

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
6 JULY 2000**

NOTE: A copy of the report mentioned below has been sent to all members of the Social Services Committee. Further copies are available from Peter Hull, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford (telephone 01992 555565)

ADOPTION POLICY

An Adoption Panel review, presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in October 1999 highlighted the need for an adoption policy for Hertfordshire (whilst a policy was contained in the adoption procedures there was no single document that could be defined as the adoption policy for the adoption agency).

Following further work by the Panel the Committee agreed a policy as an important statement of Hertfordshire's principles and practice in relation to adoption. This is an easily understandable document which can be produced on request for anyone interested in adoption and which will provide the framework for consistent practice.

The policy is in line with the latest statutory guidance and best practice and takes into account latest research published by the Department of Health in September 1999 and also preliminary general feedback from the Department of Health following the survey of all local authority adoption agencies in August 1999.

Key components of an adoption policy were identified and the policy contains a clear statement of the central values and principles which underpin the adoption agencies practice, together with a clear outline of procedures relating to adoption to which the agency is accountable.

The following briefly summarises the policy:-

Section 1 - contains the statement of values and principles within the legal framework for adoption,

Section 2 - sets out statutory duties of the local authority to provide an adoption service describing in summary how the service is delivered,

Section 3 - sets out the principles and practices of the agency in relation to the needs of children who require adoption placements,

Section 4 - sets out principles in relation to birth parents who can be offered support before and after the adoption of their child,

Section 5 - sets out the agency's policy in relation to adopters in particular giving a clear statement about equal opportunities,

Section 6 - briefly covers Intercounty adoption,

Section 7 - covers post adoption services,

Section 8 - covers the management of the adoption agency

Section 9 - covers a range of additional considerations which have been identified as key practice issues which can cause confusion and misunderstandings,

Sections 10, 11, and 12 - summarise procedural matters in relation to assessment and approval of adopters, placement breakdown and complaints.

The work of the members and officers of the Adoption Panels in monitoring and assessing the implementation of the policy will be reported to a future meeting of the appropriate panel/or select committee.

Julia Price
Chairman
County Hall, Hertford
6 July 2000