support and specialist advice for adoptive families to enable them to maintain stable placements for children.

EVIDENCE:

Adopters spoken with expressed confidence that support would be available to them at any stage in the child's life. The support which is available to adopters is part of a developing service and includes a bi monthly group, one to one direct work with adopters and/or children, independent counselling services paid for by the Borough and groups which are provided by other members of the Consortium. Currently 3 members of staff provide post adoption support and all the team provide support up to an adoption order being made.

The Primary Care Trust show a good commitment to the adoption service in their provision of the main consultant in paediatrics as medical adviser to the panel. The time commitment for this task is large and shows the level of importance which is attached to this role. Adopters knew that they could seek medical advice in relation to children matched or placed with them and there was evidence that this had been done. The Borough also shows a high level of commitment to the legal advice provided through a senior member of staff being allocated 2 days a week for adoption work. Staff said that access to legal and medical advice was easy and they were approachable and accessible. A protocol needs to be developed for the legal and medical advisers however.

An important area of support available to adopters' pre adoption order being made is the attachment team who provide "theraplay" (sic) to children with attachment issues. They also provide consultation and training for staff and adopters. There is also a wider service which provides other types of therapy for families and children pre and post order.

The agency has had 2 disruptions in the last 12 months. The case files were inspected and show that support was given to adopters and children during

and after the disruption. It was also clear that lessons had been learned and adopters said that they felt able to say, without fear of blame, whether they felt able to continue with introductions at the mid point review. The manager reported that they try to provide an independent chair for these meetings but this was not always possible. The inspectors suggested that the process of the mid point review being held at foster carers homes be re-visited as this had been an issue for one of the cases which disrupted.

One placing authority which responded by questionnaire commented: "staff were available, efficient and responsive and adopters were well supported during the process of matching and placement".

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 standard(s) 7,8,9

The agency provides some good work with birth parents but this needs to be developed further to ensure they make a positive contribution to the child's life.

EVIDENCE:

There was evidence of some good work with birth parents and staff interviewed expressed sympathy and a recognition of their needs and realised that they needed to do more to develop this to improve outcomes for children. It is currently a reactive service and needs to be developed as a more proactive service.

A number of forms E were seen and none of these were signed by the birth parents, nor did they have any comment made as to why this were the case, whether or not they had been seen by the birth family and if they had any comments to make on them. The adoption team are undertaking work with placing social workers to try and improve this area.

There was evidence of birth parents providing photographs and helping with the production of a life story book and playing an active part in contributing to this process. The agency were able to arrange for 2 birth parents to speak with the inspectors and this was facilitated, even though they knew that one of these people would not be positive about their experience, but would find it valuable. They were able to tell the inspectors of the help that had been provided, such as counselling by an independent agency and it was clear that strenuous efforts had been made to find a counsellor, which would suit the needs of the person concerned. They also found a group for birth parents for one of them to attend. Thus although one person felt that they had not been offered support, it was clear that this had in fact been offered and work was continuing to enable her to deal with her situation. One birth parent described

the adoption team as “responsive, listening and helpful”. In the questionnaires received, a birth parent commented: “when I talked to the adoption team I was always spoken to and treated with respect and I wish to say your staff are wonderful”. Another questionnaire was less positive.

The adoption team also assist with direct contact. The indirect contact through the letterbox scheme has also been improved but further work could be done on this to enable birth families to fulfil their plans for contact, such as more proactive efforts to assist with letter writing, reminder letters and so forth.

There was evidence of life story books being prepared for children. These were of a variable standard and in some cases had been prepared by foster carers without any social work involvement. It was also clear from talking with social workers that they had not all understood that life story work was a process rather than a task and life story books were more of a photo album than a story which had involved the child. The adoption team and specialist social worker are providing training on this but there is still some way to go.

The agency has a life long commitment to adoption and provides assistance to adopted adults through birth records counselling, tracing and intermediary work. An adult who received this service was complimentary about the assistance given and described it as “very efficient and quick” and the worker “nice to speak to”.

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 standard(s) 1,3,14,16,17,20,21,22,23,25,26,27,28,29

The agency is well managed overall and staff receive good leadership which enables them to provide a good service for children.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has a statement of purpose, which has been recently reviewed and this meets the requirements of the regulations. Staff spoken with confirmed that they had seen it and thought it was accurate. The agency also has a

Children's Guide, which is suitable for older children. The current practice is to use a variety of tools to talk to younger children about adoption but thought needs to be given to the preparation of another Children's Guide which will meet the needs of all children for whom adoption is the plan, including younger children and children with disabilities.

The agency has developed very good written and audio/visual information for birth parents, which explains about the process of adoption. Some of this has been developed with the involvement of the team which deals with adults with learning disabilities and includes a CD Rom, and two levels of written information. The agency also has access to translation and interpreting services at short notice.

There is good written information for adopters, which conveys the openness and transparency of the eligibility criteria and process. It was clear from the interviews undertaken that people are welcomed from a variety of backgrounds and this was confirmed in our discussions with adopters. There are a number of same sex couples who have been approved as adopters, which is an indication of the non-discriminatory and positive approach of the agency to recruitment.

There are mechanisms to prioritise the assessment of adopters to meet the needs of children waiting for families and evidence was seen of adopters who were "fast tracked" to meet the needs of a particular child. The agency has systems in place to enable them to know which children are waiting and has access to a small number of sessional workers to undertake assessments if the adoption social workers have limited capacity at that time.

Adopters receive a very full information pack, which also includes articles about assessment, reading lists as well as information about the process. They also get the chance to talk to adopters at the assessment groups or on an individual basis if they wish.

The agency is well managed and managers demonstrated effective leadership skills. The managers are appropriately skilled, experienced, qualified and knowledgeable, with good lines of communication. Staff said that the managers were "accessible and approachable" and were complimentary about their skills and knowledge. Lines of accountability are well established and communication is good both within the team and across teams. Staff indicated that communication with the senior managers were less effective at times and did not see them as quite as approachable.

The assistant team manager has direct supervisory responsibility for the adoption team social workers and there was evidence that she utilises the individual skills, experience and preferences of the staff to best effect. Staff confirmed that they had supervision and said it was "very regular and very

good". They felt their caseloads were monitored by the manager and that they were manageable.

Staff said that administrative support was "excellent" and that there were sufficient clerical staff to undertake the tasks. However, the IT systems were said to be very poor and impacted negatively on staff's ability to do their job efficiently and well.

All staff were very clear about the importance of handling the initial enquiry to the agency in a sensitive and welcoming manner and one adopter commented on how Greenwich contrasted very favourably with the initial reception she received from another agency, where the response had been less than sensitive.

The agency has good information systems and a member of staff specifically involved in tracking and monitoring. The managers also have systems in place for monitoring the work of the agency through regular meetings, statistical information and performance indicators which are regularly reviewed and assessed. It was not clear how much involvement the executive side of the Council have in the work of the adoption agency however. They received a report in November 2004, but this has not been on a regular 6 monthly basis as required, so this should be addressed.

The agency has sufficient staff to maintain the service at a basic level, but to develop the service further in line with improved post adoption support, and a better service to birth parents, this will need to be addressed. Likewise, the staff team do not reflect the ethnic population of the Borough and this should also be addressed.

Staff have access to the corporate training which is provided but as a specialist team, this is not sufficient to meet their needs. The staff said that the manager would pursue training on their behalf, but consideration needs to be given about how the training needs of the adoption team can be met in a more coherent manner.

Case records for both children and adopters were well organised and there were good written procedures in place for case recording and accessing information. However, there were some shortfalls in the recording, such as an inappropriate letter to a birth parent on a file, a report about a sibling on another child's file, no letter to birth parents about the best interests decision on one file and no recording of the visits to the child on the child's file. Not all adopters' files include the contemporaneous notes of the visits which contributed to the form F assessment. The file audit system was in its early stages and needs to be formalised and there was no evidence of case decisions by supervisors on any of the files seen.

Personnel, sessional staff and panel members' files also had shortfalls and both need to comply with schedule 3 and 4 of the regulations. They did not all have proof of identity, proof of qualifications, photographs, 2 references and one panel member did not have a file at all.

The storage of files was secure and files were stored in lockable cabinets in lockable rooms. The archive storage was adequate but the storage of open files should be risk assessed in terms of fire and water damage.

The premises of the adoption service were very poor and not appropriate for the service. They were not readily identifiable, did not have disabled access, did not have a reception, there was nowhere to conduct sensitive interviews in pleasant surroundings and nowhere to see people who are distressed and call in on an unplanned basis. Although new premises are planned in 3 years, this needs to have more immediate attention.

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	2
9	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	2
4	3
5	3
10	2
11	3
12	3
13	4
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	3
18	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
3	4
14	3
16	3
17	2
20	2
21	3
22	3
23	2
25	2
26	3
27	2
28	1
29	1
30	N/A
31	N/A

N/A

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

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.	25	1983 Adoption Agencies Regs - 7	The agency must ensure that the child's adoption file contains all the necessary information as required in part 1 of the schedule.	31/10/05
2.	28	LAA Regs 2003 - 11	The agency must ensure that all personnel and panel members' files comply with schedule 3 and 4.	31/10/05
3.	29	LAA 2003 Regs 16	The agency must ensure the premises are fit for the purposes of the adoption service to enable the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose to be met.	31/10/05
4.				

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.	2	The agency should ensure that the decision making process and explanation to the child in relation to placement away from siblings is consistently clear in all cases.

2.	2	The agency should ensure that appropriate direct work is undertaken with all children to enable them to move on to suitable adoptive families.
3.	2	The agency should ensure that all staff who work with children understand the importance of attachment issues and that this informs their assessment.
4.	4	The agency should consider increasing the number of checks undertaken to include family members and ex-partners.
5.	5	The agency should clarify the notification form so adopters sign to specifically indicate that they will notify the agency in event of their child dying in childhood or shortly afterwards. The current wording is implicit rather than explicit.
6.	5	The agency should consider undertaking life appreciation days to improve the level and quality of information available to adopters.
7.	10	The panel should develop its policies and procedures to ensure it is quorate and to receive progress reports on all cases.
8.	19	The agency should ensure adoption staff have training in child protection which relates specifically to children placed for adoption.
9.	18	The agency should clarify its written protocols in relation to the role of specialist advisers.
10.	7	The agency should ensure that birth parents see and have the opportunity to comment about what is written about them and their circumstances and that their signature on the form E, or an explanation of why there is no signature, is given.
11.	8	The agency should ensure that more weight is given to the importance of life story work.
12.	1	The agency should develop another Children's Guide which is suitable for all children who have adoption as their plan.
13.	17	The agency should ensure that the executive side of the Council receive written reports on the management and outcomes of the services of the adoption agency every 6 months.
14.	20	The agency should improve its IT systems.
15.	23	The agency should address the specialist training needs of the adoption staff in a coherent training programme.
16.	25	The agency should risk assess its storage of records to minimise the risk of damage from fire and water.
17.	25	The agency should ensure that decisions by supervisors are recorded on case files.
18.	27	The agency should ensure there is a formal file audit system which is implemented.

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