

From your enquiry to the adoption panel: the process

The process of assessing people as prospective adopters is lengthy and intrusive by nature as we need to know a great deal about you and how your life experiences have shaped you as an adult. We will ask you about the important relationships in your life, both past and present, and will want to understand about your support networks and how you deal with the stresses and challenges of everyday life.

We will support you throughout the assessment process and most importantly work with you to a point of agreement about your strengths and capacity to meet the needs of children through adoptive parenting.

Step 1: The option of completing an enquiry form on line, emailing us or telephoning; the choice is yours. You may wish to receive an information pack through the post at this stage or may already have accessed information about adoption on our website and through other sources.

Step 2: We will make contact and answer your questions about adoption and also find out a little about you and your reasons for being interested in adoption.

Step 3: If both parties agree we will arrange an appointment to visit you at a convenient time and have a more full discussion about the adoption process and the kinds of children who are in need of a permanent family. You will no doubt have a number of questions at this stage and we will be interested to learn more about you.

Step 4: Following the initial home visit you may be invited to an 'Information Day' with other people where we will provide you with an overview of the adoption assessment process and the needs of children. After the information day you may be given a detailed application form to complete and this is the beginning of the more formal process of the assessment of you as prospective adopters. The application form requires you to name a minimum of 3 referees, one of which can be a family member and we also ask you to arrange to have a full medical with your G.P. practice. We also require you to complete a 'Consent to Enquiries' form which enables us to carry out CRB and other safety checks that are required by law.

Step 5: The next stage is your attendance at a 4 day preparation group course where you will learn a great deal more about the needs of children and the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting. **See the link on the website about preparation groups.**

Step 6: You will be allocated an adoption social worker, whom you may have already met at the preparation groups, who will carry out regular visits to your home and complete a written assessment called a Prospective Adopter's Report (PAR). The PAR will contain a detailed account of your early life experiences and upbringing, education and employment and an assessment of your skills and qualities and relate them to the needs of children. You will be encouraged to make

a written contribution to the PAR as it is very helpful to the process if prospective adopters are able to express aspects of their personal experiences in their own words.

Step 6: The PAR will be written up and you will be given the full report to consider 21 days before the meeting of the adoption panel and 10 days to submit any comments or proposed amendments. The PAR should be a true and accurate representation of you as a family and it is important that this is achieved.

Step 7: You will be invited to attend the adoption panel that will consider your application and make recommendations about your suitability to adopt. You do not have to attend the adoption panel meeting but most applicants value the opportunity to do so. During the panel meeting you will be asked a number of questions and you may wish to answer directly or your adoption social worker may also provide answers. You will be informed of the recommendation of the adoption panel immediately after the meeting. The Agency Decision Maker has read the reports and receives the minutes of the meeting within a couple of days and makes a formal decision about the matter. You will then be informed of the Decision in writing within 7 working days.

You may have a number of questions about the above information as it is only an outline of the process. If you wish to contact us by email or telephone we will be very happy to help