



## North Lincolnshire Adoption Service

### Adoption: The Person Behind the Phone Call

In North Lincolnshire we have children waiting with a plan of adoption, but not yet placed, who are currently in foster care. Matching these children to prospective adopters, whilst also providing continued care and support, requires skill, dedication, experience and empathy. It is often a daunting prospect to first pick up the phone and enquire about adoption but, rest assured, here at North Lincolnshire, adoption social workers like Michaela Tataryn, are ready and able to provide the best possible help.

Michaela, a mother and grandmother from North Lincolnshire, always knew she wanted to be in the caring profession. After working in playgroups and nurseries she followed in the footsteps of her aunt in qualifying as a social worker. Thirteen years ago Michaela started working for the adoption and fostering team and then specialised in adoption after five years. She considers her job to be a vocation and “part of who she is”. Although most days involve time spent with children, time spent with adults and some paper work, Michaela said there’s no such thing as a typical day:- **“You can never guarantee when you come to work in the morning what it’s going to be like and it’s not a nine-to-five job. You’ve got to balance the fact that you’re working with people and people’s needs don’t just happen during work time.”**

Around 99% of children placed for adoption have some form of contact with their birth family and this is done through the letter box scheme which Michaela manages. The adopters will write an update on how the child is doing and birth family members are encouraged to write back with all correspondence sent and received via the adoption service. **“It helps children with their identity by giving them a link to their past that they can use in the future.”**

In fact birth families are never forgotten at North Lincolnshire’s Adoption Service where there is also a birth parent support group which meets regularly. This helps the families of children who have been placed for adoption. **“We support them through their own feelings of loss and bereavement and try to look at how they can**

**change their lives so that they're in the best possible situation if they go on to have children in the future."**

Matching the right child with the right adoptive parent or parents is perhaps one of the most vital roles of an adoption social worker. Michaela also believes it's vital to help the adopters think about their skills and parenting abilities. Many of the children come from complex, often neglectful, backgrounds which can make parenting more of a challenge. **"Even when things are difficult there are things we can assist with, there are services that can be put in to try and help a family form relationships where it might be really hard. And we do offer a high level of support to our families."** In spite of past traumas, many children go on to have strong and positive relationships with their adoptive family and Michaela said she's lucky to see them become confident and able adults:- **"For me watching those children grow with a family and seeing the amazing relationships that parents and children then share is incredible. It's something that still makes me want to come to work every morning"**.

Nationwide there is an acute shortage of foster carers and potential adopters, especially of siblings, older children and children with complex needs. This is also the case in North Lincolnshire where there is always a staff member on duty ready to take the call from potential adopters. Michaela said that this first phone call must be really difficult:- **"I would always say to try and be open minded, pick the phone up, and someone will talk you through it. Then hopefully as soon as you're ready to start working with us I hope you'll see that we're there to support and to think about whether adoption's right and, if it is, to prepare people for the parenting experience ahead."**

At the end of a long working day, Michaela Tataryn is happy to be part of a strong, supportive and friendly team. She has no doubt that being an adoption social worker is worth it if it means even just one more child can be cared for within a safe, secure family unit. Ultimately it's not the sort of work that Michaela will ever leave behind:- **"There will always be children that stay with me and when I'm an old lady I shall think about them. For me it's just the incredible abilities that adoptive parents have to be able to look after children that might have difficult things to work through and it just makes me feel very fortunate that I come into contact with them."**

# **How you can help? Spread the word! North Lincolnshire is looking for adopters!**

North Lincolnshire is looking for adoptive parents. Do you think you are who we are looking for? We are looking for people who can make a real difference to the children we care for.

We know that making the decision to adopt is one of the biggest steps that anyone can take but it is also one of the most rewarding. We would like to hear from people who can offer time, commitment, patience and a loving and stable home. There is no such thing as a 'typical' adopter and we want people who have different experiences and different things to offer. This is to reflect the various different ages and needs of the children we are family finding for.

We welcome all applicants over the age of 21 years including:

- Married couples or couples living together in a stable relationship
- Same sex couples living together or in a civil partnership
- Single applicants

We welcome interest from those who live in North Lincolnshire and from those who live outside of North Lincolnshire. We are always looking for adopters that we will be able to place North Lincolnshire children with.

We do not discriminate on the grounds of age, class, culture, disability, race or sexual orientation.

Give us a ring on 01724 297024 to find out when our next Information Event is and / or to speak to an adoption social worker. It may not be Michaela you speak to but all our workers are as committed as Michaela in making a real difference to the children we care for.

**North Lincolnshire Council, Make A Real Difference and Adopt**