



## Adoption Recruitment Strategy

### Adoption inspection report

We are very proud to maintain the high standard found by our latest Ofsted inspection, which said:

"Support to adopters is outstanding, including comprehensive welfare rights advice, training, support groups, social events and newsletters. The agency is very good at recruiting adopters and making good matches with children waiting to be adopted. The preparation, assessment and approval of adopters is thorough and they are provided with good and full information about children's histories. The service to birth parents is also outstanding and there is a life-long commitment to all involved in the adoption triangle".

The quality of Nottinghamshire County Council's adoption service is regularly inspected by Ofsted, and inspection reports can be downloaded from the [Ofsted website](#).

### Nottinghamshire Adoption Service's strategy for recruiting adoptive parents

The aim of the recruitment strategy is to recruit and support sufficient adopters from culturally diverse backgrounds, who are appropriately matched with children who need stable and permanent homes.

Nottinghamshire aims to be inclusive and transparent in the way it works with families to nurture a relationship of trust between the local authority and its communities, particularly black and ethnic minority communities.

Nottinghamshire is committed to meeting the permanency needs of black and ethnic minority children, both locally and nationally. While numbers of such children are relatively small in the county, Nottinghamshire actively recruits adoptive parents from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and works co-operatively with other agencies seeking such families when no local match can be made. Targets are set for the total number of adoptive families to be approved during the year, and reviewed annually by the Service Manager for Adoption.

Realistic budgets are set and reviewed annually by the Service Manager for Adoption to support all recruitment activity, including advertising costs and interagency placement fees, if required.

The strategy is implemented via adoption tracking meetings and home finding meetings, which are held monthly and chaired by the service manager adoption.

The adoption tracking meeting:

- enables early identification of future needs for adoptive families
- suggests the focus for specific recruitment activity
- monitors children from all backgrounds who need permanency
- ensure proactive consideration of whether families may need to be sought outside Nottinghamshire in order to avoid delay, or to meet a child's individual needs.

The child's social worker must give careful consideration to the type of adoptive family that might meet the child's needs and record this for the benefit of the adoption panel and subsequently to enable appropriate home finding to be undertaken. In doing so, the worker should not be unnecessarily restrictive and should be aware of their own values regarding family life and the diverse types of family now being approved by adoption panels. The adoption home finding meeting will be the forum in which any potentially discriminatory values are challenged.

The child's social worker is expected to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings at every stage of the adoption process, where the child is of a sufficient age and level of understanding to express a view. This must be recorded in reports which are written for the adoption panel (i.e. the child's permanence report and, later, the adoption placement report).

It will also be of particular relevance if the child is to be featured in adoption journals or referred to the Adoption Register, which requires the child's consent if possible.

The priorities for the recruitment of adoptive families are contained in the eligibility criteria, a summary of which is sent to all enquirers and is also posted on the Nottinghamshire website. Social workers are aware of the criteria and respond appropriately to enquiries.

An outline recruitment plan is devised at the beginning of the year, which is reviewed regularly. This is intended to maintain the momentum of recruitment activity and so ensure a high level of public awareness of Nottinghamshire's profile as an adoption agency.

One essential aim of any publicity is to educate the public so that when social workers receive enquiries they are from people who have some knowledge of adoption in the 21st century, particularly of the kinds of children waiting to be adopted. To this end, the effectiveness of recruitment campaigns is evaluated not in terms of volume but in terms of the quality of enquiries and the percentage of applications that result from them.

Nottinghamshire County Council's website contains useful information for would-be adopters which encourages them to make personal enquiries. The website includes the agency's up-to-date eligibility criteria for the recruitment of adoptive families.

Enquirers initially contact Nottinghamshire County Council via the customer service centre number 0300 500 80 80 who will direct the caller to the Adoption Service to enable them to speak to an experienced adoption worker through the duty system.

Enquiries that are made via email or letter are responded to promptly and followed up as appropriate within the timescales required by statutory adoption guidance – that is, written information to be sent within ten working days.

The source of referrals is recorded when enquiries are received to identify the most productive vehicles for recruitment.

Experienced adoptive parents are encouraged to act as ambassadors for the Nottinghamshire Adoption Service either formally by providing interviews for local and national media, or informally by providing word-of-mouth recommendations and endorsements of the quality of the adoption service.

Where it proves necessary to consider seeking a family approved by another agency, the following means will be used:

- the child's profile which has initially been uploaded to Linkmaker for NCC approved adopters will be opened up and extended to other local authorities and agencies already registered to this site.
- referral to the National Adoption Register – the adoption home finding meeting will decide when it is necessary to pursue this option. A referral process has been developed. The child's worker will be required to complete the referral form and send it to the RPO at the County Adoption Team who will record this and forward it to the register.
- featuring the child in publications/ journals as decided – the adoption home finding meeting will decide whether to pursue this option and at what stage. Where appropriate, publications whose target market is the black and ethnic minority community will be used (e.g. The Voice and the African Times). The County Adoption Team will prepare a profile in consultation with the child's worker and will also arrange for a photographer to take a photo which will be sent to the appropriate publication.