

Information for Prospective Adopters



**Aberdeenshire Council
Family Placement Service**

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Children Needing Families

The law requires that Social Work's first priority should generally be to try to help families to care for their own children. If a child needs to become looked after by the Local Authority, the plan should be, wherever possible, for the child to return to live with his or her own family. If this is not possible, an alternative, permanent family will usually be sought for the child. A new family will be achieved by adoption or permanent fostering, depending on the age and individual circumstances of the child.

Sometimes the plan will be for the child to remain with his or her Foster Carers, where they have developed a close relationship. For other children, Aberdeenshire Council will try to find adoptive parents. We are looking for a range of families for a range of children. We are looking for individuals and families who:

- Have experience of looking after children and can demonstrate that they enjoy being with and caring for children.
- Understand and accept the need for the child to keep links with his or her birth family, where this is part of their care plan, and can accept the child's history and the importance this has for the child.
- Can work with Social Work, working together on the plan for the child.
- Are tolerant and flexible and can offer security to a child/ren through their childhood and into adulthood.
- Understand the sadness a child will feel and the effects of the separations the child will have had on him.
- Can maintain links with significant people in the child's life, such as Foster Carers.
- Can accept a child whose future development is unknown because of early traumatic experience.
- Have family and friends who will support them when difficulties arise.
- Can cope with the delays arising from a child's uncertain legal position.
- Could consider the placement of a group of brothers and sisters.
- Can consider a reasonably wide range including primary school age children.
- Can keep an open mind with regard to gender.
- Can consider offering a family where siblings can stay together.

If this is in the best interests of the child, it may be recommended as part of the plan for adoption for the child to have contact with birth parents or other family members. Where the family group is not placed together, continued contact between brothers and sisters is likely to be important. The level of contact might range from regular meetings to letters or photographs. Aberdeenshire Council has a Letterbox Scheme, and detailed information is available to all parties, as well as on Aberdeenshire Council's website.

Aberdeenshire Council needs to find adoptive families for around 15 children each year. Our responsibilities lie in finding families for children, rather providing children for families.

Some of the children placed

Lewis (aged 8) and Sean (4) are brothers. Their mum abuses drugs and was fostered for a number of years throughout her childhood. Because of child protection concerns, they lived with foster carers for 2 years, until adoptive parents were found for them.

Because Lewis spent longer in an unstructured situation where his needs were not met, he has more difficulties than his brother: he finds it hard to concentrate in school and is making slow progress. Lewis and Sean were very close to their birth grandmother and their adoptive parents take the boys to meet up with her every month.

Gemma (6) is one of a large family. Her brothers and sisters have been placed for adoption, or with foster carers on a permanent basis. Gemma has delayed development and has speech and language problems and needs speech therapy, as well as additional support in school. She has contact with her brothers every 6 weeks, which reassures each of them about each other.

Scott is aged 4 and has foetal alcohol syndrome. His mother died as a consequence of her alcohol abuse when Scott was 3. Scott has poor concentration and finds learning difficult. He is a lively affectionate boy who is challenging but rewarding to care for. He has always enjoyed a warm relationship with his grandmother and will have contact with her throughout his childhood.

Taylor is 4 months old; she was born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and spent the first 6 weeks of her life in the Special Nursery withdrawing from the effects of cocaine addiction. She appears to have made a good recovery, although still displays aspects of withdrawal; she is quite unsettled in her cot, finds feeding difficult and is at times resistant to being touched, although these aspects are improving. Her development is uncertain and cannot currently be assessed in relation to the longer term as she is too young and still recovering from NAS. She is a very attractive child, with a shock of dark hair and she engages with her Foster Carer - offering smiles and occasional squeals of delight. No direct contact with her mother is planned but Taylor will need to know about her birth history as she grows up in a way she can understand.

Julie (6) and Kirsty (4) suffered severe emotional abuse and neglect when they lived with their parents. Both parents have learning difficulties. They have made a good recovery from this, helped by skilled foster carers, but they become anxious about change.

Kirsty has co-ordination difficulties: she falls over easily and needs physiotherapy. The girls need a placement together and will have yearly letterbox contact with their parents as they grow up.

Names of the children have been changed, for reasons of confidentiality.

If agencies cannot find a suitable family for a child, they might refer the child to the Scotland's Adoption Register, where they might identify a family to link a child with within Scotland or the UK.

Criteria which applicants to become Adoptive Parents must meet

Aberdeenshire Council set out the criteria which an applicant must meet before we will take forward an application to become an adoptive parent. Our criteria underpins our need to recruit families for children in Aberdeenshire who are waiting for or are likely to need an adoptive family and places the long-term best interests of the child at the centre of everything we do. We must ensure that we offer children a permanent family who can meet their needs well into adulthood and our criteria reflect our focus on this. The criteria currently applied by Aberdeenshire Council are:

Aberdeenshire Council will consider applications from:

- Married couples who wish to adopt jointly;
- Couples in a civil partnership who wish to adopt jointly;
- Couples living together in an enduring family relationship;
- Individuals who are married or in a civil partnership but who are applying on their own because their spouse/civil partner cannot be found, or they are permanently separated and living apart or, because of ill health, the spouse/civil partner is incapable of making an application for an adoption order;
- a single person.

Aberdeenshire Council will **NOT** consider applications from:

- Individuals undergoing fertility treatment;
- Individuals who are pregnant or trying to conceive;
- People who are only interested in the straightforward placement of a normal healthy baby.

Where a couple are applying both partners must normally be at least 25 years of age. We will usually consider a maximum age difference of 45 years between the youngest applicant and that age of the child they may adopt, for example to adopt a 2 year old, you would usually be no older than 47. The age range of adoptive parents is to try and ensure longevity of parental relationships where children have already experienced significant losses of primary carers in their lives.

Health & Lifestyle

Adoption is all about children and finding fit, active, healthy and motivated families who can care for children and hopefully be part of their lives well into adulthood is our priority. We take into account a range of factors when considering suitability to adopt a child. Health and lifestyle is one area and we work with NHS colleagues to address these matters.

Smoking

We will not consider families where any of the adults in the household smoke and any ex-smokers must have been fully stopped for at least 6 months. This includes the use of E cigarettes as medical research into the passive impact of e cigarette vapour is largely unknown as yet.

Drugs and Alcohol Misuse

We will not take forward applicants with any current or recent addiction difficulties. We will consider each case individually where this has been an aspect of an applicant's past and work with NHS colleagues to understand and provide guidance. Children who require adoption sometimes come from families where adult addiction has been the reason for trauma, neglect or abuse and we will not risk replicating this for a child in their permanent home where at all possible.

Obesity and BMI

Obesity is a growing issue in the UK and something we must seriously consider in terms of prospective adopters capacity to care for a child. If you are overweight and/or obese, we encourage you to explore the information on NHS choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Healthyweightcalculator.aspx>

We will seek an early Medical Assessment for those who may require support with weight/BMI associated health issues in relation to becoming an adoptive parent.

Issues we will consider and explore with you before taking forward an application are:

- Does the applicant have the physical capacity to meet the needs of a young child? We encourage you to explore this NHS Choices webpage to help understand what children might need:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/physical-activityguidelines-for-children.aspx>

- Is the applicant sufficiently motivated to lose weight and committed to a healthy diet and lifestyle? What has led to obesity and what previous attempts have been made to reach and maintain a healthy lifestyle and weight?
- Does the applicant have full commitment and knowledge on how to provide a healthy diet and promote age appropriate physical activity and exercise for a child and be able to set a positive example?
- Is the degree of the applicant's excess weight such that it might reduce his or her chances of remaining in good health at least until a child reaches independence?

Where a high BMI (over 25/30) as a result of being overweight or obese is apparent, applicants should be advised that the health risks associated with obesity aren't taken lightly and if they wish to proceed, they must clearly evidence through the entire process a commitment to weight loss and improved health. Stamina and physical agility are important in caring for young children as well as the importance of positive role modelling around diet and health. Applicants with a BMI of over 40 – in the Morbidly Obese category as a result of being overweight will be deferred from assessment until such time as they have reduced their weight/BMI sufficiently, to below 40 and advice and support will be available. Continued weight loss and a healthy lifestyle will be monitored thereafter to ensure all our adoptive families can promote and enjoy healthy family lifestyles.

Fostering to Adopt

In most situations where a child has an adoption plan, they will remain 'Looked After Children' by the Local Authority until such time as a Court grants an Adoption Order. This is a legal requirement to ensure that the safety and well-being of the child is monitored and maintained until alternative carers assume full parental rights and responsibilities.

In order to allow children who have an adoption plan to settle into their permanent family at the earliest opportunity, which we know to be in the best interests of the child, Aberdeenshire approves all prospective adoptive parents, at the point of approval, as Foster Carers so that children do not have to wait sometimes many months for legal processes to come to an end before they can be placed with their prospective adoptive family. This means that in most cases, prospective adoptive parents must assume the role of Foster Carer, only for the child they become Matched with and must agree to executing that role.

An early transition to a prospective adoptive home in a Fostering situation may mean that children have ongoing parental or birth family contact and prospective adopters acting as Foster Carers for the child in such situations must support any ongoing plans and arrangements in place for the child until such times as they are concluded or terminated. Prospective Adopters acting as Foster Carers will care for the child throughout the legal process which may take some months and as a result may have a role to play in this. This will be discussed in full with prospective adoptive parents on a case by case basis, however you must be prepared for this role.

The children who are available for adoption often have complicated backgrounds and applicants must be prepared to accept that:

- children may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties:
- some children will be subject to developmental delay.
- there will likely always be degrees of uncertainty in relation to a child's heredity.

The age of the child in relation to the age of applicants and any existing family they have will be factors taken into consideration when children are matched with prospective adopters. We must satisfy the Court that the age gap between parent and child is within ordinary parameters and so in most situations we will allow no more than a 45 year age difference between adoptive carer and the child. Aberdeenshire Council's practice is to place children below the age of existing children in the family and to ensure an age gap of 3 years.

There is an expectation that, where appropriate, childless couples will have moved on from pursuing any infertility treatment, have received medical counselling for their infertility and can demonstrate that they have come to terms with such loss. They must be able to demonstrate as far as possible that they are committed to meeting the needs of an adopted child.

Where it is in the best interests of the child, applicants may be requested to meet with birth parents or other significant family members.

Except where it will benefit a child or children, applications will only be accepted from those resident within the geographical area covered by Aberdeenshire Council.

First Steps

When we receive your Registration of Interest form, you will be offered a meeting with an Adoption Social Worker within 4 weeks which will take place in a mutually convenient place, most probably your home. At this meeting we will establish whether or not you meet the criteria to be assessed as a prospective adoptive parent. If your application cannot be taken forward at that time, we will give you a written explanation. If it is considered that you could potentially meet the needs of children in Aberdeenshire waiting for adoption, our next step is to invite you to an Adoption Preparation Course. We run this course when enough people have expressed an interest in attending, normally twice annually.

The National Care Standards for adoption agencies set out what you can expect from the service you receive from Aberdeenshire Council. (See Page 14).

Preparation

All applicants are required to attend an adoption preparation course. The course offers the opportunity to learn more about adoption, and to help you to consider whether you wish to and are ready to apply to adopt. The training includes:

- reasons why children become available for adoption;
- understanding children's growth and development;
- the impact of difficult early life experiences on the child's ability to develop an attachment to their new family;
- education and medical issues;
- legal issues;
- contact in adoption;
- the ongoing support and information that adopted children need about birth families;
- parenting issues
- an opportunity to meet with foster carers, adoptive parents and adopted people.

The focus of the course is preparation for adoptive parenthood.

Checks

By law, we have to undertake a number of checks and you will be asked to give your written agreement to this. These checks are confidential, but any issues arising from them will be discussed with you. These checks include:

- **Criminal Records Checks** You will be asked to join the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. Having a criminal record will not necessarily mean that we cannot proceed with your application, but some kinds of offences (such as serious offences or offences against children) may prevent us from proceeding. This would be discussed fully with you. Advice may be sought from the Permanence Panel.
- **Medical Checks** You will be asked to consent to medical information being given by your G.P. We will ask you to undertake a full medical examination with your G.P. Medical matters are dealt with by Aberdeenshire's Medical Adviser, who will give advice to the Social Worker and to the Permanence Panel on your suitability to adopt from a health perspective. Having health issues will not necessarily mean that we cannot proceed with your application, but we are looking for families who will have sufficient good health and vigour to parent a child at least into early adulthood.
- **Social Work Records** You will be asked to agree to checks being made of Social Work records in Aberdeenshire and any other areas in the UK where you have previously lived.
- **References** You will be asked to provide the names and addresses of 6 personal referees (not members of your family) who know you well. We will also include family members in the assessment where they will play an active role in a child's life with your family. We run a workshop designed for Family and Friends who wish to support you as adoptive parents to help them understand what adoption means.
- **Health and Safety assessment of your home**
- **Employer's reference**
- **Any other checks relevant to your situation**

If you already have children in your family, we will wish to speak to your children's nursery or school Head.

The assessment should generally be completed within 6 months from the date that we receive your application. It will involve a number of meetings with your Social Worker. The Social Worker must gather information that is required by law, about you, your family, your reasons for wanting to adopt and evidence of the skills you would have in parenting an adopted child. If you already have a child, they will be consulted for their views.

We will give you information about how the assessment is progressing and you can ask for this at any point. You may also ask to meet with the Social Worker's manager.

If the Social Worker has any concerns during the assessment, these will be shared openly with you and if there is any doubt about whether the application should be proceed, advice will be sought from the Permanence Panel.

You will be invited to write parts of the Report. The Social Worker will share the report openly with you (excluding any information from third parties which cannot be shared), and you will receive a copy of it. You will be asked to sign it, and any areas of disagreement will be recorded. You are welcome to provide us with written feedback.

Attending the Panel

The Permanence Panel will consider whether you are suitable to be an adoptive parent. It will then make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker, who is a Senior Manager in Children's Services who will make a decision. All matters dealt with by the Panel are confidential.

Aberdeenshire's Permanence Panel consists of approximately twelve members with a wide range of knowledge and experience in relation to adoption and children separated from their families and includes an Independent Chairperson, Medical Adviser, a Legal Adviser and an Adoptive Parent. The Panel meets every 3 weeks on a Thursday and usually consists of around 6 Panel Members on the day.

You will have the right to attend the Panel when your suitability as an adoptive parent is being considered, and the Panel expects you to attend where at all possible. For the first part of the meeting, the Permanence Panel and your Social Worker meet to identify any matters from the Home Study Report which need further discussion or clarification. You will then join the meeting to discuss any matters that have been identified, to talk through your application and ask any questions of the Panel. You will then leave and the Panel will then consider the application further and will reach a recommendation. Usually the Chair of the Panel meets with the applicants immediately after the Panel to advise them of the recommendation. If this is not possible, you will receive feedback within 24 hours.

The Panel's recommendation is passed to the Agency Decision Maker who must make a decision about the application within 14 days and must notify you within a further 7 days.

After Approval

Where it has been decided that a child should be adopted, detailed information will be available, outlining the child's needs, taking into account the child's religion, ethnic and social origin, cultural and linguistic background, special health needs, needs as a result of disability and wishes of the birth parents. If the child is old enough to have a view, his or her wishes will be taken into account. Where it is at all possible, and in the interests of the children, family groups of brothers and sisters will be placed together.

Permanence Resources Meetings are held every 4 weeks to consider the children in need of an adoption placement, as well as children likely to need an adoptive family in the future. The meeting also considers the approved prospective adoptive parents and applicants likely to be approved. This meeting considers the needs of the child for the rest of his or her life and identifies the adopters who could best meet these needs.

Families who are potential matches for a child are considered at a linking meeting attended by the child's Social Worker, and other members of Social Work staff. All suitable families are carefully considered in turn, to compare the strength of the prospective adoptive parents' capacity to offer the child a supportive adoptive home with the needs and background of the child, with a conclusion reached about the best match. We can provide information on how we match children with prospective adoptive parents.

If you are felt to provide the best match, your Adoption Worker will tell you this and will arrange for you to be given full information about the child.

If you wish to proceed, your Adoption Worker will provide full written and verbal information about the child, will arrange for you to meet with the Child's Social Worker, Foster Carers and Legal and Medical Advisers. They will then arrange for the proposed match to be considered at the Permanence Panel. The Panel will make a recommendation on the match to the Agency Decision Maker who makes the decision on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council.

If the Agency Decision Maker makes a decision that this child/ren should be placed with you, a meeting will be held to plan introductions and the placement. The child will generally move to live with his or her new family as soon as they know him or her well enough to take over his or her care. Our Medical Adviser will provide your GP with written information about the child and we will liaise with the Education Service to ensure effective transfer of information.

Once the child has settled with his or her adoptive parents, their Adoption Worker and the child's Social Worker will discuss with them when the Adoption Petition should be lodged in court. Sometimes a Permanence Order will be applied for before an adoption order is granted – see the section on Legal Information.

Until the adoption is finalised, the child remains a Looked After Child and so their Social Worker and your Adoption Worker will visit you, to safeguard the child's welfare and to support you. Adoption support will continue to be available, after the adoption order has been granted to you, and to any child/ren placed with you. The Social Work service has a duty to provide post adoption support services for children, adopters or anyone else affected by adoption such as birth parents and adopted adults. Where an assessment has identified that this is required, you can contact The Adoption Service, or Adoption Worker.

Adoptive parents have a duty to tell children that they have been adopted, giving more details as the child's understanding grows. The child's Social Worker will provide this background information. Social Work can also provide advice to adoptive parents on this.

The Adoption Agencies (Scotland) Regulations 2009 require a person who has been approved as a prospective adoptive parent to have their approval reviewed in the following circumstances:-

- a) Where a child has not been placed with the prospective adopters within 2 years of approval; or
- b) Where a child has been placed with the prospective adopters and the prospective adopters have not applied for an adoption order within 2 years of a placement and Social Work considers that a review is necessary or appropriate to safeguard or promote the welfare of the child.

Where the prospective adopters are also approved as foster carers for the purposes of adoption, a review must be held within 12 months of approval where no placement has been made and reasons for that will be explored.

Ethnic Background

The law requires us to take account of the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

Wherever possible, Aberdeenshire Council tries to find a family for a child/ren who matches the child's ethnic background. Sometimes this will mean seeking a family from the Scotland's Adoption Register.

Interagency Linking

Prospective Adoptive Carers, where a Link with a child in Aberdeenshire is not envisaged after 3 months of being approved, can be referred to Scotland's Adoption Register/ Linkmaker to be available for children throughout Scotland. This is a system to primarily find families for children rather than for families to find children. Each adoption agency will have its own policies and procedures which will apply in such circumstances.

Legal Information The Local Authority Process

Adoption is the legal process where a parent and child relationship is created by court order.

As explained above, people who wish to adopt have to go through a process with Aberdeenshire Council. This involves the completion of a home study report and referral to Aberdeenshire Council's Permanence Panel.

The Council has duties to make plans for children who can't return home and sometimes the plan will be for a child to be adopted. Children's cases are also referred to the Permanence Panel. The Panel may decide that adoption is in a child's best interests. In that event, the Panel also has to match that child with suitable adopters taking account of the information presented to a linking meeting. Once a child is matched, a child may be 'placed' with prospective adopters, although prospective adopters will have to be aware that the child's legal situation will remain uncertain until a court order is achieved. The Panel makes recommendations only – decisions are made by the Agency Decision Maker.

The Court Process

After the Agency Decision Maker has decided that adoption is best for a child, an application must be presented to Court. The birth parents of the child may not consent to the proposed adoption. If this happens, Aberdeenshire Council may apply for a Permanence Order with authority to adopt from the Sheriff Court. A Permanence Order transfers the right to decide where the child lives to the local authority. The other parental rights and responsibilities may potentially be shared among the local authority and the child's carers. The birth parents may have a right of contact with the child, either direct or indirect. The Council may place the child with the adopters at this stage, although sometimes the placement will have been made earlier. After a Permanence Order with authority to adopt has been obtained, the prospective adoptive parents will have to apply for an Adoption Order from the Sheriff Court. The birth parents may be notified of this application. Adoption Orders transfer parental rights and responsibilities in relation to the child over to the adopters. An Adoption Order will only be granted if the Sheriff believes that the legal requirements are satisfied. After the Adoption Order has been granted, the child who has been adopted is treated as if he or she had been born to the adoptive parents.

Only Local Authorities such as Aberdeenshire Council or "a registered adoption service" can arrange for children to be placed for adoption, and only the Court can grant an Adoption Order. By law, Social Work has to keep the child's file and the adopters' file for 100 years. Adopted people can have access to their adoption file at the age of 16 in Scotland.

Expenses and Allowances

With the exception of applicants wishing to adopt from overseas, Aberdeenshire Council does not make any charges for processing applications from people wishing to become adoptive parents.

Financial Support in Adoption

In order to be approved as a prospective adoptive family, you must evidence that you can meet the financial requirements of ordinarily bringing up a child to independence. This does not mean that adoptive families must be wealthy but we can't place a child where poverty and similar hardship may be an issue.

Help is available under certain circumstances, in the form of Approved Adoption Allowances. These are assessed around the needs of the child rather than the finances of the family and are subject to annual review. The children most likely to qualify for an adoption allowance are older children, sibling groups and children who may have additional health or developmental needs either now or in the future due to the difficult start in their early lives.

Financial assistance can be available to help with the early expenses of preparing for a child to be placed, this is most relevant when more than one child is moving into a new adoptive home.

After a child is placed for adoption, you may want to instruct a solicitor to help you complete the Adoption Petition (which is the application which is lodged in court) and to represent you in court, although instructing a Solicitor is not necessarily required if you feel confident in taking the application forward yourself. Costs are significantly reduced by making your own application, however you should be aware of the risks of the Petition being challenged, which may require the services of a legally experienced person.

The Permanence Panel will recommend what legal expenses will be paid, however this is only a contribution to the overall costs and you will have to meet the remaining costs yourself.

A further cost is for the Adoption Certificate from the Registrar General, and generally adoptive parents meet this cost.

Representations and Complaints

While it is Aberdeenshire Council's aim to provide a good service, if you have issues regarding representation or a complaint, please go to Aberdeenshire Council's website and locate the complaints form: <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/me>

As Aberdeenshire Council's Fostering and Adoption Service is regulated by The Care Inspectorate in Scotland, you may also make a complaint to The Care Inspectorate, Johnston House, Rose Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1UD Tel: 01224 793870.

Appeals Procedure

Adoptive applicants who disagree with a decision by Aberdeenshire Council should lodge an appeal with the Director of Education and Children's Services within 21 days, who will make appropriate arrangements to have the appeal considered. Information is available on Aberdeenshire Council's Website on Appealing Decisions made by the Social Work Service.

National Care Standards

The National Care Standards for adoption agencies are available on the internet:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/924/0011828.pdf

Intercountry Adoption

Aberdeenshire Council offer a service to people seeking to adopt a child from overseas. Currently a charge of £6,129.32 is made for commissioning an Independent Social Worker to prepare a Home Study Report. The charge will be reviewed annually.

The Home Study Report would be considered by the Permanence Panel, where a recommendation will be made to the Agency Decision Maker. The Home Study Report and Agency Decision would then be passed to the Scottish Government. We offer applicants the opportunity to attend our adoption preparation course, and the charge made includes the cost of attending this course. Generally the Home Study Report will be completed within 6 months from the date that the application is received. The Report will include detailed information, as well as police checks, medical checks, local authority checks, references from people who know you well, an employer's reference and a check of your accommodation. Additional costs may be required by the placing agency or the child's country of origin, which will need to be met by the prospective adopters.

Following training, applications for a Home Study Report are to be prepared. The charge requires to be paid at this point, payable to Aberdeenshire Council.

The Adoption (Intercountry Aspects) Act 1999 and The Adoptions with a Foreign Element (Scotland) Regulations 2009

Background

The 1999 Act allowed the UK to ratify the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. The Convention requires that Central Authorities are set up in each Convention State to facilitate the exchange of information and the monitoring of standards crucial to the protection of children. In due course it should be the case that an Adoption Order in one Convention State will be recognised in other Convention States.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/18/contents>

The Regulations can be viewed at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/10/03140947/5>

One particularly important section of the Act makes it a criminal offence, in certain circumstances, for a child to be brought into the UK by someone who has not been approved as a prospective adopter by a UK adoption agency (eg a local authority).

Prospective adopters awaiting a placement from the Hague Convention countries must be reviewed annually until a placement is made. Prospective adopters awaiting a placement from Non-Hague Convention countries must be reviewed every 2 years.

Further information on Intercountry Adoption can be obtained from the following sources:

Aberdeenshire Council can provide a leaflet on Intercountry Adoption. Please phone: 01467 532800. There is also information on Aberdeenshire's website

Scottish Government, Children, Young People and Social Care Directorate, Area 2-C(S), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ Tel: 0131 244 3663
www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/people/youngpeople/children-families/1792/10959

The Department for Education website: <https://www.gov.uk/childadoption>

(NB - although this website contains useful information, much of the legislation referred to is English rather than Scottish and there are some significant differences)

Intercountry Adoption Centre Tel: 0208 447 4753 website: www.icacentre.org.uk

Leaflet "Intercountry Adoption" published by CoramBAFF

Legal Advice

Anyone considering adopting a child from overseas should consult their own solicitor. Aberdeenshire Council cannot provide legal advice. Information on local solicitors who may be able to help can be found at www.lawscot.org.uk.

Adopting a Step-Child or Relative

Aberdeenshire Council can provide an information leaflet for parents, step-parents and relatives, (please phone 01467 532800), and this information is also available on Aberdeenshire's website. Social Work will be required to prepare a report for the Court about the circumstances of the adoption.

Children not placed for adoption by a Local Authority

Where a child has not been placed for adoption by the Local Authority, then the person who intends to adopt the child must formally notify Aberdeenshire Council Social Work of their intention to apply to adopt the child. In all circumstances, Social Work will be required to prepare a report for the court about the circumstances of the adoption.

Information about Aberdeenshire Council

In Aberdeenshire Council, staff are aware of best practice guidance in adoption, and strive to develop the service continuously. Staff are recruited through a process that takes account of safe recruitment practices and are supervised, appraised and trained. We have in place systems for recording all contacts and incidents and management information. We review our service regularly, taking account of feedback, with the aim of continual improvement.

Our Adoption Duty System ensures that an experienced Adoption Worker is available Monday - Friday during office hours to respond to inquiries. Call us on 01467 532800 to speak with the Adoption Duty Worker (they may ask to call you back if busy with other adoption work) or email your inquiry to adoption@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

We also offer a 24 hour Telephone Support Line to prospective adoptive families who have a child placed with them so support and advice is always on hand.

Reading Material

Suggested books mainly available from CoramBAAF are:

Adopting a Child by Jennifer Lord BAAF 2008

Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting The Adopted Child by Holly Van Gulden and Lisa M Bartels-Rabb (ISBN 0 8245 15145, £14.99)

First Steps in Parenting the Child Who Hurts – Tiddlers and Toddlers by Caroline Archer (ISBN 1 85302 801 0, £14.99)

The Adoption Experience: Families Who Give Children a Second Chance by Ann Morris (ISBN 1 85302 783 9, £13.95)

Adopters on Adoption: Reflections on Parenthood and Children by David Howe (ISBN 1 873868 32 4, £11.95)

Next Steps in Parenting the Child Who Hurts – Tykes and Teens by Caroline Archer (ISBN 1 85302 802 9, £15.95)

The Adopters' Handbook: Information Resources and Services for Adoptive Parents by Amy Neil Salter (ISBN 1 903699 08 8, £13.95)

A Child's Journey Through Placement by Vera Fahlberg (ISBN 1 873868 13 8, £23.50)

Helping Children Cope With Separation and Loss by Claudia Jewett (ISBN 0 7134 7766 0 £16.95)

Attachment, Trauma & Resilience: Therapeutic Caring for Children by Kate Cairns (BAAF 2006 £12.95)

If you are considering Inter-Country Adoption

CoramBAAF leaflet "Inter-Country Adoption: Information and Guidance 2006"

Inter-Country Adoption: Developments, Trends and Perspectives by Peter Selman (ISBN 1 873 868 84 7, £16.95)

Further information sources on adoption

- Call us on 01467 532800 to speak to the Adoption Duty Worker or email us at adoption@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- Aberdeenshire Council's website at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- The British Association for Adoption and Fostering at www.corambaaf.org.uk, and CoramBAFF, Coram Campus, 41 Brunswick Square, London, WC1N 1AZ, Tel: 020 7520 0300.
- Adoption and Fostering Information Line at www.adoption.org.uk
- Adoption UK, <http://www.adoptionuk.org/scotland>.
- St Andrews Children's Society, <http://www.standrews-children.org.uk/home.php?id=home>