

SAFE WELL PROSPEROUS CONNECTED

# North Lincolnshire Council Statement of Purpose for Special Guardianship 2021 - 2022



**North  
Lincolnshire  
Council**

[www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

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**Appendix 1 – Adoption Team Structure – North Lincolnshire**

***This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please phone 01724 297024 if you need any of these or any other help to access North Lincolnshire’s services.***

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This Statement of Purpose explains the aims, objectives and services provided by North Lincolnshire Council's Adoption Service with regards to Special Guardianship. It is made available to staff, Special Guardians and the general public.

The main responsibilities the service has, which the Statement of Purpose, sets out are: -

- The organisation and running of North Lincolnshire Council's Post Adoption Letterbox Contact Service. Currently, we are managing over 200 arrangements for children who are in either adoptive or Special Guardianship arrangements.
- The provision of post order support services in respect to Special Guardianship, as identified within the core offer. Taking a 'One Family' approach, support is provided by the right service for the right family and where it is felt there are more holistic needs then support can also be provided by our Family Support Services alongside the identification of other universal services.

SGO Assessment Reports are completed by the allocated Social Worker for the Child and quality assured by their Practice Supervisor. The Adoption Service coordinates the completion of the support plan pre order which outlines the supports to be in place post order.

Alongside this document, a Young Person's Statement of Purpose has also been completed.

All information is correct as of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

This document will be revised annually unless there are any significant in year changes.

The Adoption Service is registered with;

**OFSTED**

**Piccadilly Gate**

**Store Street**

**Manchester**

**M1 2WD**

**Telephone 0300 123 1231**

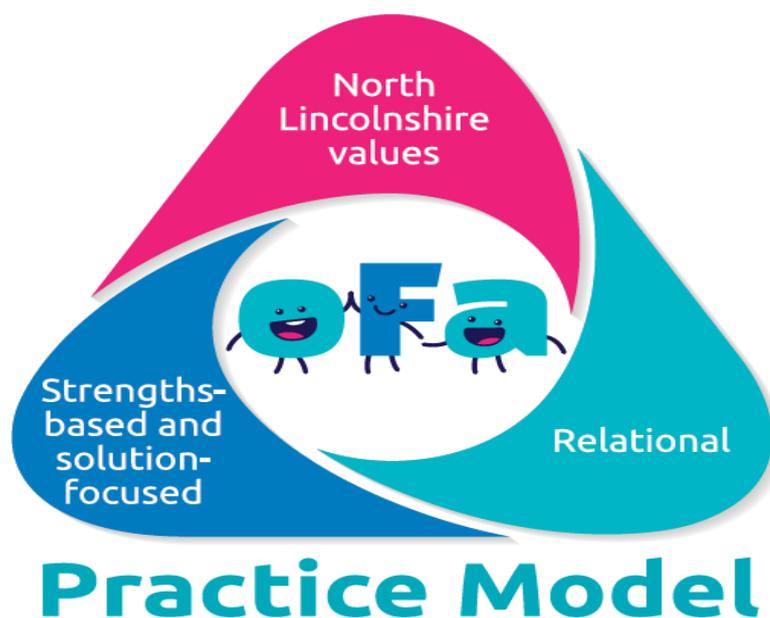
**Email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)**



Our One Family Approach aims to create a system that works for all children, young people and families, where we work together to provide and commission integrated services for children and young people.

Our ambition is for children to be in their family, in their school and in their communities.

Within this, the **One Family Approach - Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire 2020/24** document sets out how services support children, young people and families to participate, find help online and in their networks and communities, be resilient and stay independent.



**We want all children, young people and families to be able to build upon their strengths and develop their resilience** to find or be enabled to find solutions when things are not going so well. They should be able to access available information, advice, guidance and be enabled to maximise their life chances.

Central to this is a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This commitment is inherent in our council values of equality of opportunity, excellence, self-responsibility, and integrity, and underpins our focus on prioritising the most vulnerable. Additionally, North Lincolnshire Council believes that it is our role, and indeed our responsibility alongside our partners, to challenge racism and prejudice in all its forms by upholding our values and the highest standards of behaviour, and by committing to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices to reduce inequalities.

## 2. VALUES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WORK

### Values

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the Special Guardianship process.
- Children in Special Guardianship arrangements should have an enjoyable childhood and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the process.
- Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of the children waiting to achieve permanency.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.
- Children, Birth Parents and Special Guardians will be valued and respected.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved is essential to deliver the best outcomes for children.

The Adoption Service is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This commitment is inherent in the council values of equality of opportunity, excellence, self-responsibility, and integrity, and underpins our focus on prioritising the most vulnerable. Additionally, the Adoption Service believes that it is our role, and indeed our responsibility alongside our partners, to challenge racism and prejudice in all its forms by upholding our values and the highest standards of behaviour, and by committing to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices to reduce inequalities.

### We ask that Special Guardians;

- Be aware that being a Special Guardian often brings challenges as well as joy and ask them to be realistic about the needs of children and young people who have experienced difficult life experiences.
- Make the most of opportunities to develop their parenting skills and seek support when needed at the earliest stage.
- Do all they can to enable the child they are Special Guardian for to feel loved and secure and to reach their full potential.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

- North Lincolnshire Council aims to deliver a high-quality service which meets the needs of its service users. This includes children who are living in Special Guardianship arrangements.
- The welfare of any child is the paramount consideration of all services provided by the Council and the safeguarding of every child's welfare, safety and security is at the heart of the work of the service. We will ensure that children feel safe and are safe and that they understand how to protect themselves. The safety and protection of children will be promoted and addressed through the functions of the North Lincolnshire Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding arrangements, effective multi-agency working and clear procedures in line with 'Working Together' guidance 2018. Safer Recruitment practices and regular child protection training for staff and volunteers will all be integral to safeguarding.
- Where it is not possible or safe for children to be brought up with their Birth Parents, we will work with everyone concerned to help the child to move on to a permanent and stable home. Special Guardianship is seen as a positive means of providing stability and permanence for children who cannot live with their Birth Parents. Where Special Guardianship is identified as the appropriate care plan for a child, we will work together with all others involved in the child's life to ensure that this happens without delay. This is achieved through early intervention, timely decision-making, and effective planning with regard to relevant timescales. Children with a plan of Special Guardianship are referred to the adoption service early to enable early consideration of support needs post order.
- Our approach is underpinned by all working closely together, performance reporting and monitoring processes that review family finding activity; the assessed needs of children and identified specific additional steps to be taken in order to secure a suitable permanent home. Throughout we will remain mindful of each child's stage of development and 'time in the life of the child'.
- We recognise the lifelong impact of Special Guardianship and we aim to deliver support to all parties at all stages in the process. Provision of services will reflect the assessed needs of each service user. The overall aim being to ensure that each child who receives a service from the Adoption Service is provided with the opportunity, through the care offered by their Special Guardians and through the support of North Lincolnshire Children's Services and partner agencies, to develop to their full potential and achieve positive outcomes in terms of their safety, education, health, leisure activities, and self-esteem and identity.
- We will actively promote the educational achievement of children in partnership with Special Guardians.
- We aim to help children to develop a positive self-esteem, emotional resilience and knowledge of their background as a means of supporting and valuing their diversity and identity needs. We recognise that achieving these outcomes demand a clear focus on the specific individual needs of children coupled with an awareness of the implications of Special Guardianship. Some of the main elements of this are:

1. *High quality Special Guardianship assessment reports, which are quality assured.*
  2. *A commitment to the careful preparation of children through direct work and keeping children informed throughout the process.*
  3. *Children with a plan of Special Guardianship will be carefully prepared, using direct work techniques and the appropriate Children's Guide. They will have a personalised record of their family and personal history to keep.*
  4. *Special Guardians will be assessed on their capacity to safely meet the needs of children for whom Special Guardianship is the plan.*
  5. *Contact plans that are based on the assessed needs of the child and which are reviewed where required, taking into account the wishes and views of all involved.*
- The voice of children is critical to achieving the best possible outcomes for them. We are therefore committed to listening to children and to taking their views, wishes and feelings into account when making decisions on their behalf. We have developed a range of consultation and participation processes to ensure that all children are consulted, unless by virtue of their age – for example a baby or infant - and level of understanding makes ascertaining their views, wishes and feelings not possible.
  - A variety of methods or approaches are used to establish children's views including play or direct work, questionnaires, and interviews. Where children are disabled and are unable to express their views and feelings verbally or in writing we ensure that they have access to other means of communication such as IT or through a specialist professional who possesses the requisite communication skills.
  - Children can also access advocacy and be given advice with regard to contacting the Children's Commissioner and Ofsted.
  - To work in partnership with education professionals, health professionals and other organisations to develop and deliver informed, responsive and effective support services to all parties affected by Special Guardianship. These services should reflect the implications of Special Guardianship.
  - The service aims to involve birth families as much as possible, treating them with openness and respect and encouraging full participation wherever possible. To help birth families maximise the contribution they can make to promoting and preserving their child's heritage and sense of identity. We recognise the specific needs of birth families in the process and provide or help access services, which take account of their feelings of loss and grief.
  - Appropriately, qualified and experienced practitioners will deliver all services.

#### 4. WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE SERVICE

Everyone during 2020/21 has experienced an unprecedented event with COVID 19. This has meant that we have had to adapt as a service and find different ways in which to carry out business safely for those we are working with and ourselves. It is with pride that we can say that throughout COVID 19 we have continued to provide a service and that it has been a service that has been valued by those we are working with. Alongside, a testament to the commitment of the staff team.

We have sought the views of those we have worked with, in particular, as we plan for the future, to help inform us of what has worked and what we can continue to develop.

Overall, the questionnaires evidenced a satisfaction with the virtual way that we were working and direct quotes are as follows;

*'We value the level of support we are receiving'*

*'The contact [with their worker] had increased during lockdown' and they were appreciative of this*

*'I know that you are always there if I need help or advice. You are doing a good job'*

*'It has been fantastic to have support at the end of the phone. To be able to speak to someone who understands the challenges we are facing'*

*'Agreeing a contact plan via telephone which has been maintained over time has been helpful'*

*'Agreeing when that contact will occur via text so I can plan around home schooling has also been useful'*

*'It has been both invaluable and provided a fresh perspective on managing my child's behaviour'*

*'Having the collaborative support with Family Support Service and Adoption has enabled change and the workers are a credit to the service'*

*'Support to get our children a place in school has been beneficial for the whole family'*

*"Support to ensure my child had a place in school over the holiday periods was essential' and was provided"*

*'Telephone contact which is co-ordinated with the Barnardos Therapist has meant that support is spaced out in the week and collaborative in nature'*

*'Agreeing when that contact will occur via text so I can plan around commitments to relatives has been helpful'*

## 5. SERVICE AND STAFFING

Special Guardianship arrangements are overseen by the North Lincolnshire Adoption Service in conjunction with colleagues and partners in other areas including the FaSST service who provide bespoke support to families where it is needed. There is a strong culture amongst all staff of continuously looking at ways in which we can improve and develop the services we provide. This is reflected in our performance.

Staffing within the Adoption Service includes:

- 1 x Service Manager with a lead responsibility for adoption and SGO arrangements
- 1 x Practice Supervisor
- 7.5 FTE Social Workers – one of whom has specific responsibility for the coordination and oversight of support to SGO arrangements

All appointments working directly with children are subject to safer recruitment procedures and all staff receives regular supervision, appraisal and development opportunities including training and shadowing. Frequent team meetings are held and regular team days. The staff have a strong value base of providing our children with high quality, safe and nurturing family-based care which best meets their needs and achieves optimal outcomes.

**Please see appendix 1 for the Structure Chart.**

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### Service user consultation

The feedback we receive as a service is important and we use this feedback to develop our services. Seeking, listening to and responding to the feedback are key ways in which the Adoption Service works with service users.

We collect feedback and consult via the following methods;

- Collecting verbal feedback that is given to us via support groups and social events that we hold.
- All prospective Special Guardians give written comments about their support plan.
- Service users are invited to complete a questionnaire about the service they have received.
- We ascertain birth families views via the work we undertake with them.
- We also hold an annual consultation event 'Celebrating Special Guardianship'. This is a way for us to capture the views of those families who do not have active involvement with us. We use this feedback to develop our post order support services.
- We ensure that we have a presence at the Council Marketplace Events and Children's Service Events and actively encourage those we work with to give feedback about our service.
- North Lincolnshire Council also has a robust formal complaints procedure and it is available to those who may wish to complain about any aspect of the service.

Any lessons are picked up throughout the year on receipt of responses. Points for

improvement are noted and shared with relevant professionals, in adoption team meetings and in team training days.

Overall, the feedback we receive tells us that service users in the main are happy with the services that we provide and that they feel supported.

### Supervision and Management

- Staff supervision takes place on a monthly basis as well as informally; quality checks on the work produced take place at regular points in the process
- Staff training and professional development has a high focus in the service and is monitored on an annual basis by the appraisal process.
- Monthly audits are undertaken. Actions arising are followed up and lessons for improvement are shared with the social work teams.

### Performance Management

- Progress of children with a Special Guardianship plan are monitored via the permanency tracker, which the Social Work Team coordinates.
- Monthly performance reports are circulated to Senior Management and Staff.
- Team days are used to track progress and development and also include feedback on quality assurance issues which have arisen.
- An annual adoption business report is presented to Senior Managers and the Council Executive. These reports highlight the range of relevant statistics and comments on performance measures. In the year-end report, there is also a narrative report on the service across the year. This will now also include an overview of Special Guardianship.



## 7. OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

### Preparation for Special Guardianship

North Lincolnshire Council recognises the importance of sensitive and age-appropriate direct work for children to enable them to successfully understand their plan. The primary responsibility for ensuring the child understands their plan rests with the child's social worker. However, foster carers, health service professionals, fostering social workers, adoption social workers and birth family members can assist the social worker in this task.

Many of the prospective Special Guardians that we work with are initially connected persons for the child in their care and they are supported by the Fostering Service. The support they can expect to receive is;

- An allocated Fostering Social Worker
- Access to foster carer training including both virtual and face to face training

### Foster Carers Who Wish to become Special Guardian's for the child in their care

Foster carers who make a formal application to be assessed as prospective Special Guardians for a child in their care will be given the information they need to understand Special Guardianship.

Their assessment will focus on the specific long-term needs of the child in question and will consider the following;

- The quality of the attachment between the child and the foster carers.
- The wishes and feelings of the child.
- The assessed ability of the foster carers to provide a permanent family for the child through Special Guardianship.
- The impact on the child now, and for the rest of their lives, in respect to those particular carer(s) acting as Special Guardians

### Information and Support

North Lincolnshire Council is committed to ensuring that all involved are provided with information and support throughout the process.

All children, taking into account age and understanding, are provided with a copy of the Children's Guide, once a decision has been taken that Special Guardianship is the plan or earlier if appropriate.

The child's needs for Special Guardianship support services are assessed at different stages of the Special Guardianship process. These are as follows;

- Where North Lincolnshire Council is considering Special Guardianship for the child.

- When the Special Guardianship Support plans are being completed.
- Post Order, following a request for support.

After the making of the Special Guardianship Order, support may also be provided if a support plan is in operation or it is decided to provide services as a result of an assessment of needs. North Lincolnshire retains responsibility for any former looked after North Lincolnshire Child for three years following the making of the Special Guardianship Order. A looked after child placed in North Lincolnshire from another area remains the placing authority's responsibility for three years following the making of the Special Guardianship Order.

*\*Please note the above only applies to former looked after children leaving care by way of Special Guardianship. If the child was not looked after immediately prior to the Special Guardianship Order being made, then any support requests go to the Local Authority that the Special Guardianship household resides in.*

Special Guardianship support services are accessed via a formal assessment of need where the request will involve ongoing provision of services. Where one-off support is the likely outcome, this will be provided without a formal assessment.

Any support plan may make reference to other services such as those provided by education or health professionals. These services will, therefore, be consulted in the preparation of the plan.

The primary goal of the provision of Special Guardianship support services is to ensure the continuance and success of Special Guardianship families.

**Examples of post order Special Guardianship support services that could be provided include:**

- Information, advice and counselling.
- Therapeutic services.
- Support for contact arrangements between adoptive children and birth relatives
- Financial support.
- Social Events for Special Guardianship families.
- Training - As a service we continuously review and develop the training we provide to our Special Guardianship families based upon need and feedback received.

Our families are able to access the Local Authority Training Plans and we are continuously reviewing and revising this to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our adoptive families.

We also offer virtual and face to face training, delivered by Adoption Social Workers in respect to a variety of different topics.

Alongside, the above we also offer e-learning which we purchase from AC Education and this also covers a wide variety of topics, for example, attachment; trauma; different therapeutic approaches and identity.

There is a booklet that is updated annually that summaries the support services available. This booklet is called the 'Special Guardianship Core Offer of Support' and is made available to Special Guardianship families.

### Post Order Contact

North Lincolnshire can provide support in respect to post order contact arrangements for every North Lincolnshire child, who had been placed with their Special Guardians and following the making of the Special Guardianship Order.

It is our belief that any contact arrangements (indirect or direct) must always be for the benefit of the child, not the parents or other relatives.

It may serve on or all of the following functions;

- To maintain a child's identity. Consolidating the new with the old.
- Provide reassurance for the child.
- Provide on-going source of information for the child.
- To give the child continuing permission to live with their Special Guardian.
- To minimise sense of loss.
- To assist with the process of tracing.
- To give the Special Guardian a secure sense of the right to parent.

Depending upon what the post order contact arrangements are, if appropriate, the child may receive **indirect** information from their birth family, via the council's Adoption Contact Letterbox Service. All letterbox arrangements are child focused and must be in the child's best interests. The system, which is administered by the Adoption Service, passes information between birth family members and children (or special guardians acting on behalf of children). The type of information passed on, together with the frequency of exchange, are set out in the Special Guardianship Support plan. A review can be requested but all parties must be minded that if contact arrangements have been agreed within the court process, then we would advise them to seek their own legal advice prior to making any changes. If there are safeguarding issues then immediate advice from the Children Services in the area in which they reside, must be sought.

Where **direct** contact has been agreed, the arrangements must be clearly set out within the Special Guardianship Support Plan. Again, where needed the Adoption Service can help facilitate a review of arrangements but again all parties must be minded that if contact arrangements have been agreed within the court process, then we would advise them to seek their own legal advice prior to making any changes. If there are safeguarding issues then immediate advice from the Children Services in the area in which they reside, must be sought.

## **Adoption Support Fund**

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was launched nationally on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. The aim of the fund is to reduce the gap between adoptive children needing therapeutic services and receiving them (ultimately to improve outcomes for young people and families). The fund was then extended to former looked after children residing with Special Guardians.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016 the government confirmed that the funding for the Adoption Support Fund would continue, increasing year-on-year, for the next four years. The Fund remains in place for 2021/22.

The Adoption Support Fund can be used to provide therapeutic support for children.

As a service we will remain responsible for core support and assessments of need, and we will be able to apply to the fund when therapeutic services are needed; subject to meeting the fund criteria and assessment having been completed.

Currently, a broad range of support is provided within the framework set out within the Special Guardianship regulations. A significant amount of support to families is provided in house. However, where it is assessed to be required referrals are made to our local CAMHS or to other therapeutic providers.

We have a good working relationship with our local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. The lead Clinical Psychologist is an Adoption Panel Member and there are also monthly meetings to consider service provision.

**Support to Social Workers and other professionals** - The service is happy to provide workshops on a variety of topics for example;

- Identity
- Post Order Contact
- Education
- Managing Social Media
- Overview of Special Guardianship process

We run these workshops on request and where need has been identified.

## **Bespoke Training Packages**

We welcome being approached from all those working with children / young people and their families, in respect to discussing any bespoke training they would like the Adoption Service to provide. For example, we are happy to go into schools to provide training around attachment. There may be some occasions where there has to be a charge for this training. This depends upon the costs incurred by the Adoption Service, and this is something that would be discussed alongside any conversation regarding a bespoke package of training.

## **Education and Special Guardianship**

We are available to offer support and guidance. Where appropriate we can offer bespoke training to schools in respect to understanding Special Guardianship and how best to support the child.

We provide written information in respect to the Pupil Premium, which details how this is accessed.

## Financial Support

Special Guardian(s) may be entitled to financial support but only in the following circumstances where the Local Authority considers;

- Financial Support is necessary to ensure that the Special Guardian(s) can look after the child.
- If the child is looked after prior to the Special Guardianship Order being made there will be consideration of transitional finances to be paid; taking into account what the proposed Special Guardian(s) were currently in receipt of.
- The child needs special care requiring a greater expenditure of resources than would otherwise be the case because of illness, disability or emotional and behavioural issues or the consequences of past abuse and neglect.
- Provision of specific equipment based upon specific need
- Where specific support is assessed as being required to facilitate contact.

Financial Support may take the following forms;

- A means tested assessment in respect of a Special Guardianship Allowance which determines a weekly payment to be paid. This is reviewed annually by way of a further means tested assessment. All child related benefits are taken into account as we are not able to replicate any child related benefits that the Special Guardian is entitled to receive by way of caring for the child. Support can be provided in respect to this where required.
- Time limited payment for a specific reason.
- A lump sum for a particular item.

Additional financial support to Special Guardians will be considered only in the circumstances prescribed in the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005.

In order to comply with principles of a base rate applying to all types of substitute parenting which involve council funding, the base rate is the same whichever route is chosen so that there is no financial incentive or disincentive for an adopter or special guardian to opt for one route rather than another.

The base rate for an adoption or SGO means tested allowance is set and maintained to be in line with the Level 1 base rate received by foster carers in North Lincolnshire. For 2021 – 2022 this is:

0 – 4:	£138:00
5-10:	£154:00
11-15:	£176:00
16+:	£204:00

A means test is used to determine the amount of finance to be received by each family.

Discretionary additional financial support may be given due to the needs of the children placed with adoptive parents or under special guardianship. All child related benefits are deducted from any allowance paid, as we are not able to replicate these payments.

## Adoption Support Services Advisor

Adoptive families or others affected by adoption may choose to seek advice and assistance through North Lincolnshire's Adoption Support Services Advisor. The role of the Adoption Support Services Advisor is to act as a single point of contact and respond quickly to provide advice, resolve problems, or to help to arrange, where appropriate, for services to be provided. They also work closely with other departments such as health and education to help develop and improve services. The ASSA can also provide advice and assistance with regards to Special Guardianship where required.

The Adoption Support Services Advisor may be contacted by writing to:

The Adoption Support Services Advisor

North Lincolnshire Council

30-40 Church Square House

Scunthorpe

North Lincolnshire

DN16 6NL

Telephone: 01724 297024

Email: [adoption@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:adoption@northlincs.gov.uk)

Further information regarding Special Guardianship Support including the legal framework can be obtained on request.



## 8. DESCRIPTION OF PERMANENCY OPTIONS

The following list provides options when considering the most appropriate permanent care for a child. Permanence with family should be sought as the first choice for a child if it is in their best interests, only when this cannot be achieved should other care be sought. The list should not be seen as a ladder of options. Good assessment and planning should help determine which of the priorities is the most appropriate for the individual:

- Staying at Home
- Placement with Family or Friends/Connected Persons
- Adoption
- Early Permanence which includes consideration of Fostering for Adoption / Concurrency placement
- **Child Arrangement Order/Special Guardianship Order**
- Long Term Fostering
- Residential Care

### **Staying at Home**

The first stage in permanence planning is work with families and children in need to support them staying together.

This involves the provision of to ensure that the child remains with his or her family and it does not breakdown or, where it does, that the child is restored to his/her natural family as quickly as is safely possible.

### **Placement with Family or Friends/Connected Persons**

If the assessment concludes that a child cannot safely remain at home, every effort must be made to secure a placement with a family member or Friend/Connected Person as their carer. This will either be as part of a work plan to return the child home, or as a preferred option of permanency if a return home is not in the child's interests.

It is vitally important to establish at an early stage which relatives or friends might be available to care for the child, in order to comply with court proceedings and avoid delay for a child.

Permanence with Family or Friends/Connected Persons should be considered if:

- There are no significant risks to the child with the birth family/friends or connected person.
- There is a high likelihood of achieving permanence with birth family/friend or connected person.
- There is wider family support.
- Agencies are able to provide sufficient long-term help to support the family/friend/connected person to maintain the child's stability and wellbeing throughout their childhood.

- There is a low risk of further harm or disruption by the parents.
- It meets the wishes and feelings of the child.

## **Adoption**

Adoption transfers Parental Responsibility for the child from the birth parents and others who have parental responsibility, including the Local Authority, permanently and solely to the adopter(s).

The child is deemed to be the child of the adopter(s) as if he or she had been born to them. The child's birth certificate is changed to an adoption certificate showing the adopter(s) to be the child's parent(s). A child who is not already a citizen of the UK acquires British citizenship if adopted in the UK by a citizen of the UK.

Research indicates adoption as a primary consideration and as a main factor to contributing to the stability of children, especially for those under four years of age who cannot be reunified with their birth or extended family.

## **Early Permanence including Fostering for Adoption**

A child for whom adoption is thought to be a likely outcome may be placed with prospective adopters who have been given temporary approval as foster carers. This can be where the child's plan is likely to become adoption, and other options have not yet been ruled out for that child.

Approved prospective adopters can be given temporary approval as foster carers under Section 25A of the Care Planning and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. This temporary foster carer approval planning process can be carried out at the same time as the adopter approval process.

The local authority should consider placing a child with dual approved foster carers whenever it is considering adoption; or where the decision has been made that the child ought to be placed for adoption, and where the agency does not yet have authority to place the child for adoption through either a placement order or parental consent.

## **Special Guardianship**

Special Guardianship addresses the needs of a specific group of children, who need a sense of security, stability within a placement away from their parents, and without the absolute legal break, associated with adoption.

## **Child Arrangements Order**

This is an order that dictates with whom the child concerned is to live; this person acquires Parental Responsibility via the order. The Order can also outline arrangements regarding contact with the child. It may be used to increase the degree of legal permanence in a placement with family or friends/connected persons, or a long-term foster placement where this would be in the child's best interests.

## Long-term Fostering

Long-term foster care can be an option that is in the best interests of children who retain strong links with their birth family, and whose wishes and feelings indicate they do not want or need the formality of adoption. It is also used when the carers wish for continued involvement of the Local Authority, with shared parental responsibility.

## Residential Care

Residential living is only likely to be considered in very few cases when the criteria for permanence is met and it is not possible, or appropriate to provide a fostering placement.

The needs of the young person may be such that they cannot be met within a family placement or it may be the wishes and feelings of the young person not to live within a family.

## Final Note;

The decision between the options will depend on the individual needs of the child set alongside the advantages and disadvantages of each legal route.



## 9. COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

At times, Special Guardians, children, birth families and other people affected by Special Guardianship may feel unhappy about the services they receive. The Adoption Service works within North Lincolnshire Council's complaints procedures. If you have a complaint we encourage you to contact the service directly in the first instance. Staff there will do all they can to put things right and resolve the issue for you. If you feel the matter is still unresolved or you wish to complain formally, please report your complaint to;

**Lesley Cooper**  
**Contact and Relationship Manager**  
**North Lincolnshire Council**  
**Church Square House**  
**30 – 40 High Street**  
**Scunthorpe**  
**North Lincolnshire**  
**DN15 6NL**

**Telephone Number 01724 297069**

**Email: [Lesley.Cooper@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:Lesley.Cooper@northlincs.gov.uk)**

If you remain unsatisfied with our response you may wish to contact the **Local Government Ombudsman on 0300 061 0614.**

## 10. FAMILY ADOPTION LINKS NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CONTACT DETAILS

**If you have any questions about anything in this Statement of Purpose then please do not hesitate to contact;**

Karen Everatt, Adoption Service Manager **01724 297024**

**[karen.everatt@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:karen.everatt@northlincs.gov.uk)**

**Address;**

Family Adoption Links North Lincolnshire  
Church Square House  
30 – 40 High Street  
Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire  
DN15 6NL

## 11. OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

### The Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner for England promotes and protects children's rights in England. The Commissioner does this by listening to what children and young people say about what matters to them and making sure adults in charge take their views and interests into account. Contact details are;

The Office of the Children's Commissioner  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
Telephone: 020 7783 8330  
Email: [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)



## Appendix 1

### NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE ADOPTION TEAM

