

## ADOPTING OVERSEAS

### Adopting a child from overseas – the role of Shropshire County Council and the Borough of Telford & Wrekin Joint Adoption Service

If you would like to talk to a Social Worker about adopting a child from overseas, please contact us on 01743 241915, Monday – Thursday 1p.m. – 5p.m., Friday 1p.m. – 4p.m.

#### Step 1 – Advice and Counselling

Shropshire County Council and the Borough of Telford & Wrekin have a duty to advise and counsel anyone who lives within the County boundaries who wishes to adopt a child from overseas. In the first instance you will be invited to an Information Meeting about adoption. From your initial contact with the Joint Adoption Service you should receive an invitation to an Information Meeting within five working days. Following the Information Meeting a social worker with experience of adoption will talk to you about adopting a child from overseas. The social worker will be able to:

- tell you about our part in the process;
- explain to you the implications of adoption;
- discuss with you your plans;
- give you the opportunity to talk through any concerns or anxieties you may have

The Social Worker will arrange to visit you in your home. You will be advised to arrange to attend a Consultation Day held by the Inter-country Adoption Centre. Tel. No: 0208 4492562 and will receive written information about the purpose of the Consultation Days

If you have not already done so, you will need to decide from which country you wish to adopt a child.

**Note:** *It is not our responsibility to help you decide from which country you intend to adopt; this is your decision. You will need to gather as much information as possible about the specific procedures and requirements of that country. The Department for Education and Skills will be able to assist you with this. They can be contacted at:*

Inter-country Adoption Casework Team  
Department for Education and Skills  
Area D,  
Ground Floor,  
Mowden Hall  
Staindrop Road,  
Darlington  
DL3 9BG

Telephone Number 01325 391700

Information is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website:

[www.dfes.gov.uk/intercountryadoption](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/intercountryadoption)

Information is also available on the IAC website [www.icacentre.org.uk](http://www.icacentre.org.uk)

Once you have attended an IAC Consultation Day and decided you wish to proceed you will need to contact the Joint Adoption Service and we will make a formal referral to the IAC regarding your wish to attend their Preparation Course. You are responsible for the costs of the Consultation Day and Preparation Course.

Once you have completed the Preparation Courses you must inform us regarding your wish to have a social worker allocated to commence your home assessment. Please note that there may be some delay in us being able to allocate a worker. This is due to our need to recruit, prepare and assess families for the children that are currently referred to this service who require permanent families by adoption. Assessments of families for these children are our priority which means that applicants for new babies, very young single children or children from abroad often have to wait for an assessment to commence.

Once we are ready to commence your assessment we will send you an application form to complete and return to us. We will need to undertake a series of checks as follows:

### **CRB checks**

Completed Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Application Forms, will be sent to the CRB to check whether you have any criminal convictions which may mean that you will not be suitable to adopt a child from overseas.

### **Health Checks**

Your GP will carry out a medical examination of you to check that you are fit enough to adopt a child. You will have to pay for this examination (your GP will tell you what the charge is). The result of the examination will be shared with the Adoption Agency's medical adviser, who will tell the agency whether you are fit enough to adopt a child.

### **Other Statutory checks**

On receipt of the application form, Probation, Community Health Authority, NSPCC and Local Authority checks will also be made.

### **Referees**

As part of the application form, you will be asked to provide the names and addresses of 4 referees, 2 of which must not be a relative and 2 references from family members. These people will be asked to provide a written reference.

Later on in the assessment process, the referees will be interviewed. The reference they give will be confidential and you will not be able to have any information about the interview or see what they have written.

**Note:** *If we are told anything which suggests you may not be suitable to adopt a child this will be discussed with you as soon as possible.*

### **Step 3 - Assessment**

The assessment will include the following:

- details of your background, your home circumstances and lifestyles.

- details of your experience of parenting
- exploring with you the implications of adopting a child who shares few or none of the racial, cultural and linguistic inheritance of your family and who may have suffered considerable early disadvantage;
- interviewing the referees you nominated

The Preparation Groups will have informed you about the implications and complexities of adoption and bringing up an adopted child. You will also be encouraged to find out as much as possible about adopting a child from your chosen country.

### **How long will the assessment take?**

The assessment can be complicated and will require a major time commitment from you. We will aim to produce the final report within 4 months of the start of the assessment, unless we agree with you that it can take longer or there are other mitigating circumstances.

### **What will it cost?**

*You will be charged a fee for the assessment.* You will be asked to pay the amount in 3 equal instalments, the first third on completion of the application, the second on receipt of appropriate checks, references etc and the third on completion of the home assessment. You will have to pay the fee even if you do not agree with the assessment and you are not approved as an adopter. The fee is raised annually in line with inflation.

The fee charged for the Assessment for 2006/7 is £4,118. This is one third of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering recommended fee for inter-agency placements and covers the work of assessment and preparation prior to a match being suggested.

### **Step 4 – The adoption panel**

Once the assessment is completed, the social worker will write a report, recommending whether or not you would make a suitable adopter for a child from overseas.

You will be allowed to see and keep a copy of the report, except for the comments made by your referees or any other report from a third party (eg psychologist). You will be given up to 28 days to comment on the report.

The assessment report and your comments will then be presented to the Adoption Panel. This is a group of eleven people with a special knowledge of adoption. The panel will recommend whether you will make suitable adopters of a child from a named country.

We expect that you will attend the panel and the process will be fully explained to you. In some cases, the Panel may want more information and may ask the social worker to get this before making a recommendation.

### **Step 5 – The decision**

After considering the recommendation of Adoption Panel, the designated Agency decision maker will decide on behalf of Shropshire County Council or Borough of Telford & Wrekin (dependent on where you live) whether or not you will be approved as a suitable person to adopt a child from overseas.

If you disagree with the decision, you have the right to make further representations. Should this happen, you will be given details of the process available to you.

Following the decision the required paperwork and report are forwarded to the Department for Education and Skills. Different paperwork will be required by different countries.

After ensuring that all the papers are in order and that all the evidence required by the country being applied to is included the Secretary of State for Health issues a certificate of eligibility and informs the applicants.

The certificate states that you have been assessed as suitable to adopt and that a child adopted by you will be granted leave to enter the UK subject to entry clearance and the making of an adoption order.

#### Step 6 – After assessment

You will be responsible for arranging for papers to be notarised/legalised as required and for payment of any charges incurred including charges for translation.

The State of Origin decides whether to accept the application and identifies a child to be matched with you. Details of the child will be sent to the Department for Education and Skills who will forward them to your social worker. Your social worker will share the information with you and discuss all the implications. It may be necessary to take other advice (eg Medical) before reaching a decision.

If you decide to accept the match, you travel to meet the child in the State of Origin. You will need to adopt your child in the State of Origin and this may necessitate a second visit. You will need to apply for clearance from the nearest British Embassy, Consulate or High Commission to bring your child into the UK.

#### Step 7 – Status of foreign adoption order.

### **Convention Countries – have fully implemented the Hague Convention**

The adoption orders of these countries are recognised by the UK. Children automatically acquire British nationality providing one of the adopters is a UK national. The order can be registered in the UK with the Registrar General and a UK Certificate of Adoption issued.

### **Designated Countries – have not ratified and implemented the Hague Convention**

The adoption orders of these countries are fully recognised by the UK. However, they do not confer British nationality. They can be registered with the Registrar General and UK Adoption Certificate be issued. To acquire British nationality the child has to be registered under the British Nationality Act 1981 with the Home Office. Alternatively it is possible to adopt the child again in the UK.

### **Non-Designated Countries**

The Adoption Order of these countries is not recognised by the UK. No parent/child relationship is created in British law.

If you are adopting a child from a non-designated country, you will need to obtain entry clearance for bringing the child to the UK for the purpose of adoption. This can be obtained from an Embassy, High Commission or Consulate, in the State of Origin.

You will have to notify Shropshire County Council/Borough of Telford & Wrekin Joint Adoption Service within 14 days of returning to the UK, of your intention to adopt the child. The Joint Adoption Service will then be responsible for monitoring the welfare of the child. When you apply for an Adoption Order they will provide a report on yourselves, the child, and the circumstances of the adoption for the court.

#### Step 8 – Post Adoption

Most countries require post-placement reports on the progress of the child. Adopters have a duty to make arrangements for these to be provided. It is possible to arrange for a local authority, voluntary agency, or independent social worker to prepare these for you.

You are entitled to the same assessment for post adoption support as UK adopters. If you feel that you need support in respect of your adoption you should make enquiries of your local Social Services Department.

#### **Convention countries**

Albania  
Australia  
Austria  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
Burkina Faso  
Canada  
Chile  
Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Israel  
Italy  
Latvia  
Luxembourg  
Mexico  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Panama  
Peru  
Philippines

Poland  
Romania  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Thailand

## **Designated Countries**

### **Commonwealth**

Anguilla  
Australia  
Bahamas  
Barbados  
Belize  
Bermuda  
Botswana  
British Virgin Islands  
Canada  
Cayman Islands  
Cyprus  
Dominica  
Fiji  
Ghana  
Gibraltar  
Guyana  
Hong Kong  
Jamaica  
Kenya  
Lesotho  
Malawi  
Malaysia

### **Foreign**

Austria  
Belgium  
China  
Denmark  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Iceland  
Republic of Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Mauritius  
Montserrat  
Namibia  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Nigeria

Norway  
Pitcairn Island  
Portugal  
St Christopher and Nevis  
St Vincent  
Seychelles  
Singapore  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sri Lanka  
Surinam  
Sweden  
Swaziland  
Switzerland  
Tanzania  
Tonga  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Turkey  
Uganda  
USA  
Yugoslavia  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe