

# Caritas



Diocese of Salford

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE

**Registered Manager:** Lorraine Courtney  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

**Responsible Body:** Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

**Chairman:** His Lordship the Bishop of Salford

*A charity registered in England No 1125808  
Company Registration No 6594417*

Caritas Diocese of Salford is a Registered Adoption Support Agency providing services to adopted adults and children, adoptive parents, birth parents and other birth relatives.

The service developed alongside the Adoption Agency operated by the predecessor charity - Catholic Children's Rescue Society - which began in 1942 and was incorporated into Caritas in 2010.

The Adoption Support Agency was first registered in 2008 following the closure of the Adoption Agency.

The Responsible Individual is:

Mark Wiggin  
Director  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

The Registered Manager is:

Lorraine Courtney  
Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral House  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

#### **Lorraine Courtney - Registered Manager Adoption Support Service**

Lorraine qualified as a Social Worker in 1980 and has worked in Children and Families teams in Strathclyde, West Devon and Stockport. She graduated from the University of Glasgow with a degree of M.A. and holds a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work from the University of Edinburgh and a NVQ Level 5 Diploma in Management.

Lorraine has been a member of the Family Placement Team since 2001 and has worked solely in the Adoption Support Service since 2007 having previously worked between adoption and adoption support. Lorraine was successfully appointed to the role of Team Manager in January 2013 and became the Registered Manager in August 2016. Lorraine is registered with Social Care England, Registration number SW44424

#### **Rachel Sadler - Admin Support**

Rachel has been employed by the organisation since March 2018. Rachel has a degree in Physiology. She has worked in various customer service roles and provides administrative support to the service.

## Management Committee

The Charity's Management Committee is made up of a group of Trustees with a wide range of experience and skills who provide overall governance to the work of the Charity.

The Children & Family Services include: Fostering Service, Adoption Support Service, Young Parents' Services and Schools Social Work Service.

Staff have access to expertise in health and safety, HR, finance, staff development and admin support.

The Adoption Support Service operates from Cathedral Centre, 3 Ford Street, Salford, M3 6DP and uses the Charity's other bases as required.

In addition to the Head Office at Cathedral Centre, the organisation has bases in Manchester, Bolton, Bury and Blackburn and accesses other bases for specific areas of work.

### The services offered by the Adoption Support Service are:

- Birth records counselling - where adoptions have been arranged through the former Catholic Children's Rescue Society, and via spot purchase by other agencies on request.
- Intermediary services provided both to adoptees and to birth relatives. The services of birth record counselling and intermediary services can also be provided on behalf of other agencies on request.
- Advice, support and signposting to children and adoptive parents where adoption was arranged through this organisation.

### Services to Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives

Services are provided to meet the need for information, tracing and in a number of instances, intermediary services and reunions. As such it is a time-limited intervention but is often characterised by return referrals over time where service users may be tentative in their first contact and ready to move further in their search when they approach Caritas again.

Many adoptees choose to make contact at different points in their adult life and our processes ensure a swift and sensitive response which acknowledges that individuals will return for further assistance as necessary.

Where there is a high volume of referrals a waiting list operates with the caveat that adoptions made before 1975 are prioritised. Service users are informed of the waiting time and kept informed if this changes.

Since the implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 an intermediary service to birth parents seeking information and tracing is provided. Reunions are facilitated between adoptees and birth relatives where this is the wish of both parties. In addition, descendants of birth parents often request a service, sometimes after a birth parent has

previously been in touch but also when they have discovered the existence of an adopted sibling eg when a parent is deceased.

The practice and procedures for this area of work have benefited from the extensive knowledge and experience gained from the agency's long history of adoption.

The inevitable complexities require skilled and sensitive handling and the combined skills, experience and training of staff ensure that this is provided.

Caritas has access to the services of a consultant with many years of adoption experience who advises on delicate and complex post adoption matters.

### **Under 18s and Up to aged 25 Service**

The closure of the Adoption Agency and registration as an Adoption Support Agency in 2008 has resulted in a gradually diminishing number of young people where the agency was involved in the placement. The majority of the families of this age group should have an Adoption Support Plan agreed with their placing agency - usually a Local Authority and known as the Appropriate Adoption Agency (AAA) - which outlines support available.

In 2015, the Government became aware of the increasing need for support and created the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) to fund therapeutic support for eligible children and their families. The only way to access this funding is to request that the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) or Local Authority undertake an adoption support needs assessment of the adoptive family.

As a result of these additional nationwide resources, Caritas may not be the appropriate agency to offer support to families in response to presenting issues. However we have maintained the strong commitment made to our families at the time of placement and we welcome any direct approach from adoptive families to the Adoption Support Team by telephone, email or in writing.

Where an adoption has taken place from 30 December 2005 following the implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 - known as Post Commencement Adoptions - the adopted adult will be signposted to the placing agency when applying for access to adoption records.

When adoptive families contact this agency to request support, they are met with an immediate response. On occasions only telephone support and guidance is required. However generally a face to face meeting is offered to discuss the difficulties the family is experiencing and, if appropriate, an assessment is undertaken to enable a detailed referral to be made to the local authority or Regional Adoption Agency. We will always be responsive, offer advice and support, act as an advocate and signpost to other agencies if it is appropriate to do so.

In line with Government guidance, we have extended the Under 18s Service to offer the same support/signposting to young people aged up to 21 years old, or up to 25 years old if they have Special Educational Needs.

### Monitoring of the services

Birth relatives and adult adoptees are asked to provide evaluations of the service and suggested improvements are considered and implemented either immediately or by a change in procedures when evaluations are reviewed.

The services are provided in line with the National Minimum Standards and Regulations for Adoption Support Agencies. The general overarching policies of Caritas Diocese of Salford are followed together with the specific policies and procedures of the Adoption Support Service. Casework activity is recorded by the Registered Manager and is monitored by the Service Manager through supervision and practice development in team meetings.

Feedback from service users is actively sought and from Local Authority Social Workers where referred/commissioned by the local Authority.

All services are included in the routine Ofsted inspections of the Adoption Support Agency.

### Confidentiality

Service users are assured of confidentiality and safe maintenance of their information and records in line with Data Protection & Information Governance guidance and legislation and in line with Caritas' Policy and Procedures. Service users will be asked for ID verification to ensure the sharing of information/records is appropriate.

The adoption database is accessible only to named persons within the Adoption Support Service.

### Safeguarding and Adult and Child Protection

Caritas operates an overarching Safeguarding & Adult and Child Protection Policy of which all service users are made aware. Child protection training is regularly updated to ensure that staff follow the procedures of the Agency which are aligned with respective local authority processes. Additional procedures specific to the Adoption Support Service are included in the Service Policies and Procedures.

### Complaints and Representations Procedures:

Caritas Diocese of Salford, in accordance with its Christian-based mission and value statement, seeks in all its work to treat each person with respect, dignity and in a professional manner, recognising that it has a responsibility to ensure a competent standard of service to all individuals and groups to whom the service is offered.

Caritas accepts fully that such a service should be open to scrutiny and the organisation has a robust Representations and Complaints policy system managed by the HR Manager who will oversee the investigation of any complaint, appoint independent persons as necessary and monitor all complaints to conclusion.

All complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible and, unless exceptional circumstances exist, will adhere to the timescales outlined in the policy and procedures. Service users

will be provided with written information about the Complaints Procedures of Caritas Diocese of Salford.

**Complaints should be addressed to:**

Sue McVeigh  
HR & Business Support Manager / Representations and Complaints Manager  
Caritas Diocese of Salford  
Cathedral Centre  
3 Ford Street  
Salford  
M3 6DP

Tel: 0161 817 2250  
Fax: 0161 833 1635  
Email: [sue.mcveigh@caritassalford.org.uk](mailto:sue.mcveigh@caritassalford.org.uk)

**Service users may also make complaints and representations to Ofsted:**

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 1231231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**This Statement of Purpose was reviewed and amended by:**

L. Carney ..... (Registered Manager)  
2 March 2020 ..... (Date)

**Agreed:**

MAWJIBAN (CEO Caritas) ..... (Responsible Individual)  
March 2nd 2020 ..... (Date)