



Adoption Central England

Statement of Purpose Summary

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THE PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Required under the Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2012, the **Statement of Purpose** is designed to be a public document for any person interested in adoption in either a professional or personal capacity.

This summary provides the following information about Adoption Central England (ACE):

- the service aims and outcomes
- the service philosophy principles and approach
- how Adoption Central England (ACE) delivers a comprehensive adoption service across the region, on behalf of Coventry City Council, Herefordshire Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and Worcestershire Children First.

The link to the full document can be found here [Statement of Purpose](#).

1. THE SERVICE

Adoption Central England (ACE) was launched on 1 February 2018 following legislation arising from four Department for Education (DfE) policy papers on adoption. The Regionalising Adoption paper published in June 2015 spelt out the government's expectations for all local authorities to be part of a regional adoption agency and 'Adoption: A vision for change' (April 2016) committed to deliver a radical, whole system redesign by regionalising adoption services by 2020. The service is hosted by Warwickshire County Council and has close working relationships with the five local authorities in the region. It aims to *'provide an innovative and relationship focussed service for children, adoptive families and others affected by adoption. This is by offering lifelong support based on up to date practices and interventions and supported by modern technology'*.

The key aims and priorities for the service are to deliver on the following outcomes:

- To increase the levels of adoption for children waiting to be adopted
- To reduce the length of time those children wait to be adopted
- To ensure that a wider pool of prospective adopters is ready to meet children's needs to be loved, nurtured, protected and understood
- To ensure that adopters understand, accept and can meet children's needs and provide a secure relationship within which they can thrive
- To ensure that attachment and trauma informed post adoption support services are available to adoptive families.

2. PHILOSOPHY, PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

2.1 Dyadic Developmental Practice - DDP

Since January 2021 ACE has become the first adoption service to be certified as a DDP organisation. DDP stands for Dyadic Developmental Practice - an approach that helps families develop healthy patterns of relating and communicating so all feel safe and connected and children can be helped to overcome trauma. ACE services are delivered by staff who are trained in using a DDP informed approach.



DDP provides the foundation for building attachment security, placement stability and positive long-term outcomes for adopted children. Early on, prospective adopters are introduced to attachment and developmental trauma and key DDP principles and ACE staff will model the DDP attitude of PACE. PACE is an acronym (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) that conveys the importance of parents having a playful connection with their child, accepting the child's inner world, being curious about the meaning of underlying behaviour, and empathically connecting with the child's emotional state. PACE is at the heart of therapeutic re-parenting which ACE promotes.

2.2 Diversity and inclusion

ACE is committed to deliver services to all sections of the community. As an organisation ACE will be inclusive, respecting the diversity of individual and family experiences. We aim to be culturally sensitive and will take time to listen and understand individual and family needs so that we can respond appropriately and sensitively.

2.3 Continuous improvement and innovation

ACE aims to ensure a culture of continuous challenge, innovation and improvement using research, academic input and stakeholder views and experiences. The organisational culture is geared towards building staff's capacity for regulation and reflection, maintaining openness with families, each other and with partner agencies. This is consistent with the principles of DDP. ACE welcomes the inclusion of adoptive parents as adoption panel members, co trainers, adopter buddies and volunteers and through the Adopter Stakeholder Group. ACE has a range of internal quality assurance processes in place and undertakes an adopter survey annually.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

ACE provides services to:

- People from all sections of the community who are interested in becoming adoptive parents
- Adoptive families in need of ongoing support including adopted children
- Birth relatives of adopted children through the Family Connexions Service
- Adopted adults seeking access to their adoption records
- Non-agency or step-parents seeking to adopt.

3.1 Becoming an adoptive parent

Services to people interested in becoming adoptive parents are provided through the ACE Hub consisting of two teams. Each year ACE produces a recruitment plan that outlines its intentions to recruit families for children needing adoptive families. ACE welcomes interest from all sections of the community including single people, same sex couples and people from black and minority ethnic groups. ACE is particularly keen to recruit people who are interested in adopting sibling groups of brothers and sisters and children within an older age range or where the child may have some health needs and uncertainties.

The process of becoming an adoptive parent is as follows:

- Make an enquiry to ACE through the ACE website or by telephoning ACE on 0300 369 0556. Information about adoption can be sent to you or downloaded from the website.
- Attending an ACE online Adoption Information Session.
- Complete and submit a formal 'registration of interest' in adoption.
- In-depth discussion with an ACE social worker.
- Stage 1 – this is where ACE will obtain the required reference checks.
- Attendance on Adoption Preparation Training that includes online modules and face to face group meetings.
- Stage 2 – this is where an ACE social worker will become your allocated worker who will get to know you really well and will produce with you the Adopter Assessment Report (AAR).
- Presentation of the AAR to the Adoption Panel.
- Adoption agency decision of your suitability to be adoptive parents.

Once you are approved as adoptive parents your social worker will look to find the suitable child or children for your family. This is the 'linking and matching' process. ACE has information on all children from the five local authorities in the region who require a family. The Adoption Panel also makes the matching recommendation with the decision being made by the child's local authority. Ongoing support is provided to adoptive families for 12

months after the adoption order is made. Ongoing support after this time or at any point in the future is provided by the ACE Spoke teams.

3.2 Adoptive families in need of ongoing support

These services are provided through the ACE Spoke teams. There are three teams across the region who provide an advice and signposting service and who will complete an assessment of need for adoption support where families are experiencing more complex problems.

Ongoing support may be offered through ACE or through an application to the Adoption Support Fund. This is a Government fund that pays for therapeutic interventions based upon the assessment of need for adoption support. The amount of funding available per child is capped each year. ACE will commission the relevant service on behalf of the family and will approach an approved list of therapeutic providers in the first instance.

A range of support services are available through ACE including:

- Training on a range of adoption related matters
- Opportunities for adoptive families to meet such as support groups and family fun days
- Support with contact related matters including the Letterbox Exchange Scheme
- Adopted Young People's Support Group
- Space 2 Talk Service
- Couples Counselling
- Quarterly Newsletter.

Services in development include day care and extended training for family and friends.

The ACE Therapeutic Team offers a range of individual and group interventions aimed at supporting adoptive families from the start of a child's placement and throughout as required.

3.3 Family Connexions

This regional wide service supports birth family members in the following ways:

- Emotional support to help them accept and understand the adoption process
- Support with the practical aspects of the adoption process
- Advice regarding future life planning
- Group sessions with other birth family members
- Support with arrangement for Letterbox contact with their children who are adopted
- Support with any direct contact plans requested by the adopted children or their adoptive parents.

3.4 Adopted adults seeking access to their adoption records

Also provided through the Spoke teams, counselling is offered and the adoption records obtained where possible. Summary reports are provided, and adult adoptees are offered advice where it is their intention to search for birth family members.

3.5 Non-agency or step-parents seeking to adopt

The implications of adoption are discussed and Information and advice are offered on the appropriateness of alternative options to step-parent adoption. Where an application is made to the court an ACE social worker will prepare the report seeking the views of all parties including the child and any other person/birth parent who holds parental responsibility for the child.

4. FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT ACE

More information about ACE and the range of services available can be found on the ACE website www.aceadoption.com or by contacting ACE:

Tel: 0300 369 05556

enquiries@aceadoption.com

