

Foster carers wishing to adopt - flowchart

Initial Enquiry

At the point of parallel planning:

Childcare social worker asks foster carer/s whether they wish to be considered to offer permanence to the child they are fostering. The conversation should be recorded on LCS.

In this instance, and in cases whereby the foster carer/s or the child are leading a conversation around permanence the carers should formally express an interest in adoption by writing to the Adoption Practice Manager: sarah-louise.rice@suffolk.gov.uk



An 'information sharing' initial visit will be undertaken by an Adoption Social Worker within 10 working days of the expression of interest being received by the Practice Manager. A summary of information shared at the meeting will be completed by the Adoption Social Worker and sent to the foster carer/s within 5 working days of the meeting concluding. In most cases, this report will also inform the Local Authority's position, i.e., whether the LA could support a plan for adoption with the child's foster carer/s. Where this is positive, the Registration of Interest Form will be given to the foster carer/s at this stage.

Where this is negative, the report will clearly state the reasons for this conclusion. In these instances, further re-iteration about the non agency adoption route will be given.

There are instances where the report is inconclusive, due to further discussions/fact finding needing to take place, for example, a legal strategy meeting to inform the child's plan, or a further professionals meeting. This will be explicitly communicated, with clear timescales also laid out.

Gather Information and provide advice



Foster carer/s can approach the Non Agency Adoption Team to express an interest in adopting a child in their care, providing the child has been in their care for 1 year. The expression of interest can be made by e-mailing cypadoptionnonagency@suffolk.gov.uk

The non-agency adoption procedure will be followed from this point.

If the foster carers also wish to proceed, following the detailed advice and guidance they have received, they will complete the Registration of Interest Form submit this to the Adoption Agency. The 4-month fast track adoption assessment begins.

Fast track adoption assessment and approval/matching panel

START the fast track Adoption Assessment

A Social Worker will be allocated to complete the Prospective Adopters Report, this is likely to be a different social worker to the worker who carried out the initial visit. All checks and references will be applied for and run concurrently with the stage 2 assessment, and the carers will be booked to attend an adoption preparation course. The carers previous fostering assessment will be requested alongside an approval panel date (in some cases a matching panel date may also be requested).

A stage 2 assessment agreement will be drawn up with the carers, this will detail topics which will be discussed during the assessment and the dates of visits.

If there are concerns raised during the assessment the SW and their CSW will offer visit/ office meeting with the prospective adopters to discuss our concerns. A Signs of Safety Mapping meeting may be required.

Attend Permanence Panel

Where foster carers are applying to adopt a child already in their care and a Placement Order has been granted (at least 21 days prior to the panel meeting), it is likely that the adoption approval panel and adoption matching panel will take place on same day. A recommendation on suitability will be made by the panel and this will be sent to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) along with all the paperwork. The ADM will make a decision about the approval (and the match) within 7 working days of the panel meeting having taken place.

Detailed information about the panel itself and ADM process are provided by the panel Admin Team prior to the panel meeting taking place. In cases involving specific children, panel admin will also notify the child's birth parents of the adoption match being heard at the panel.

If the ADM makes a positive decision, the placement under fostering regs will cease as the placement will become an adoptive placement on the date of this decision. Transitional payments will be paid from this point, up until two years post adoption order.

Adoption Order Application

LCS Workflow Notes:

- Expression of interest document needs to confirm adopters' conversation they wish to be considered to adopt the child. Consent for references to be undertaken is requested at this stage to finalise the document.
- 'Duty call' and 'provide information' stages of the workflow can be moved through as duty call is not required.
- Following initial visit and receipt of a signed Registration of Interest, can progress straight to Stage 2 on the workflow.