

CMB Adoption Support Services

(previously known as CMB Counselling)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Version 4

Reviewed January 2023

INTRODUCTION

CMB ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES (previously known as both CMB Counselling and also simply CMB Adoption Support) exists to provide quality, professional, specialist, independent, adoption support services to adults affected by or working with adoption. It has been in existence since 2006 and was re-registered in 2016 and is now about to be re-registered due to a change in legal entity of the manager. This document sets out the Statement of Purpose as required by the Adoption Support Agencies Regulations.

The Statement of Purpose covers the following areas:

1. The Values of CMB
2. The Aims and Objectives of the Adoption Support Agency; and outcomes.
3. Information about the registered manager and about the organisation.
5. Services provided by the Adoption Support Agency.
6. Procedures for assessing the needs of those requesting adoption support services.
7. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the service.
8. Information about the complaints procedure.
9. Address and telephone number of OFSTED the registration authority.

OUR VALUES

CMB Adoption Support Services is committed to being accessible to all those who might benefit from the service; is willing to take a flexible approach to service provision, responding to the needs of service users. The agency offers a personal and bespoke service, tailored to meet individual needs by listening and using techniques of empathy and respect. At the centre of the service is the best interest of the service user which includes the promotion of self-management through maximising the control that the service user can take in pursuing the outcomes they identify. This latter is demonstrated by clarifying desired outcomes during initial assessment, providing clear boundaries, respecting the progress already made by the client and enabling them to seek support as they need it.

The importance of experience in providing the service is emphasised in order that the service is of high quality and value. The Manager believes in the merits of every individual and provides equity of service provision, working with the diversity of all service users.

Important to CMB Adoption Support Services is the need to offer an ethical, safe and well organised service, supported with thorough policies and well defined plans. Communication by clear and appropriate means is vital to ensuring the service user understands what is offered and is given clarity about what can and what might not be achieved and has genuine choice.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide a counselling / intermediary service for those involved in the Adoption process; namely adoptees, adoptive parents, birth parents, birth relatives and descendants of adopted people and people with a prescribed relationship.
- In so doing to encourage those people to clarify their wishes from our service, to make informed and supported choices, to sensitively make contact with those from whom they may have been estranged if this is the wish of all parties involved and to keep them safe from harm as much as it is within the Agency's power.
- To provide this service with empathy and understanding by an experienced and suitably qualified person, working within a financially secure business and providing methods of communication and accommodation to suit the service user.
- This service will be delivered directly or in partnership with government departments, local authority departments, or charities and other organizations connected with adoption issues, including media companies.
- To support those who are or have been directly involved with any current form of substitute parenting.

The intended **outcomes** of the service are:

- To obtain, from the appropriate source, the information that is available about the circumstances of an individual's adoption and to convey this in a sensitive manner, taking account of confidentiality issues and third party information.

And

- To provide adopted adults or birth relatives with an intermediary service which supports, where appropriate, contact to take place between those separated by adoption.

And

- To facilitate birth records counselling through an appropriately qualified and experienced social worker

INFORMATION ABOUT THE REGISTERED MANAGER

The registered manager is Carolynne Margaret Bull and the service is provided at

CMB Adoption Support Services,

19 Frog Lane

Titchfield

Hants

PO14 4DU

Tel No. 01329 600164

The manager is a qualified and experienced counsellor who gained a Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling in 2000 and belongs to the British Association of Counselling and Behavioral Psychotherapists. She has 21 years of experience in providing counselling and has specialized in adoption counselling since 2002 when she completed the Post Adoption Counselling and Therapeutic Skills Course.

She is the registered manager of CMB Adoption Support Services and provides the service as an individual. There are no further employees of the agency but she values contact with other professionals through a number of adoption support networks. Carolynne has run her own business for sixteen years and has the experience and financial capability to achieve a viable business as demonstrated by her adherence to the required minimum standards and the achievement of good and outstanding inspection reports from Ofsted inspections. The registered manager is committed to ongoing learning and challenge through her regular supervision.

The agency is registered to provide adoption support services to adults as described below.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCY

CMB Adoption Support Services provides the following services:

- Access to records, including statutory access to birth details which are held by other agencies and sought on behalf of the service user. Such information may be summarised by CMB Adoption Support Services with elements of the record copied and provided to the service user. This may involve an element of interpretation of recorded material and redaction of third party information. These facts are often of a sensitive nature and due respect is always paid to the impact that receipt of such information may have on an adopted person. CMB Adoption Support Services will also undertake applications for access to court records. No such information is provided to service users without first meeting them in person or via Skype and verifying their identity by means of photo identification, passports, driving licences or, as an eventuality only, utility bills.
- Advice on searching for birth relatives. This element of the service is provided for adults who have been adopted but wish to search for their birth family. Clarity is always provided to such people that the search may not be fruitful and may not result in contact. It is explained to birth relatives that the adopted person may have placed a veto on any contact.
 - In all cases where contact is wished for but not achieved, the individual will be encouraged to place their name on the Adoption Contact Register via the General Register Office.
 - Although CMB Adoption Support Services does not undertake any more than initial searches for birth relatives or adopted adults, the agency will check search results when provided by a researcher in order that sensitive contact can be made and the adverse consequences minimised. CMB is committed to

establishing that the results of research are as genuine as they can be before making contact, recognising that contact with an incorrect person can cause severe and unnecessary emotional distress. When a birth family member is searching for an adopted adult, CMB rigorously applies the third party disclosure process, acting as an intermediary to maintain the confidentiality of the adopted person. A business relationship has been established with several experienced searching companies which specialise in adoption. This enables CMB to offer choice to the service user and to work with confidence in the experience and accuracy of the searching company. It does not, however, preclude the always present need for CMB to test and challenge the foundation for findings as described above so that contact is only made with those about whom the Agency has confidence in their identity.

- Contacting adopted adults. This service is provided to birth families who have relinquished a person for adoption and wish to find out more or offer contact with the adopted adult. The adopted adult has a choice about whether contact goes ahead and may refuse to be part of the process. CMB Adoption Support Services will always warn the birth family member of this.
- Support is provided by CMB Adoption Support Services for adopted adults, birth relatives and people with a prescribed relationship in searching, understanding the process and potential impact and managing the emotional effect of what they may see as success or failure at the outcome of their search or contact.
- Because of the good relationships developed with other agencies, especially statutory agencies, CMB can liaise productively on behalf of their service users.
- Sensitive services can be provided to those with sensory needs or learning disabilities, if necessary using a third party with whom the service user is comfortable.

PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF THOSE REQUESTING ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

If a person is referred from a statutory agency such as a local authority, it is often the case that part of the assessment of need has taken place prior to the point of referral to CMB. However, CMB Adoption Support Services uses the guidance provided in the Department for Children, Schools and Families practice guidance 'Adoption: Access to Information and Intermediary Services'. Although this practice guidance has been since reviewed, the basic assessment guidelines remain a useful foundation.

When a referral is initially received or if a person makes contact directly, this contact is always acknowledged and the person is advised when contact will be made. CMB Adoption Support Services does not operate a waiting list so it is unusual for a response not to be made within 5 working days after initial contact. The service recognises the anxiety that

may exist for someone who has made the decision to follow up the circumstances of their adoption or to seek more knowledge of an adopted person and consequently makes contact without delay with a general outline of what the agency can provide. CMB Adoption Support Services also recognises that the age of the service user or the potential age of the person they are seeking may impact on the need for a particularly prompt service.

If not already provided by a referring agency, background information is requested. This can be via a number of potential communication channels. A face to face visit is offered but many people prefer to use Skype or Zoom particularly if there is distance involved. Such visual contact is required for an adopted person seeking their birth records and the use of Skype has been legitimised by an expert in the field of adoption support*. Frequently, in other cases, contact is made by email or phone and a face to face visit only made when necessary or if requested by the service user. The information required for initial assessment will include the reason for contacting CMB Adoption Support Services; the person's age and current circumstances and pre-existing knowledge of their background or the circumstances of the person they seek; what support they have and whether their family is aware of their intentions; whether there is any reason to take account of the person's state of mental health and their hopes and worries about the process. Important at this stage is to offer reassurance but not to be unrealistic. If the person already has significant information, this will be followed up and checked as much as possible as it is recognised that there is the potential for myth to have been part of what an adopted person believes to be truth. In the provision of intermediary services, where contact is the key reason for the service provision, a request for a check to be made of the Adoption Contact Register will be made. As mentioned above, the possibility that the person using the services of CMB Adoption Support Services not being able to achieve their hopes either due to information being unavailable or there being a veto in existence is made clear early in the assessment process. Ongoing assessment of need will depend on the type of service requested and the level of information that the person already has or which can be obtained.

Statutory schedule 2 interviews are not directly carried out by CMB Adoption Support Services.

*Confirmed in 2015 by Julia Feast for BAAF/Coram – this is now assumed to include Zoom and Microsoft Teams

SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE SERVICE

- All service users of CMB Adoption Support Services are invited to complete a feedback questionnaire which asks for views on the service and support they have received.
- The initial assessment of need identifying what service was requested will be compared to the feedback questionnaire and it is identified whether the service request was met. Clearly circumstances beyond the control of CMB Adoption Support Services will prevent initial service requests being met in all cases but part of the evaluation process is to take note of whether the service user was satisfied with the service. This evaluation process usually takes place at the closure of each case (when the form is received) but an annual review of all feedback is also undertaken.
- Informal and verbal comments are also taken into account and these have been universally positive.

- All service users of CMB Adoption Support Services are advised of the complaints procedure should there be any hint of dissatisfaction with the service.
- The Manager of CMB Adoption Support Services undertakes regular training and considers her training needs in supervision.
- CMB Adoption Support Services has been subject to regular contract reviews for work undertaken on behalf of local authorities.
- The agency is inspected by Ofsted against the National Minimum Standards and has achieved good and outstanding.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

CMB Adoption Support Services has a clear and concise Complaints Policy. This recognises that informal discussion based on the existence of a good client/agency relationship is usually the best way of resolving issues about which the service user may be unhappy. However, the policy also provides for the opportunity to use formal, written processes when and if the informal process is insufficient. Lastly, the policy demonstrates that there is recognition that some people may not find it possible or acceptable to communicate directly with the agency and so provides the contact details for externally managed complaints.

CONTACT INFORMATION ABOUT OFSTED REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

OFSTED contact details:

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester

Previous CMB Registration Number SC068075
 Current Registration Number 1234851 (will be changed following re-registration)

PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF CARE

The work of CMB Adoption Support Services Ltd conforms to the requirements of:

- The Adoption Act 1976
- The Children Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1998 The Human Rights Act 1998

- The Care Standards Act 2000 (and accompanying Adoption National Minimum Standards)
- The Social Care Common Inspection Framework April 2017
- Ofsted 'Raising Standards, Supporting Lives'. Nov 2014
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002 The National Standards Commission (Fees and Frequency of Inspection) (Adoption Agencies) Regulations 2003 - England, Regulations & Guidance 2004.
- Government's amendment to The Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (PreCommencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Under Associated Child Protection Guidance)
- Other relevant Legislation and Regulations and Guidance issued to Local Authorities, which highlights good practice relating to services provided by both the Statutory and Voluntary Sector
- Employment Equality Regulations 2003 Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1975
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999