

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL ADOPTION SERVICE

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Aberdeenshire Council Adoption Service is to ensure the recruitment, preparation, matching and support of adoptive families for children requiring a permanent alternative family by this route.

Aberdeenshire Adoption Service will work to ensure that every child requiring an adoptive family in Aberdeenshire will be valued and helped to realise their potential.

Aim

To provide secure and stable adoptive families that provide the opportunity for children to feel loved, accepted and encouraged to grow, develop and realise their potential, consistent with 'The Promise'

To offer support to anyone affected by Adoption.

Objectives

- Take forward the development of an effective and integrated adoption service within Aberdeenshire's Child Care Service through improved planning based on identified assessment of need.
- Provide for every child in Aberdeenshire, for whom it is required, a permanent family by adoption, which will meet their particular needs.
- Ensure the provision of child centred best practice.
- Ensure the provision and development of equitable and accessible services.
- Provide a service that strives to promote the most effective outcomes for babies, children and young people requiring adoptive families.
- Ensure people interested in becoming adoptive parents (including those wishing to adopt a child from overseas) will be welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly, given clear information about training, assessment, approval and support.
Prepare and support adoptive families prior to and following a child joining the family.
- Ensure that birth families will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process, and that they have access to adoption support services.

- Ensure anyone affected by adoption is treated fairly and with empathy and compassion. Are listened to and supported to access services required.

To achieve this Aberdeenshire will:

- Ensure that the service provided to children, adoptive families, birth parents and families meets the legislative requirements and the National Care Standards for adoption agencies and Aberdeenshire Council's Adoption Policy;
- Recruit a wide range of prospective adoptive parents to meet the family needs of the children in Aberdeenshire who are unable to grow up safely in their family of origin.
- Prepare, train and assess prospective adoptive parents, to develop their understanding of the complexity of the impact of trauma and help them identify their own capacity to parent a child/children that would promote their healing journey and help them meet their potential in life.
- Work closely with the Scottish Adoption Register to ensure that when we are unable to find a family for a child in Aberdeenshire, that we can do so in a timely manner with partner agencies to avoid drift and delay for children whose futures need securing.
- Provide a service to children who are being adopted, fully assessing their needs and taking account of their views;
- Provide a service to birth parents and birth families after adoption;
- Find a family which matches the child's ethnic and cultural background and religion, using Aberdeenshire's matching criteria;
- Provide full information on a child's background and needs to prospective adoptive parents, and support Prospective families to develop their understanding of the child's lived experiences and their role in helping the child develop their own narrative as they grow up.
- Support colleagues to ensure children have a Life Story Book and Later Life Letter to give the child, to help them understand why Adoption was chosen for them,
- Prepare reports for Aberdeenshire's Permanence Panel, other Agency's Permanence Panel and the court on all aspects of adoption work.
- Support arrangements to encourage and ensure children can keep connected to important people in their lives both before and after adoption, both direct and indirect, through Aberdeenshire's Letterbox Scheme.
- Provide universal family support when new families are created through adoption to help build new and strong foundations of trust and attachments for children and adoptive parents.
- Provide post adoption support to adoptive parents of children who have been adopted;
- Provide a counselling service for adopted adults;
- Ensure that the workforce is appropriately skilled, trained and led.
- Operate the service within Aberdeenshire's Equality policies.
- Consult on the quality of the service and use feedback to inform development.

Principles

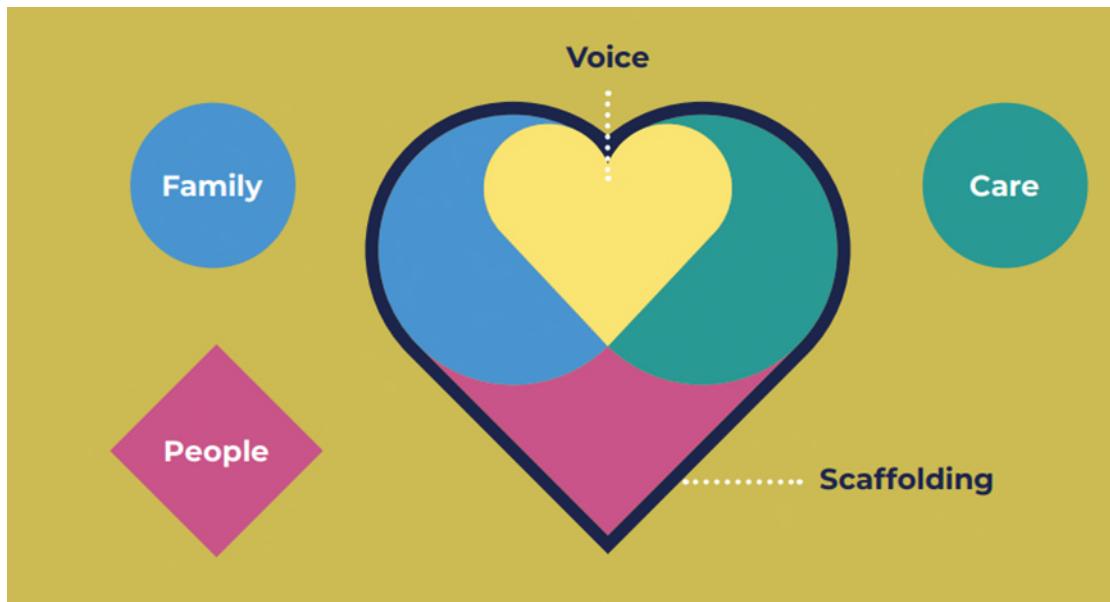
- Hold the child at the centre.
- Value and respect individuality and diversity.
- Have clear and transparent decision making procedures.
- Consider and take account of the needs and wishes of the child.
- Consider and take account of the needs and wishes of the birth family.
- Consider and take account of the needs and wishes of adoptive parents.
- Be trauma aware and responsive in interactions with anyone affected by adoption.

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Appendix 1

Aberdeenshire Adoption Service embraces and embeds the key foundation principles of 'The Promise' Scotland's Care review 2019.



Care

Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home. (p19)

Scotland must support adoptive parents to provide a loving and permanent home for children whilst recognising the importance of children understanding their birth identity and the maintenance of relationships that are important to the child. (p21)

Adoptive families must be given support and attention required to love and care for their children, particularly where the ongoing impact of trauma and broken attachments is felt by the child and the family. (p21)

Children who can no longer live with their family of origin may have complex or distressing aspects to their life story. They must be supported to understand the narrative of their lives in ways that are appropriate and have meaning for them. (p69)

People

The Children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

Voice

The starting point for any decision must be how to best protect relationships that are important to children (p30)

Scotland must recognise the pain associated with telling and retelling of stories. Listening must be therapeutic and provide opportunity for healing. (p32)

Children must have ownership over their stories and personal data so they can understand and influence how their story is shared. (p31)

Family

Whatever issues families face, Scotland must ensure that intensive family support is available, proactive and characterised by the 10 principles of intensive family support.

Scaffolding

The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

We must create an approach to care where maintain, sustaining and protecting loving relationships is possible and much more probable.