

Appendix 2: Excerpts from Minimum Standards for Adoption (IoM) 2013

ADOPTION AGENCY STANDARDS

STANDARD 16 - Adoption panels and agency decision-maker

OUTCOME

- The adoption panel and decision-maker make timely, quality and appropriate recommendations/decisions in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children throughout their lives.

Standard

- 16.1 The adoption agency implements clear written policies and procedures on the constitution, recruitment and maintenance of the adoption panel.
- 16.2 The Adoption Panel provides a quality assurance feedback to the agency every six months on the quality of reports being presented to the panel.
- 16.3 The Adoption Panel meets whenever there is business to be considered, avoiding undue delay for all parties concerned.
- 16.4 All necessary information is provided to panel members at least five working days in advance of the panel meeting to enable full and proper consideration.
- 16.5 Prospective adopters are given the opportunity to attend and be heard at all adoption panel meetings which discuss their brief or full prospective adopter's report prepared on their suitability to adopt a child, or termination of their approval, as applicable.
- 16.6 The Adoption Panel makes a considered recommendation on whether it is in the child's best interests to be placed for adoption within two months of the statutory review where adoption was identified as the permanence plan.
- 16.7 The Adoption Panel makes a considered recommendation on the suitability of a prospective adopter to adopt within eight months of receipt of the prospective adopter's formal application to be assessed.
- 16.8 The Adoption Panel makes a considered recommendation on the proposed placement of a child with particular prospective adopters within six months of the Adoption Agency's decision-maker deciding that it is in the child's best interests to be placed for adoption.
- 16.9 Where these timescale have not been met, the Panel records the reasons in the written minutes of the panel meeting.
- 16.10 The Panel chair ensures written minutes of Panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by Panel members and record the reasons for its recommendation.
- 16.11 The decision-maker makes a considered decision that takes account of all the information available to them, including the recommendation of the Adoption Panel within seven working days of receipt of the recommendation and final set of panel minutes.
- 16.12 The child's birth parents and prospective adopters, as appropriate, are informed orally of the decision-maker's decision within two working days, and written confirmation is sent to them within five working days.

STANDARD 22 - Learning, development and qualifications

OUTCOME

- Children and service users receive a service from staff, volunteers, panel members and decision-makers who have the competence to meet their needs.

Standard

Other staff

22.10 Where unqualified staff and volunteers carry out social work functions they do so under the direct supervision of experienced social workers, who are accountable for their work.

22.11 The independent worker for birth parents has a good knowledge and understanding of adoption legislation and process.

Members of the Adoption Panel

22.12 The adoption agency provides each new Panel member with an opportunity of observing an adoption panel meeting before they sit on an adoption panel.

22.13 Each new Panel member is given induction training which is completed within 10 weeks of appointment.

22.14 All panel members are given the opportunity of attending an annual joint training day with the agency's adoption staff.

22.15 Each Panel member has access to appropriate training and skills development and is kept abreast of relevant changes to legislation, regulation and guidance.

Adoption agency's decision-maker

22.16 The decision-maker is a senior person within the Department of Health and Social Care and is a social worker with at least 3 years post qualifying experience in child care social work and has knowledge and experience of permanency planning for children; adoption and child care law and practice;

and where the adoption agency provides an intercountry adoption service, has knowledge of:

- i. intercountry legislation and practice;
- ii. The principles of the law and eligibility criteria for the overseas country;
- iii. The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption;
- iv. The Immigration Rules and immigration legislation that applies to the country in question; and
- v. the implications for children who are (a) adopted from outside the British Islands and (b) being taken out of the British Islands for the purposes of adoption;