



Customer Care Standards

The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), Adoption UK, the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), and the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA) consider that the following customer care and service standards represent good practice and encourage all agencies to observe them.

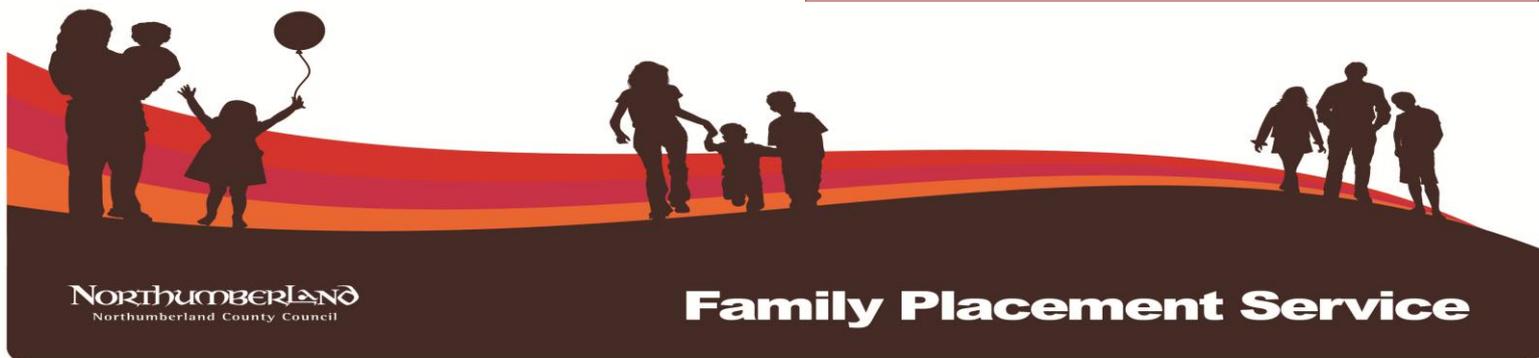
Our aims:

- To ensure that there is a positive welcome for all who may be able to care for children in the care system.
- To increase the number of prospective adopters able to meet the needs of children in care.
- To speed up the process of adoption whilst ensuring that it is effective and supportive for children and adults.
- To embed best practice in customer service across the sector.



Commitments:

- To respect and value you at all times
- To provide accurate and useful information
- To manage all information in line with the Data Protection Act
- To treat you with sensitivity and empathy
- To listen to you and take your feedback on board
- To be polite, courteous and professional
- To respond to your enquiries in a timely manner
- To provide responses to your enquiries which are clear, accurate and easy to understand
- To ensure all services are accessible and easy to use
- To apologise when we get things wrong and work with you to put them right
- To offer the opportunity for you to explore/share experiences with those who have successfully adopted





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First4Adoption and the enquiry services of agencies observing these standards will:

- Answer all telephone calls within four rings.
- If it is not possible to answer a call, use voicemail and return calls within 1 working day.
- Respond to emails within 1 working day of receiving them.
- Send you information about adoption within 5 working days of your initial expression of interest.
- Use any comments to improve the information provided and to inform national planning and service provision.
- Ensure the accuracy of information provided by updating and using verified sources and training staff and adopter volunteers.
- If you are not satisfied, we will process your complaint in line with local procedures.

Adoption agencies

- Within 5 days of receiving your registration of interest form, we will contact you to arrange for you to speak to a social worker.
- We will complete the Stage One assessment process within 2 months of you submitting the registration of interest and should this not be possible, will keep you informed of any reasons for delay.

- We will complete the Stage Two assessment process within 4 months of you submitting an application for assessment (after Stage One) and should this not be possible, keep you informed.
- To be sensitive to time and approach that suits you.
- Before any link/match with any children is confirmed, your agency will discuss a post adoption support plan with you.
- Every local authority has a duty to inform you of the post-adoption support provided locally. You are also entitled to an assessment of adoption support needs at any time.
- Once approved, if you have not been matched with a child/ren within 3 months, we will refer you to the National Adoption Register.
- If the agency is unable to assist you, we will refer you to First4Adoption for more information (0300 222 0022; www.first4adoption.org.uk).
- If you are not satisfied we will process your complaint in line with local procedures and, if unsuccessful after the Stage Two assessment, provide the details of the Independent Review Mechanism.

