

# **Adopt East Hertfordshire ADOPTION RECRUITMENT STRATEGY 2022-2023**



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## **Adoption Recruitment Strategy- 2022- 2023**

### **Introduction**

Hertfordshire is part of the Adopt East Alliance which went live in October 2020. The Adopt East Alliance is made up of 8 Local Authorities namely Bedford Borough, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Southend, Suffolk and Thurrock. It is also made up of 2 Voluntary Adoption agencies namely Adoptionplus and Barnardo's. Adoption UK represents the adopters voice for the region. As of 1st April 2022, an agreed Adopt East recruitment criteria has been adopted by all Local Authorities across Adopt East which is underpinned by both the Regional Recruitment Strategy and the National Adoption Recruitment Strategy for adoption.

### **National Adoption Recruitment Strategy**

#### **January 2021 – December 2023**

This strategy sets out what the National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group (NARSG) will do over the next three years to make a difference to the lives of children. The strategy is built upon a commitment from all those involved in the adoption system across England, bringing together all the major stakeholders in the delivery of adoption services across England. The NARSG works closely with the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board and the Department of Education to ensure a consistent approach to policy and practice.

## **Regional Alliance Recruitment Strategy**

Adopt East brings together the professionalism, skills and expertise of all eight local authorities and two voluntary adoption agencies from across the East of England.

Alongside the National Strategy, Adopt East sets out the regional steps we will be taking with regards to adopter recruitment.

The Regional Strategy identifies that by working closely together we can achieve the overarching aims as defined in the 'Regionalising Adoption' document. Those aims being:

- A larger adopter pool – created by sharing resources and better targeted recruitment activities.
- Speedier and more effective matching of children with adoptive families.
- Opportunities to reassess approaches to adoption support, address gaps and to develop a more comprehensive training package for adoptive parents.
- Improved collaboration between RAA's, LA's and other agencies in some RAA's.

## Adopt East Recruitment Criteria:

An agreed Adopt East recruitment criteria has been adopted by all Local Authorities across Adopt East as follows:

- Adopt East welcome adopter from all sections of the community, we have children with differing needs that need loving families to grow up in.

Adopt East is committed to the National Recruitment Criteria issued in 2020:

- *All adopters must be willing to put the child and his/her needs first and foremost in all decisions affecting the child's welfare.*
- *All adopters must be able to provide a loving, calm, emotionally stable environment for the child.*
- *All adopters must be healthy and fit enough to keep the child safe, care and play with the child as they grow and support them into adulthood.*
- *All adopters must be able to provide a stable, safe home with room for the child to play and sleep.*
- *All adopters must be willing to respect the child's birth culture and family origins as an important part of the child's identity, providing information to the child as he/she grows up to explain their early life.*

- *All adopters should be supported by family, friends or community who will welcome the child and support the adopter/s.*
- *All adopters must be financially able to provide for the child's needs. If both parents work this includes one parent taking time from work in the first year to settle the child into the family.*
- *Adopters must be legally resident in the UK for 1 year before becoming an adoptive parent.*
- *Adopters must be over 21 years old.*
- *Adopters and those sharing their home must have no convictions for sexual offences or crimes against children.*



## **Adopt East Hertfordshire Placement Sufficiency Strategy**

The Placement Sufficiency Strategy sets out the strategic intentions of Adopt East Hertfordshire in fulfilling our sufficiency duty (Children Act 1989 s22G) towards children in care.

Our local recruitment strategy also works within the scope of this and we play a key role in the ambition of securing permanence at the earliest point for those children who enter care. Our role being to ensure we have adoptive families available to offer placement choice and permanency to children.

### **Aims and Objectives of our Local Recruitment Strategy**

All of the above strategies will underpin our own local strategy with shared values and vision in securing the right adoptive family for every child in a timely way and encouraging a wider diversity of adopters to come forward.

First and foremost, the key value we work to is that all efforts should be made to ensure that children are supported to remain within their birth families and communities. However, where this is not possible, and permanency is required by way of adoption, that this is then achieved in a timely way.

Therefore, the key aim of the recruitment strategy is to set out how we will recruit the adopters needed to meet the needs of children who require permanence by way of adoption.



We continue to identify earlier matches where we can and the recruitment strategy is based around understanding the profile of those children who are likely to require an adoptive placement and targeting recruitment. By targeting our recruitment accordingly, we can look to recruit and assess adopters so that we can place locally in their community. However, we are also aware of the children that are waiting regionally as well as nationally and so our recruitment is also focused upon seeking adopters who can consider early permanence and harder to place children.

We use legal planning and Pre-Birth Meetings to monitor the children where assessments are ongoing and children who have concurrency and adoption plans. The information from these meetings is very helpful in us being able to predict what adoptive placements may be needed.

We have a recruitment timetable in place which we adapt as needed and it includes using a variety of different methods including digital recruitment. We hold monthly information events where those interested in adoption can come along and find out more. We currently have outdoor banners and have made use of the various council wide communications methods.

Our recruitment focuses on the message 'Adopt with Us'. We are looking for people with a range of experiences and from a wide range of backgrounds, with varied personal circumstances, taking into account the differing needs of children waiting for adoption.

In our recruitment, we aim to use our adopter networks, as we know that 'word of mouth' is one of the most powerful things there is when it comes to potential adopters choosing which agency they would like to work with. We welcome interest from any adoptive parents who would like to support in our recruitment.

Adopt East Hertfordshire has a strong record in being able to meet their sufficiency needs as the annual adoption report evidences.



## **Key objectives for Adoption Recruitment in Hertfordshire**

### **Objective 1 - To recruit at least 45 adopters in Hertfordshire**

To recruit and approve 45 adopters annually. The adopters should be reflective of the children within the community of Adopt East.

### **Objective 2 - To increase our recruitment of adopters from diverse backgrounds**

We need a wide range of adopters who are reflective of the Adopt East children and community. We need to be creative in our recruitment approach utilising the skills and advise of existing adopters from diverse backgrounds and working with our partners in Hertfordshire to extend our reach in the community.

### **Objective 3 - To ensure the Support Offer for adopters is appropriate to meet the needs of adopted children**

As Adopt East Hertfordshire we have reviewed our financial support package and we work continuously with our adopters to ensure we provide the best possible support, that is tailored to adopted children's individual needs.

### **Objective 4 – To expand our specialist provision including an Adoption Hub and early placement support**

As part of our recruitment strategy, we will inform adopters that they can have access to support from our Adoption Support Team along in the early days of placement and beyond as well as accessing support from the Adoption Hub if this is an identified need.

## Conclusion

As Adopt East Hertfordshire we work within Hertfordshire County Council bee outcomes framework aims to ensure that there is a shared vision and objectives for children, young people and their families in Hertfordshire. In the challenging financial climate we face, it's particularly important that we can evidence the impact our services are having on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. This framework is embedded in the planning for the Adoption Recruitment Strategy and ensures that children's needs are at the centre of campaigns.

