



# Applications to Foster or Adopt by Employees & their Relatives

Policy and Procedure

**‘Communication is important, so information should be accessible to everyone. People with sensory communication disabilities may need documents in easy read, large print, audio or Braille formats for example. Others may need face to face communication support through a British Sign Language Interpreter, deafblind interpreter, lip speaker or note taker (as recommended by the NHS Accessible Information Standard). If someone speaks (or reads) a language that is not English, they will need to have the appropriate language-spoken language interpreter and / or text translator’.**

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy provides guidance about applications to foster or adopt made to the Regional Partnership's Fostering Service or Adoption Agency.

## 2. Underpinning Legislation and Guidance

- The Children Act (1989) Guidance & Regulations Vol. 4 (4.12)
- Adoption Agency Regulations 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2015

## 3. Policy

- 3.1. This policy applies to:

- All Children's Services employees working in Partner Local Authorities within the Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership or
- A relative of an employee of the above

- 3.2. It does not include:

- Other employees working for other parts of the Local Authorities involved in the Regional Permanency Partnership. For example, Highways, Libraries Departments.

- 3.3. As a general rule, employees within the Regional Permanency Partnership who wish to foster and/or adopt, should apply to Fostering Services or Adoption Agencies of other Local Authorities or Independent Fostering Agencies, Regional Adoption Agencies or Voluntary Adoption Agencies. This is to prevent a conflict of interest occurring.

- 3.4. The respective Senior Manager with responsibility for the Locality Hub within the authority of employee should be consulted immediately if it becomes apparent that an employee within the Together4Children Partnership or relative of an employee within Partnership seeks to use the service. The Senior Manager will consider each case on its merits to determine if the application can proceed, and if so, what mitigating actions need to be put in place to avoid a conflict of interests.

- 3.5. However, there may be occasions when exceptional factors determine that an application from a member of staff or their relative would be considered. Each case will be considered on an individual basis, judged on merit and a decision will reflect what is in the child's best interest. The outcome will be conveyed to the staff member in writing by the Senior Manager and if positive, the appropriate assessment process will then be undertaken.

- 3.6. Factors to be considered under this decision-making process:



- How much access the individual employee has to information on children, adopters and foster carers.
- Geographical working location of the Employee.
- The nature of the application for example an in family Non –agency adoption or connected person assessments.
- Direct access an Employee would have to looked after children and their families.
- Employees address.

3.7. Control measures that could be considered by the Senior Manager:

- Other localities within the region undertaking assessments and services
- Conflict of interest risk assessment/working agreement
- Consideration of using independent Social Workers where appropriate

3.8. There is a responsibility on the Employee to make Employers aware of a potential conflict of interest in the case where relatives apply through the Regional Agency to Foster/Adopt.

#### 4. Escalation / Complaints Process

- 4.1 If a complaint / dispute should arise this should, in the first instance, be resolved by the respective adoption/fostering Team Manager of the appropriate Local Authority within the Partnership.
- 4.2 If the complaint / dispute is not resolved at the earlier level it should be escalated to either the Senior Manager for Adoption or the Senior Manager for Fostering Service. They will ultimately take decisions relating to this policy.
- 4.3 If an individual is still not satisfied with how the situation has been resolved they have recourse via the Corporate Complaints Process within the appropriate Local Authority.