

# 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 and birth parents.

The service developed alongside the Adoption Agency operated by the predecessor charity - Catholic Children's Rescue Society - which 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  
Chief Executive Officer  
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 generic and Children and Families teams in Strathclyde, West Devon and Stockport. She graduated with a degree of M.A.(Glasgow University) and holds a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work and NVQ Level 5 Diploma in Management. Lorraine has been a member of the Family Placement Team since 2001 and has worked full time in the Adoption Support Service since 2007 having previously worked between adoption and adoption support. She was successfully appointed to the role of Team Manager in January 2013 and is registered with the Health and Care Professions Council Registration number SW44424.

#### **Gayle Sykes - Social Worker**

Gayle qualified as a Social Worker in 1995, gaining an M.A and Diploma in Social Work from the University of Hull in 1995. After qualifying Gayle worked for a number of London Local Authorities in various teams ie Children and Families, Child Protection and Adoption as well as in a Residential Family Assessment Centre and a Historic Abuse Enquiry team. She then worked for the NSPCC for twelve years primarily in an Independent Safeguarding Enquiry and Assessment Team but latterly providing therapeutic support to Children and Young People. Gayle joined the Caritas Adoption Support Team in September 2015. She is registered with the Health and Care Professions Council Registration number SW86915.

### **Sarah Innes- Admin Support**

Sarah has been employed by the organisation since June 2016. Sarah has a degree in Business and Management and provides administrative support to the service.

### **Susan Carr - Bank Staff Counsellor**

Susan qualified as a counsellor in 2012, gaining an MA in Counselling from the University of Manchester. She is an Accredited Registered Member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Susan has been employed as Bank Staff (Adoption Support Counsellor) since May 2013.

### **Fiona Astbury - Bank Staff Counsellor**

Fiona has worked with Caritas as an Adoption Support Counsellor since January 2015. She is a BACP Accredited Counsellor who qualified as a Diploma Level Counsellor in 2013. Her background experience of working within bereavement and loss is as a Registered Nurse both within a Hospice and community setting over a period of 20 years.

### **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 (see Birth Parent Counselling).

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

- Advice, support and signposting to children and adoptive parents where adoption was arranged through this organisation
- Birth records counselling - where adoptions have been arranged through this or another agency.
- 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.
- Support and counselling for birth parents and relatives where children have been placed for adoption. (This is a contracted service to six Local Authorities).

## Under 18s Service

Adoption Support Services are provided to children placed through the agency and to their adoptive parents, where placement was made via the Charity. Adopters have been made aware of this commitment to them at the point of placement. In addition the placing agency will have been identified on the child's adoption support plan as a source of support. This plan outlines the level of support available from different agencies of which Caritas is one.

Where families refer themselves to Caritas, an assessment is undertaken establishing what other services are being, or have been, accessed as families may already have been in contact with other statutory services.

Where there is ongoing involvement with e.g. Local Authority Children and Families Teams, CAMHS or any other therapeutic service, this will usually be a contra - indication to a Caritas service being offered. However, commitment to our families remains strong and we will always be responsive, offer advice and support and signpost to other services as required. The implementation of the Adoption Support Fund has created additional resources for adopted children and their parents and Caritas will act as an advocate to ensure that this is accessed when it is required.

Assessment at the point of referral will determine whether or which of these services is appropriate:

- Support via Letterbox (indirect contact)
- Telephone advice/reassurance
- Short term intervention - this can facilitate a referral to the formal funded services now in place within Local Authorities to support adopted children and their families

Referrers can make a direct approach to the Adoption Support team by phone or email and will receive an immediate response from the manager or social worker which will begin the initial assessment and/or signposting to an appropriate alternative service.

## Over 18s Service

Due to the closure of the Adoption Agency in 2008, there are a declining number of placements where the agency acted as the Appropriate Adoption Agency ie the placing agency.

In line with legislation, young people are notified when they reach 18 years of their right to access information regarding their history and their right to register a veto against their being contacted on behalf of birth relatives if they wish to do so.

## 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 what they receive.

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

### **Birth Parent Support and Counselling Services**

This service was established in October 2006 following a successful tender application to provide independent counselling to birth parents where adoption is the plan for their children.

Adults are referred to the service by the respective Local Authorities. Caritas staff engage with parents/relatives and meet with them at a convenient venue (venues are established in all the areas where coming to our Centre is likely to be problematic). Support and counselling sessions are provided over six hours (increased by agreed extension) with the aim of helping parents to accept those plans for their child(ren) and to help them use methods of indirect contact in ways that are positive for the children in their new families.

Training and information events are held at regular intervals to ensure the contracted Authorities are well informed and that the contract is being successfully delivered.

### **Monitoring of the services**

Birth parents 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 and is monitored by the Registered Manager through file sampling, 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.

Birth parent support services are monitored routinely by each Local Authority in the joint contract. Contract monitoring meetings are called by the Lead Authority as required.

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). 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 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 Procedure**

The organisation has a robust Representations and Complaints policy - the service provides short guides for children and for adults to enable them to make a complaint.

The Complaints and Representations system is managed by the HR Manager who will oversee the investigation of any complaint, appoint independent persons as necessary and monitor progress to conclusion. Complaints can result in a number of findings which can conclude that the complaint is:

- Upheld
- Partly upheld
- Not upheld
- Irresolvable

Recommendations include:

- An apology to be made over a specific issue
- The organisation giving the complainant an explanation of the actions
- The organisation recognising an issue
- The organisation reconsidering a previously made decision
- The organisation amending existing policies and procedures
- The organisation identifying a way of redressing the situation

Service users are also advised that they can make complaints to Ofsted.

The Adoption Support Service is registered and inspected by:

OFSTED  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Tel: 0845 640 4040  
Email : [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Web : [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Ofsted may be contacted in the event of any complaint a member of the public/service user may wish to make against this service.

This Statement of Purpose was reviewed and amended by:

L. Carney ..... (Registered Manager)  
27.01.17 ..... (Date)

Agreed:

Mark Wiggins ..... (Responsible Individual)  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 ..... (Date)