



The Centre for Adoption Support

# Bespoke Family Finding Service

A guide for Local Authorities

April 2015





## About us

Adoption Matters & Caritas Care have a combined 140 years' experience in finding and assessing families for children working with Local Authorities across the UK. We have specialist skills and experience in finding families for those children considered 'harder to place' (currently over 60% of all the children we place fall within this category) and a range of special projects and partnerships designed to help us find the right families for the children in your care.

Our support for families does not stop there however: through our unique regional Centre for Adoption Support we are able to offer so much more than a simple family finding service. Our specialist staff work directly with Local Authority Social Workers to understand the specific needs of the children waiting, providing assessment, preparation and support for those children to ensure the best possible match and maintain the placement.

**Our service doesn't just offer an advertising and profiling service, we *find and prepare the right family* to meet the needs of the child.**

## What we offer

We have extensive experience of child specific recruitment and have recently expanded our dedicated family finding team to help meet the needs of hard to place (priority) children. Our service brings together:

### **Child-centred recruitment**

Targeting families across the north west, Yorkshire and Humberside, the Midlands, North Wales and beyond with the skills and capacity to consider children with a wide range of needs.

### **Experienced Social Work Support**

Working directly with your teams to understand the needs of children in your care.

### **Assessment, preparation & approval**

We have a dedicated social work team with extensive experience of placing children with high needs. Adopters will typically also have the continuity of working with the same social worker throughout their adoption journey.

### **Access to ongoing innovative, bespoke support**

All our approved families benefit from free access to a wide range of training and support through our innovative Centre for Adoption Support. The Centre was developed through collaboration with four Local Authorities and its evidence-based approach has been commended by Edward Timpson MP.



## The process

- We will meet with you and the child's social worker to gain an understanding of your needs. We will ask you to complete a referral form and provide the information required.
- We will meet with you to discuss the different recruitment options available to you.
- We will meet with the child's social worker, foster carer and any other important professionals in their life to gain a real insight into their needs.
- A specific family finding recruitment plan will be agreed for each child.
- Our experienced marketing team have proven success in finding families for children with complex needs.



**I'm Tia, I like music, singing & Beyonce!**

Tia is a lively little 4 year old who absolutely adored singing, dancing and her idol Beyonce. There isn't a day when she doesn't burst into song! Tia's foster carers describe Tia as "A whirlwind of energy and noise, in a good way! Tia does need lots of attention and that can be demanding but she is getting so much better".

Tia has a heart condition which means she has to have regular trips to hospital, which she copes with very well.

Tia eats and sleeps well. Tia does have some additional needs and she receives extra support at her nursery which she attends twice a week, at nursery she mixes very well with her peers and is a very popular girl.

If you feel you would like more details about Tia contact us on **01925 534 118** or email: [adoption.support@adoptionmatters.org](mailto:adoption.support@adoptionmatters.org)



**I'm Ella, I love my wellies, getting muddy and geese!**

Ella is a bubbly, little three year old girl who loves life, or carers say she always has a smile for them. One of Ella's favourite things is her yellow wellies and she likes to wear them all the time. Ella's foster carers live near a cat petting farm and Ella loves it there.

Ella has had a disrupted start to her life, her birth family had drug and alcohol problems and Ella may have experienced domestic violence. Ella's birth Mum may have drunk during pregnancy so Ella's adopters need to be aware of the uncertainties around Ella's future development.

Ella eats and sleeps well. Ella's development is a little behind and she receives extra support at her nursery which she attends twice a week.

If you feel you would like more information about Ella contact us on **01925 534 118** or email: [adoption.support@adoptionmatters.org](mailto:adoption.support@adoptionmatters.org)



## Child-Centred Recruitment

Through the child preparation work the information gathered ensures that we have an increased awareness of what the child needs now and what may be required in the future and this shapes the family finding activity. Families can also be assured that they have the skill set and qualities needed to parent the child they are responding to.

Our experienced marketing team know that child-specific 'advertising' needs to be carried out in a sensitive and secure manner which is closely monitored. We will keep you informed at every stage, reporting what has worked well and we will be honest with you about what hasn't. We will provide you with detailed regular reports of enquiries received and if appropriate, reasons why the enquiries were not fruitful.

### **We will develop a recruitment package that *could* include:**

- Rewrite and design of child's profile
- Design child-specific 'advert' as required
- Profiling children through Adoption Matters / Caritas Care existing and prospective adopters through information meetings, preparation groups, and websites
- Adoption UK
- Adoption Link
- New Family Social
- Bespoke social media advertising – Facebook/Twitter
- Bespoke Google Adwords advertising
- Photography DVD

## Preparing children

Preparing children for the planned move onto permanency is a vital step in the process of helping children on their journey before moving into their new family. From experience, we know this process greatly helps the child in making sense of their situation at their own pace and that better preparation makes for better (permanent) outcomes.

Children will be allocated a Social Worker who will assist them through creative play techniques to help them understand why they are in the care system and what will happen to them through the adoption process.

## Innovative, bespoke adoption support

We work closely with families, schools and other professionals to offer a holistic approach to adoption support offering a wealth of training, support, activities and peer to peer support through our buddy scheme. The child is at the heart of everything we do which is why we don't have a set list of options, each support plan is bespoke and tailored to the child's and adopters' needs.

For children with the most complex needs who may have been waiting in the system for some time, we offer the IAAM (It's All About Me) programme which is a national family finding programme working in partnership with voluntary adoption agencies and local authorities. This includes an assessment conducted by the South London and Maudsley (SLaM) Hospital. Further information about the IAAM programme is available at: <http://iaamadoption.org>





### Bespoke Family Finding: what we need from you

You will need to provide a number of documents and consents when referring a child for family finding including:

- Up to date child's permanence report
- Up to date foster carer report
- Up to date medical information (including psychological reports)
- Any other reports considered by Agency Decision Maker (ADM)
- ADM decision minutes
- Comprehensive needs assessment

#### We can assist you with:

- An agreed number and quality of still photos & DVD
- Record of child's preparation and life work to date
- Support plan, with ADM authorised funding if required

### Publicity Consent

It is essential before any family finding and recruitment can commence that full consent for publicity is agreed. This may be different for each child. Our working agreement includes a section on consent and we will discuss this with you during our initial consultation. We cannot proceed without consent

### Local Authority Comments

"The CFAS staff are very experienced in adoption and have a wealth of knowledge. Feedback from the families has been especially positive, they valued the practical strategies provided by the 'nurtured heart approach' and this has been complemented by theoretical understanding of why adopted children have different needs."

**Libby Hardman, Adoption Support Social Worker  
Cheshire West & Chester Council**

"Cheshire West and Chester Council have worked in partnership with the Centre for Adoption Support with a number of children and families over the last 18 months. They offer a tailored specialist service that is both professional and child centred. Their work has enhanced the wrap around adoption support services that Cheshire West and Chester put in place and we would highly recommend the Centre and the quality of their service. The Centre have provided a variety of evidence based therapeutic parenting programmes for our adopters so enhancing the overall positive outcomes for our children."

**Colette Jones, Adoption Team Manager  
Cheshire West and Chester Council**



## Services Provided

Each family finding referral will be dealt with on an individual basis. Depending on the circumstances of the child, the areas you are looking in the UK to place the child etc we will recommend a bespoke recruitment plan for each child. Contact us for our latest pricing guidance.

<p><b>Initial consultation</b></p>	<p>Initial phone consultation and/or meetings with social workers to discuss a child / children.</p>
<p><b>Standard placement services</b></p>	<p><b>The services include:</b></p> <p><b>Child centred recruitment activities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile and advertising stage – approximately 6 months. Child will have their own bespoke recruitment plan. Plans typically will include:</li> <li>• Reading of child’s file and contacting significant people in child’s life to compile holistic picture of child’s needs.</li> <li>• Rewriting and design of child profile.</li> <li>• Child profile featured at Caritas Care / Adoption Matters recruitment events, newsletters, preparation groups and websites.</li> <li>• Child profile to be featured in selected media as agreed which could include – regional outlets, regional employer advertising, social media.</li> <li>• Regular reports of enquiries received and outcome for recording on child’s file</li> <li>• Assessment process including prospective adopters report</li> </ul> <p>We can also offer additional bespoke therapeutic input which is included in our Centre for Adoption Support brochure.</p> <p>We can also work with Local Authorities to complete an assessment of needs which they can submit to the Adoption Support Fund which is also included in our Centre for Adoption Support brochure.</p>



## Services Provided

<p><b>Additional bespoke family finding services</b></p>	<p><b>Preparation and Training:</b></p> <p>The standard preparation and training package can include training courses such as New Child &amp; Parent Workshop, Therapeutic Parenting, Life Story Workshop, Talking About Adoption, You and Your Support Network, Access to a Buddy and Social Support Events.</p> <p>An enhanced optional package is available to meet the needs of the individual child and family. The cost of this enhanced package will be determined by the level of need identified for the child and prospective family.</p>
<p><b>Optional services</b></p>	<p>In addition, we can provide a number of enhanced services to ensure the children have the optimum chance of finding a suitable family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating child’s permanence report</li> <li>• DVD – production, filming &amp; editing of a child’s DVD. This will include input from the child’s foster carer, voiceover and is based on approx. 5 minutes of film.</li> <li>• Set of professional photographs.</li> <li>• Regional or national press advertising will be costed and agreed at time of recruitment plan. For example: Liverpool Echo, Chronicle Series, Yorkshire Post, Lancashire News or other targeted titles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Travel expenses</b></p>	<p>Depending on location, some of the above activities may also incur a travel cost. We will discuss this with you and provide an estimate before we commence any work.</p>



## The Centre for Adoption Support

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