

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Social Work Committee Operations & Services	Subject: Adoption Service for 0 - 2 year olds
From: Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work	
Date: 24th March, 1997	
Ref: SP/HS	
Author of Report: Sandra Paterson, PO (Child Care)	

1.0 Purpose of Report

To advise the Committee of the proposal to establish and maintain an Adoption Service for children aged 0 - 2 years in Glasgow and the West of Scotland through a partnership approach amongst Local Authorities and to seek approval for North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department to participate in this service.

2.0 Background

This service previously operated throughout the Regional authority. It offered a placement service for the small number of children aged 0 to 2 years who required an adoptive family (approximately forty a year for the whole Region) and provided a recruitment, preparation, assessment and matching service for prospective adoptive applicants. This service was a small but important part of the overall family placement service with the majority of its work being concerned with the placement of older children and family groups.

It is now proposed to establish a similar adoption service for 0 to 2 year olds with eight other local authorities with the proviso that each partner will be free to disassociate from it at any point when this is considered by the authority to be necessary.

3.0 Principles of Service

- * The needs of children who require adoptive services will be of paramount concern.
- * Each partner will retain the responsibility to make its own decisions on individual situations.
- * The partner authorities will not levy financial charges upon one another in respect of services included within the scope of this partnership.

- * The service will uphold and promote high standards of practice in all adoption-related work, and will give due regard to developments in law and in professional practice.
- * The service will promote the importance of adopted children growing up with knowledge about their origins and birth families.
- * Where possible, birth families should be involved in the process of selecting adoptive parents, and in meeting the adoptive parents.
- * The service will strongly advocate the selection of adoptive placements which will meet the cultural, religious and racial needs of the child.
- * Siblings, should, wherever possible, be placed together. If separate placements become necessary in the interests of the children, arrangements should be made to maintain contact between them.
- * Partner authorities will operate with the same eligibility criteria for prospective adopters.

4.0 Range of Services

The partner authorities will work collaboratively around the following areas of activity.

- * Publicity.
- * Initial screening.
- * Information meetings.
- * Preparatory groups.
- * Initial interviews.
- * Formal applications.
- * Assessments.
- * Linking of children.
- * Adoption panel.
- * Review of applicants.

5. Other Information

The Glasgow Baby Adoption Service, mainly Glasgow City Council, will co-ordinate initial enquiries, arrange information meetings, operate preparatory groups with assistance from other local authorities and approve applicants and matchings of couples and babies.

Other local authorities will be responsible for initial interviews and completing assessments.

6.0 Benefits of the Proposals

This service is to be operated amongst authorities on a no cost basis. It will ensure that the same criteria for applicants are applied in neighbouring authorities. It will ensure that children aged 0 to 2 years will have access to a wide range of approved couples who will be able to meet their individual needs and will ensure that approved couples from North Lanarkshire would have greater access to a wider range of children. Because of the larger number of applicants involved, information meetings and preparation groups for prospective adopters will be organised more quickly.

7.0 Review of the Service

Representatives from the partner authorities will meet on a quarterly basis to review existing arrangements and recommend changes when necessary.

8.0 North Lanarkshire Statistics 1st April, 1996 to 31st March, 1997

There were two 0 to 2 year olds referred for adoption during this period. The number of couples approved was eight.

9.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications and indeed there may be savings as North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department will not be required to organise information meetings or preparatory groups for prospective adopters for this age group of children, and costs for publicity will be shared.

10.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

11.0 Personnel Implications

There are no personnel implications.

12.0 Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

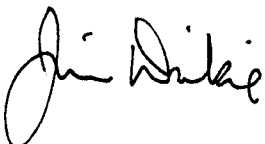
13.0 Conclusion

Participating in this service will ensure that both children and applicants have access to a comprehensive adoption service which could not be provided within North Lanarkshire.

14.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that -

Committee approve the involvement of North Lanarkshire Social Work Department in this service.



Jim Dickie,
Director of Social Work.