



Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Adoption

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption



Statement of Purpose

December 2021

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/adoption
adoptionenquiries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
0300 123 1093



www.cpadoption.co.uk

Foreword from Ricky



Thank you for taking the time to find out more about Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is the Regional Adoption Agency responsible for providing a range of adoption and adoption support services, including special guardianship support across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council collaborated to establish the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption shared adoption service in 2020. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is hosted by Cambridgeshire County Council.

We always provide a warm and friendly welcome to prospective adopters who can demonstrate that they could meet the needs of our children and young people who need adoptive families. We will always consider your application fairly and will be open and transparent with you in supporting you on your adoption journey.

Ricky Cooper
Assistant Director, Children's Services

We welcome applications from adults who are over 21 years of age, from all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds and religions. It is important that we have adopters that are representative of the wide range of communities that we serve in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, remembering that we are not always simply looking for people who have had straightforward lives. We will consider your family history sympathetically recognising that coming through difficult situations can make us resourceful and resilient in parenting a child or young person confidently. We will support you at every stage of the process.

Hopefully our website; here (<https://www.cpadoption.co.uk>) will answer the many questions that you have including how you access the full range of adoption support services, including those available to Special Guardians.

We very much look forward to receiving your enquiry and helping you take the next step of your adoption journey with us.

Vision:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is part of the wider Children's Social Care Service in all the two local authorities and reflects each Council's commitment to 'Best Practice' in the provision of an Adoption Agency. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Authorities believe that children should experience permanence and security throughout their childhood and that it is best for a child to live within their birth family, if it is safe to do so. Where this is not possible, the local authorities aim to provide, in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption, permanent alternative families who will promote the child's well-being and development by providing the highest possible standards of care to meet their individual assessed needs.

Both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough adoption services have been providing a good service and by bringing these together we will build on the strengths of each to deliver an excellent service

to all those affected by adoption in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. We will do all we can to support good outcomes through adoption for children beyond our two authorities and ensure that we are able to use our expertise in recruitment of prospective adopters to provide a resource for children in need of adoption from across the country.

By delivering the service through a hosted model we can also maintain the closest possible links with other parts of children's services. This will not only support recruitment and matching activities but will enable us to build on our success in relation to early permanency work.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption will make a life-long difference to the lives of children for whom adoption is in their best interests and support those caring for children and young people through access to therapeutic support.





Aim & Objectives:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption aim to provide safe, high quality adoptive families for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. As well as promoting their health and general well-being, our service is committed to:

- The main aim of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is to provide a child focused and efficient service: which will be demonstrated by increased numbers of adopters being recruited, through timely assessment and the provision of training and support, which prepares adopters well and enables children to achieve permanence in loving and nurturing families.
- To provide an effective, flexible shared adoption agency where the needs of individual children can be met within the legal security of adoption as appropriate.
- Offer high quality support to adopters, birth parents and carers and all parties involved with the child.
- To secure for each child a loving family to 'belong to' on a permanent basis and to form secure attachments and reach their potential and developmental milestones.
- To ensure children with a proposed plan for adoption will be identified and matched early to avoid delay in the child's journey to permanency.
- To recruit and maintain sufficient numbers of prospective and approved adopters to meet the assessed needs of the children of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who need adoptive placements. This recruitment should whenever possible reflect the ethnicity, culture, religion, and language needs of the children.



- To ensure that the recruitment, preparation, training, and support given to prospective adopters is a comprehensive service and meets their needs so that they can be successful adopters.
- To ensure permanence for children is achieved at the earliest opportunity and provide Foster to Adopt placements for children.
- To recruit and support carers who are willing and able to offer a Foster to Adopt placement for a child as foster carers and as prospective adopters to for children aged 0-2.
- To signpost prospective adopters who are interested in Intercountry Adoption to the relevant Adoption Agency.
- To provide a proactive and professional family finding service which seeks to match individual children with prospective adoptive families that have been assessed as able to meet their needs.
- To provide an accessible, responsive, and comprehensive adoption and special guardianship support service to children, their birth families and adoptive families living in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who because of adoption or special guardianship require advice, counselling, practical or emotional support. In addition, to provide adoption and special guardianship support services to children and their adoptive families placed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption outside of the boundary of the two Local Authorities.
- To provide access to information, counselling, intermediary services, and support as appropriate to adults whose lives have been affected by adoption, including adopted adults and their birth relatives.
- To provide organisation and management of the post adoption letter box contact scheme.
- Ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles and good practice and works within the principles of value for money for the Council.
- To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair and that any concerns are addressed and information about the complaints procedure is made available to all.
- To promote team and personal development and training for both staff and foster carers.
- Consult regularly and learn from those that are in receipt of services through comments, compliments or complaints and have regular meetings and consultation with adoptive parents, senior managers, and elected members.
- A commitment to continuous challenge, innovation, and improvement. It will use research, academic input and stakeholder views and experiences, combined with rigorous performance and quality assurance systems. This includes a comprehensive approach to systemic practice and therapeutic parenting.

Values and Principles

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is committed to achieving and maintaining the highest quality adoption service which draws on best practice from each authority making the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption service one that is highly regarded. The work of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is underpinned by the following values and beliefs:

- To ensure children's needs always come first.
- The needs, rights, wishes, safety, and welfare of children are paramount.
- Every child is entitled to a permanent family throughout their childhood, which should meet all their needs in terms of stability, safety, and security, that promotes their physical, social, and emotional development and that offers a supportive lifelong relationship.
- Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice are intrinsic to the delivery of the service. All adoptive applicants will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. No applicant will be discriminated against on grounds of ethnicity, culture, disability, sexuality, gender, age, financial status, or marital status.
- To ensure open and transparent practice is intrinsic to the agency.
- A culture of learning and continuous development is central to the agency to ensure that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption works jointly with other organisations where this improves services.
- Children are entitled to be treated with respect; diversity and difference should be valued and enjoyed. A child's sense of identity and self-respect needs to be actively promoted, particularly awareness of issues of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, and ability.
- All prospective adopters, adoptive families, children, and special guardians are always treated with respect.



- We promote all family structures (including single parents, couples who are heterosexual or gay, married, in civil partnerships or unmarried) that provide the nurture and parenting to meet the needs of children coming forward for adoption.
- To achieve positive and timely outcomes for children with a plan for adoption.
- Promote openness so that children grow up with knowledge and understanding of their birth family and support direct and indirect contact between adopted children and birth relatives.
- The service actively supports Foster to Adopt placement as in the child's interest working closely with all partner Local Authorities to identify children who would benefit from Foster to Adopt placements.
- Encourage and support families to prioritise children's needs and make a commitment to the child on a permanent basis and with resilience to persevere through difficult times.
- Contact (direct or indirect) should be encouraged if compatible with the child's needs.

Services



Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption provides a range of services to children and their families including children who are requiring an adoptive placement, supporting those caring for children in a permanent placement as well as the birth families for those children who are placed for adoption. Here is an overview of these services.

Recruitment, assessment, and approval of adopters – they support prospective adopters from the start of their interest in adoption with their initial enquiry, completing the assessment process to enable them to be approved as adoptive parents. The team continue to support the prospective adopters with identifying the children they wish to adopt, enabling the children to move in and until they become the sole legal parents for the children through an Adoption Order.

Family Finding - A key activity of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is ensuring children are successfully linked with their forever family as early as possible. Dedicated Family Finding social workers will have developed a detailed knowledge of the child throughout their time in local authority care to ensure that the child's adoptive family can be identified and linked as soon as adoption is the plan for the child.

Foster to Adopt - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have a passion for securing permanence at the earliest opportunity for children and have embedded practices of Foster to Adopt into the adoption service as well as the safeguarding teams. Foster to Adopt is where adoptive

parents are also approved as foster carers so they can provide a safe and stable placement prior to adoption being confirmed as the plan for the child. This will prevent changes in the child's primary caregivers and enables these attachments to be developed at an earlier part of the child's life. Family Finding will consider if Foster To Adopt is a suitable plan for the child and the adoption assessing social worker will prepare adopter to support children with these plans.

Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Team - The team provides support to adopters, special guardians, and their children to enable them to make positive changes to challenges that they face throughout their childhood and beyond. Their approach is rooted in developmental trauma and attachment. They work with a range of stakeholders to provide a child-centred comprehensive approach grounded by the evidence base.



Adopter Assessment

Stage 1

Potential adopters who contact Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption will initially spend time to talk to the Recruitment Officer to explore their interest in adoption. They will have the opportunity to attend an Information Session to understand more about adoption and the assessment process. Those that meet the criteria to be considered will be offered an initial interview by a member of the Social Work team.

After the initial interview the social worker will make a recommendation to their manager about whether the applicant(s) are suitable. If the manager confirms that they meet the requirements and are ready to proceed they will be encouraged to submit their Registration of Interest (ROI). If the information submitted in the ROI evidences that the enquirers are not currently suitable, they will be offered information and advice about what they would need to do to meet the criteria.

Once the enquirers meet the criteria for assessment their ROI will be accepted, and they are deemed to be in Stage 1 of

the adopter assessment process. The prospective adopter will be allocated a social worker from the Recruitment and Assessment Team to undertake Stage 1.

Stage 1 includes completing statutory checks, and these must be completed and reviewed by the line manager before Stage 2 can commence. In addition, the prospective adopters will be asked to complete a series of work sheets in order to increase their understanding in relation to adopting a child from care.

Every effort will be made to complete the work of Stage 1 within two months, unless there are clear reasons why it needs to take longer, for example when a disclosure and barring service or medical check is delayed, or if a prospective adopter needs more time for personal or other reasons.

Stage 1 of the process is adopter-led, and a Stage 1 agreement will be completed based on the individual circumstances and needs of the prospective adopter and be allocated to a social worker in the Recruitment & Assessment Team.

Stage 2

Stage 2 is the full assessment of prospective adopters. Once statutory checks have been satisfactorily received, the Team Manager will review the information relating to the adopters and the prospective adopters to decide whether the agency will accept a formal application into Stage 2, with particular reference to the children whom the agency seeks to place for adoption/early permanence.

An assessing social worker is allocated, and a Stage 2 agreement set up. The allocated social worker will be responsible for completing the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR). Once completed the PAR will be viewed by prospective adopters and they are given five days to review it or to attach their own comments.

If applicants wish to be considered for Foster to Adopt, they will need to undergo dedicated assessment and training in relation to the role and expectations of foster carers.

Prospective adopters are invited to attend the Adoption Panel at which their approval will be considered, but if they do not wish to attend, this will not influence the outcome of the Panel.

The panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM), in relation to approval. If the ADM agrees with the recommendation the prospective adopters will be informed of their decision within five working days.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is guided by the statutory timescales for the adoption approval process and prospective adopters are asked to ensure that they can meet these at the start of the assessment. This is a child-focused process, and applicants are expected to understand our commitment is to the welfare of children needing permanence through adoption.

Once an adopter's approval as adopters is confirmed the allocated social worker will work with the adopters to identify a child who will benefit from the skills and experience of the prospective adopters. This will include working with colleagues in the Family Finding team and referring children to other agencies and to Link Maker.

The adopters' social worker will continue to play an active role in the child's placement and will support the parents in their role as adoptive parents. They will prepare a court report in relation to the court application for an Adoption Order.



Family Finding

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption have dedicated Family Finding Social Workers who have knowledge of all the children from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who may need an adoptive placement.

The Family Finding Social Workers will regularly review the permanency plan for the child and once it is clear adoption is the plan for a child active family finding will start.

Family finding activity includes early information sharing of children with a plan for adoption with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption approved adopters, the use of exchange events and adoption activity days where required as well as forums such as Link Maker.

When a child is identified by an adopter, there will be a series of meetings with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption and the Local Authority or other agency where applicable, to ensure that adopters have full information about the child – as far as is available. This will include meeting with the Medical Advisor, the current foster carer, the child's school, when applicable, and a child appreciation day to gather detailed information about the

child's experiences and history to date. Prospective adopters are entitled to all available information about the child that they are considering and will need to feel confident that all information about the child has been shared with them.

When a child is placed for adoption with a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption approved adopter the allocated social worker for the adopters will visit the placement regularly and reports will be provided to the placing authority. The allocated Social Worker will also attend all reviews and any other meetings that are convened in relation to the placement.

If a child is placed on a Foster to Adopt basis when the final care plan is not yet determined, the placement will be supervised, managed, and supported in line with fostering regulations.





Panel

The Adoption Panel for the region is constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations, and guidance.

There is a central list of over 20 approved panel members, including three Chairs and a Vice-Chairs. The work of the panel is supported by a Panel Adviser and Panel Administrators.

Members of the Adoption Panel include individuals with personal experience of adoption, adopters and adopted adults and other independent members with professional experience of adoption, fostering and looked after children. Panels are balanced as far as possible in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and experience.

The purpose of the panel is to consider all applications for approval from prospective adopters and make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker. The panel considers all applications for the approval of a match between a child/ren from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption and suitable adopters. This recommendation goes to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for the relevant Local Authority of the child being placed.

The panel also consider placements for adoption where the birth parent(s) request their child be adopted. The recommendation of the match goes to the ADM for the relevant Local Authority.

The panel consider, on occasion, 'brief reports' on adoption applications during Stage 2 on whether the assessment to approve adopters should continue if the agency is considering terminating the assessment. The recommendation is made to the Agency Decision Maker for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption.

The panel consider reports on disrupted placements, reports of any case referred to the IRM and advises on lessons to be learned.

The panel perform a quality assurance function, commenting on the standard of reports received and the quality of assessments.

The panel members will be provided with training, including mandatory courses, such as equality and diversity, safeguarding and other learning events relevant to panel activity.



Adoption & Special Guardianship Support:

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption offers its approved adopters and the partner local authority special guardians support post placement and post order. Post placement support is provided by both the allocated child's social worker and the adoption social worker. Once a child is adopted, support is provided by the adoption & special guardianship support team.

Statutory adoption support for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption provides a range of adoption support services, advice, guidance and information regarding relevant services including counselling, birth records counselling, support with contact arrangements (direct and letterbox), intermediary services, access to adopter peer support and more targeted support through access to therapeutic support via the adoption support fund.

Upon receipt of a referral for support, an initial assessment will be completed to outline the identified needs for the family to which support will then be provided. Services can include advice and guidance, parenting support, family work and individual work with children.

Some of these services are delivered through the Adoption Support Fund. The team also carries out reviews of any financial support requests from families including a needs-based assessment alongside an understanding of their financial circumstances.

There are other statutory services that the team will provide including birth records counselling, intermediary services, counselling for birth relatives and life story work.

The team facilitate regular support groups for children and families.

There are three post box co-ordinators that sit within the Adoption and Special Guardianship.

The support team facilitate indirect contact for children whom Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have placed for adoption. The team will also support families where there are plans for direct contact between the children and their birth families.

The team provide families with a duty line so families and individuals can access advice and guidance with ease.



Monitoring Performance:

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption undergo regular internal and external scrutiny to ensure that services are robust and of good quality. This will be achieved by:

Supervision & oversight of the service:

All social workers/senior practitioners/ managers receive regular reflective supervision and annual appraisal. The frequency depends on the needs of the supervisee but is generally not less than monthly.

File audits are undertaken by Managers to ensure compliance and to identify good practice and areas of improvement. Report monthly on service performance to the Assistant Director.

Report annually to Corporate level (Elected Members). Complete the annual report for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption to be available to the wider organisation.

Ofsted will inspect regularly as part of the wider Children's Services inspection framework to ensure that our Fostering Service complies with legislation and regulatory standards set against the National Minimum Standards.

Safeguarding:

All safeguarding issues or serious concerns about placements are discussed with the Head of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption and/or Head of Service for the local authority by the relevant Manager and are acted on and recorded by the social worker in accordance with the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

All safeguarding concerns are promptly investigated to ensure that children are safe and receiving appropriate care and that any lessons about the future operation of the service are disseminated and learnt.

Adopter and Carer feedback on the service:

Evaluation forms are completed by prospective adopters/carers and adopters at key points in the adoption process, including those who have attended: the information events; preparation and training groups; panel; post placement and post adoption orders.

Compliments/complaints feedback

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adoption welcomes feedback from service users on the service they receive, including complaints and compliments. Service users are provided with a leaflet about the complaints process. The outcomes of complaints are monitored to ensure that lessons are learned, and service provision can be improved as a result.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Complaints Process can be accessed from the link below:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/contact-us/council-complaints-procedures/childrens-services-representation-and-complaint-procedure>

Agency Decision Maker:

The ADM for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is Simon Green, Strategic Change Management Advisor, Cambridgeshire County Council & Peterborough City Council.



Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Adoption

Adoption & Permanence Panel

Agency Advisor –
Jade Cullum

Panel Admin

Panel Admin

Tony Darnell –
Marketing & Comms Manager

Marketing Assistant

Assessment & Family Finding Service – 0300 123 1093

Ricky Cooper – Assistant Director

Joanne Banks – Head of Service

Chris Clipston –
Team Manager (Assessment Lead)

Senior Practitioner Assessment

Social Worker Assessment

Social Worker Assessment

Senior Practitioner Family Finder

Recruitment Officer

Social Worker Family Finder

Tom Hey – Team Manager – (Family Finding Lead)

Senior Practitioner Assessment

Social Worker Assessment

Social Worker Assessment

Senior Practitioner Family Finder

Social Worker Assessment

Social Worker Assessment

Adoption & Special Guardianship Support Team – 01480 379679

Kelly Johnson –
Team Manager

Senior Practitioner

Senior Practitioner

Social Worker

Senior Practitioner

Social Worker

Therapeutic Family Worker

Post Box Co-Ordinator

Post Box Co-Ordinator

Post Box Co-Ordinator

Business Support Assistant Family Finding Focus
Business Support Assistant Assessment Focus

Business Support Manager – Ruth Edley
Business Support Assistant

Business Support Assistant

Contact Details

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption is based at:

Scott House, 5 George Street
Huntingdon, PE29 3AD

Information about the Cambridgeshire and
Peterborough Adoption can be accessed via:

Website: **www.cpadoption.co.uk**

Email: **Adoptionenquiries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

Phone: **0300 123 1093**

Cambridgeshire County Council – Customer Care Team Children's Services:

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Cambridge CB3 0AP

Phone: **01223 699664 or 01223 714765**

(or 0345 045 5203)

Text: **07795 092404**

Email: **Childrens.ServicesFeedback@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

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(Office for Standards in Education,
Children's Services and Skills)

Ofsted checks the work of the social
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