ST DAVID'S CHILDREN SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Updated: November 2015

ST DAVID'S CHILDREN SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform you about the aims and objectives of St. David's Children Society and to provide information about the adoption services it offers. It outlines the processes in place for the recruitment, preparation, assessment and support of adopters and explains how placements are made and supported. It also provides details of the Society's structure and its staff.

St David's Children Society provides adoption services in Wales and England and this document relates to both services. This document is a legal requirement and the issues it covers are laid down within the legal framework that relates to Voluntary Adoption Agencies in Wales and England.

On request, arrangements can be made for the Statement of Purpose to be translated, explained or produced in a different format to suit the needs of staff, services users or volunteers.

2. Our Aim

St David's Children Society seeks to provide a comprehensive adoption service, which will deliver services of the highest possible quality to all parties involved in the adoption process. We operate within the legal framework for adoption within Wales and England.

3. About Us

3.1 St David's Children Society is a Registered Charity (No: 509163) and has provided adoption services to all of Wales and Herefordshire since 1942. We are the longest serving adoption agency in Wales with over 70 years' experience of placing children with new families. To date we have placed over 2,000 children for adoption.

3.2 The Society is governed by a Board of Trustees. They delegate the day to day management of the Society to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive holds responsibility for the efficient management of the Society and is also the Agency Decision-maker in relation to the Adoption Service and the Adoption Panel.

3.3 The Board of Trustees meet regularly and monitor the professional performance of the Society. They ensure that the strategic development and operational elements of the service are delivered to a high standard. The Board of

Trustees also links to the Society's accountant, in order to assure itself of the Society's financial position.

3.4 The St David's Children Society Head Office is in central Cardiff, with another office in Hereford.

3.5 As a registered charity the Society receives its income from a variety of sources including placement and post-placement support fees, grant aid and charitable donations.

3.6 The Society is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (Wales) and Ofsted (England) as a Voluntary Adoption Agency.

3.7 We work closely with the 5 regional Adoption Consortia and voluntary adoption agencies in Wales and in England. In addition we have good links with the Welsh Government, the Wales Adoption Register and the Adoption Register for England.

3.8 The Team provides the following range of adoption services including:

- Recruitment, training and assessment of prospective adopters,
- Support to approved adopters both prior to and after placement,
- Pre-approval, post approval and post adoption support groups.
- Linking, introductions

For adopters approved by St David's Children Society and children adopted by them we provide:

- Contact arrangements and support
- Post Box contact
- Work with adults who have been adopted

For all our families (Pre- and post- approval) we have an annual celebration / Fun Day and a Christmas party.

3.9 Work with the children matched or placed with our adoptive carers remains the responsibility of the local authorities who have the care of the children, as does work with birth families and significant others.

4. Our Vision and Values

Our Mission

Hi, my name is Eve. I have been adopted. My mum couldn't look after me. Now I have a new family and I'm very happy."

Eve, age 8

Our Vision

St. David's Children Society:

Where every child with an adoption plan is found a new family

Our Values

4.0 St David's is a child centred service.

4.1 Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family, which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond. We offer lifelong support through the adoption process.

4.2 Children whose birth families cannot provide them with a secure, stable and permanent home are entitled to have adoption considered for them.

4.3 The child's welfare, safety, needs and views should be the centre of the adoption process and will be fully taken into account at all stages.

4.4 Adoption is about meeting the needs of children, including their welfare and safety, not the needs of adults.

4.5 We are a learning organisation who work openly with families

and Agencies, We welcome feedback at all stages of the adoption process.

4.6 Delays in securing permanency through adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided, whenever possible.

4.7 Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions and individuals who have to work together to provide services for those affected by adoption.

4.8 Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language will be respected and considered when decisions are made. We respect a child's identity and wherever possible promote placing Welsh children in Wales.

4.9 Children will be placed with their brothers and sisters unless this will not meet their individually assessed needs.

4.10 Children will be matched with families who can best meet their needs but they will not be left to wait indefinitely.

5. Objectives and Standards

Our Objectives

5.1 To create stability and security for children by providing meaningful relationships through adoption.

5.2 To recruit, prepare, train, assess and approve appropriate people to be adoptive parents from a range of backgrounds, experiences and ethnicities.

5.3 To match children with families based on the child's needs.

5.4 To play an active part in supporting the lifelong needs of families brought together by adoption.

5.5 To offer lifelong support to families brought together by adoption – including siblings, grandparents and significant others.

5.6 To develop new and innovative services related to our core work that ensure the best outcomes for children.

5.7 To develop professional skills and understanding and disseminate this knowledge widely.

5.8 To influence positively public and national policy relating to the promotion of best interests of children.

5.9 To work to the Society's Policies, Procedures and Standards in relation to Safeguarding, equal opportunities, complaints,

finance and administration, health and environment, safety, security and management of risk, monitoring and evaluation, staff development and training, staff management, staff recruitment, service-user involvement and volunteers.

Our Standards

5.10 We monitor and measure our standards in accordance with the legal and regulatory frameworks for adoption in both Wales and England. In addition services are monitored against the relevant National Minimum Standards. We regard these as a 'minimum' standard to achieve and we aspire to both meet and exceed them.

6. Adoption Services Provided to Prospective/ Approved Adopters

Eligibility Criteria

6.1 The current eligibility criteria for adoption for the St David's Children Society, and the answers to some frequently asked questions, are attached as Appendix 1.

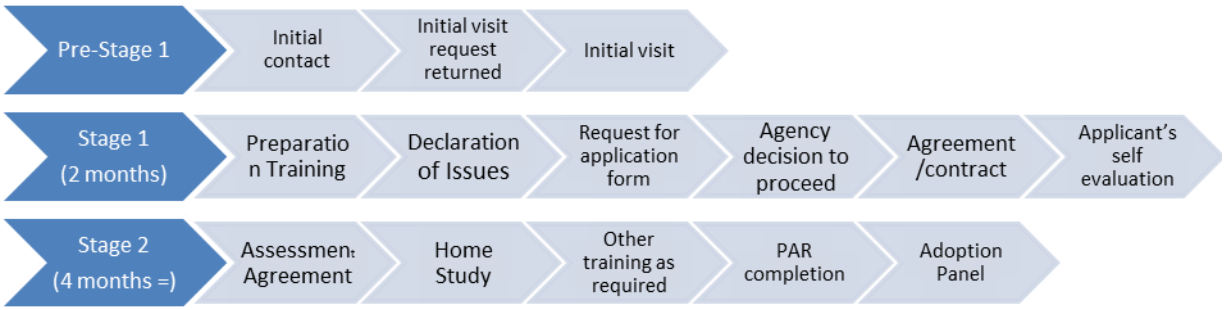
6.2 People who are interested in becoming adoptive parents will be welcomed without prejudice and will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process.

Recruitment

6.2 A wide range of children in Wales and England require adoptive families. We will assess the need for adoptive parents, on an annual basis, and will target our recruitment accordingly. This may mean that the criteria for acceptance of an application changes from year to year.

6.3 Specific recruitment may be undertaken for particular children or groups of children.

The Application and Assessment Process



Initial Contact

6.4 We accept initial contacts by letter, telephone, email, or by personal contact. Prospective adopters will be sent an information pack and an Initial visit request form.

Initial Visit

6.6 At this visit we will provide general information about adoption and the types of children needing adoption. We will also provide information about our processes, timescales and current priorities for recruitment. We will ensure that you are given clear information about the purpose of the assessment and information about the support available to adoptive families. We will discuss with the next step we feel you should consider and we will supply written information where appropriate.

Preparation and Training

6.7 The Society provides preparation and training courses for prospective adopters. All applicant(s) (including second time adopters) must attend preparation sessions as part of the adoption process. It is expected that, where there are two applicants, both applicants will participate.

6.8 It is expected that this will take place before the formal assessment is undertaken unless there are exceptional circumstances. In these instances, where the assessment has begun prior to training, the preparation group should be attended at the earliest opportunity.

6.9 The preparation groups provide more information about adoption. If we come to a view at this stage that an application will not succeed, we will provide feedback to the applicants.

The Application - Stage 1

6.10 When initial preparation training has been completed, applicant(s) will be asked to submit a formal application if they wish to move on to Stage 1 of the assessment process.

6.11 Assessments of prospective adopters will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation and statutory guidance. This includes undertaking a number of checks to ensure the safety of an adopted child (e.g. reference checks, identity check, DBS check, local authority checks etc.). We

will also ask applicants to undertake a medical assessment. These checks and medicals will be undertaken as part of the Stage 1 Process.

6.12 Under English legislation we are required to complete this stage within 8 weeks of receiving your application. In Wales we endeavour to work to the same timescale even though it is not a statutory requirement.

6.13 Occasionally we will advise applicants that we are unable to progress to Stage 2. If that is the case we will advise you of the reasons for this in writing.

Assessment and Approval - Stage 2

6.14 The assessment and approval process will be comprehensive, thorough, fair and fully explained to applicants. We will work in partnership with applicants at all stages of the assessment and approval processes.

6.15 All assessments at Stage 2 will be undertaken within the timescales recommended in Wales (6 months) and prescribed by regulation in England (4 months). We provide detailed information about our local procedures on our website and during our initial visit. General information about the adoption assessment process is available at www.baaf.org.uk and (for applicants in England) www.first4adoption.org.uk.

6.16 We will want to work with any children already in the family as part of the assessment process. We will ask them to make their own contribution, e.g. by writing or through drawing a picture. Children will be seen alone, as well as with adults

6.17 Applicants will receive a completed copy of their assessment and be given the opportunity to discuss or make comments on it. Third party information will not be included.

6.18 The assessment will contain a clear recommendation about the applicant(s) suitability to be adopt and will clearly identify the range of children for which they could be considered.

6.19 The St David's Children Society Adoption Panel will consider all adoption applications and can have an advisory role part way through the process, where there is concern as to whether the application should proceed.

6.20 When applications are completed, applicant(s) will be encouraged to attend the Adoption Panel and will be sent full information on the Panel's membership, role and function in advance.

6.21 The Adoption Panel, will consider the application, its strengths and potential areas of vulnerability. Applicant(s) will be given an opportunity to speak to the panel and are asked 2-3 questions through the Chair in order to contribute to the discussion. Applicant(s) will be informed verbally of the Panel's recommendation on the day.

6.22 The applicant(s)' papers and the Panel's recommendations will be considered by the Society's designated Agency Decision-Maker within 7 working days of the Panel's recommendation being made (unless affected by sickness or annual leave). The Agency Decision Maker is responsible for making the decision on whether or not the applicant(s) should be approved. The Society's Decision-Maker is the Chief Executive. Applicants will be notified in writing once a Decision is made.

6.23 If the agency is minded not to approve the applicants, we will advise them of their rights to either make representations to the Agency Decision Maker, or their eligibility to make a representation to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent review of the decision making process.

Services for Approved Adopters

6.24 With consent, details of approved adopters will be sent to Local Authroities/ adoption consortia in their local area immediately following the Agency Decision to approve.

6.25 We will encourage adopters to give consent to submitting their details to the National Adoption Registers for Wales and England.

6.26 We will give approved adopters full information about the matching, introduction and placement process. We will discuss all suitable children made known to us with the adopters. If a link appears possible we will make contact with the child's social worker and information about the proposed link will be shared with the adopters.

6.27 At every stage of the linking/matching process we endeavour to fully support adopters. Once a match with a specific child is identified it will be formally considered by the adoption panel of the placing Local Authority i.e. the local authority with responsibility for the child. We will support approved adopters in attending this panel meeting.

6.28 We will support approved adopters to attend planning meetings that are convened by the placing authority as part of the matching process.

6.29 We will request full, comprehensive and up to date information about the child, including health and educational assessments. We will endeavour to ensure that our approved adopters are provided with full information about a child prior to matching. We will endeavour to negotiate access to case files once a match is agreed and try to ensure that a later life letter is given to the adopters and that the child has a life story book.

6.30 We will ensure that approved adopters can meet the child's foster carers and any other significant professionals. We will also ensure that they can seek relevant information from the placing authority's medical advisor.

6.31 We will require all approved adopters to produce age appropriate information for the child they are matched to as part of the introductory process.

6.32 We will visit approved adopters post approval and should they remain unmatched, their situation will be formally reviewed every 12 months. After a two year period the review will be presented to the adoption panel in order that any changes or amendments to the original approval can be made. The agency will also undertake a review if there are in its view significant changes in circumstances of the adopters, which may impact on their approval status. Updated DBS checks will be requested after 2 years and updated medical examinations every 2 years, unless there are significant issues which require further exploration/examination.

7. Post-Approval Adoption Support Services

7.1 Under the legal framework for adoption in both Wales and England the statutory responsibility for providing adoption support applies mainly to local authorities. They have a role, together with the child's placing agency, to ensure that the adoptive family's needs are fully assessed when a placement is being considered and an adoption support plan completed.

7.2 Within St David's Children Society we will work in partnership with the placing authority to ensure that the applicant's adoption support needs are assessed and that an appropriate Adoption Support Plan is developed.

7.3 We will ensure that the Adoption Support Plan is taken into account when the placing authority's Adoption Panel discusses the proposed placement. We will ensure that the plan is reviewed in conjunction with the placing authority, at appropriate intervals.

7.4 We will provide intensive support to the adopters during the introductory period and the early weeks of placement. Our allocated social worker will visit weekly for the first month, reducing to fortnightly for the following three months and in accordance with assessed and agreed need. We will also provide telephone support as appropriate.

7.5 All adoptive applicants with St David's Children Society are enrolled as members of 'Adoption UK'. We offer a program of post approval training and support groups, alongside Adoption UK and encourage attendance at these events.

7.6 Advice and support will be provided to adopters to assist them in preparing their Adoption Application for the Court, and to maintain any agreed contact arrangements.

7.7 We facilitate regular support groups, workshops and social events for our adoptive families.

Working with Disruptions

7.8 Every effort is made to avoid a placement disruption, but occasionally the needs of the child are so complex that the adopters' capacity to manage these are insufficient, even with an intensive package of support services.

Likewise there may be situations whereby there are significant and unexpected changes in the personal circumstances of the prospective adopters which can militate against the adoption process concluding.

In such circumstances the welfare of the child remains paramount and agencies work together to avoid an unplanned ending of the placement.

7.9 In such circumstances we will work with adoptive families, local authority staff and others involved with them to provide focussed support to the family during, and following, a placement disruption.

7.10 We have developed clear policies and procedures to inform our work in these circumstances. The aim is to ensure that the child's needs remain paramount but that alongside this adoptive families are supported by the Society and assisted in moving forward. We regard the future health and wellbeing of its members, including other children, as a key responsibility.

Access to Counselling and Support Services

7.11 St David's Children's society will offer support, advice and counselling to adopted children, adults, adoptive parents and birth relatives where the adoption took place through the Agency.

7.12 Where the adoption has taken place through the Society an intermediary service is available to help establish contact between adopted adults and birth relatives, if appropriate.

7.13 Access to information/births records counselling service is offered to all adults who were adopted through the Agency.

8. Services for Adopted Adults and Birth Relatives

8.1 Adopted adults may approach the Agency for access to their adoption information, intermediary services, registering a Veto or for general advice, information or support about their adoption.

8.2 Birth Relatives may approach the Agency for access to non-identifying information about their adopted relative, intermediary services or advice, information or support about their relative's adoption.

8.3 When a referral is made for these services the Adoption Managers will assess the needs identified and allocate a staff member accordingly. We also make written information available to enquirers about the nature of our adoption support services. **There are differences in the Regulations between England and Wales which govern the work of this agency, and these will be adhered to accordingly.**

8.4 Social Services Departments carry the lead responsibility for arranging both an assessment and providing adoption support services under both sets of regulations. The Society can, by arrangement with the placing local authority, provide some of the services. The Society provides post placement support groups, post placement support from a social work practitioner and access to specialist skills within the social work team, including family work.

9. Members of Staff and Organisational Structure

Chief Executive

9.1 Gerry Cooney is the Chief Executive and was appointed in January 2000. He's based at the Head Office in Cardiff
He has overall responsibility for the service including financial security, integrity, efficiency and the overall effectiveness of the Society. Gerry is responsible for the overall development of the Society's strategic direction and production of the annual business plan.

He has 35 years' experience of working in social work in a variety of statutory & voluntary organisations

Qualifications: BA Hon, CQSW,
MSc in Advanced Social Work Management

The Registered Manager:

9.2 Joan Price (RSW) is the Deputy Director and is the Registered Manager for the adoption service in both England and Wales. Joan has 33 years of experience as a qualified social worker and joined the society in 2002. She's based in Cardiff and is responsible for:

- the provision of a quality service,
- supervision and appraisal of social work staff,
- monitoring and evaluation of performance,
- monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures.

Qualifications: BA, CQSW,
Diploma Social Studies
Post Graduate Management Studies Certificate

Staff

9.3 The Society employs staff on as detailed below. All staff are qualified social workers and registered with the Care Council for Wales.

The Society employs only social workers with a minimum of three years or more post qualification experience in a childcare, setting. It currently benefits from a very experienced workforce .They bring a broad range of social work skills from a variety of settings including of adoption and fostering, working with children and families, child protection, undertaking direct work with children, mental health social and medical social work, working with adolescents, and working in residential childcare settings.

Most staff are employed by the Society. 3 are self-employed.

Name	Designation	Employment status	Particular responsibilities	Where based?
Helen Hawksworth BA and Dip.SW	Adoption Manager	Full-time	Staff supervision and panel quality assurance	Cardiff
Melanie Oates BA (Hons) Community Studies, Dip. SW, NVQ 4 PQ1 BA	Adoption Manager	28 hours	Staff supervision and panel quality assurance	Cardiff

Anna Nyanmhotsi Bsc Econ in Sociology & Education. DipSW in Social Work	Adoption Manager	18.5 hours	Staff supervision and panel quality assurance	Cardiff
Lisa Blackmore Dip SW and Masters	Senior Social Work Practitioner & Development Officer	Full-time	Assessment and supporting families	Hereford
Jane Smith BA and CQSW	Senior Social Work Practitioner	25 hours	Assessment & supporting families Access to information, S51 Counselling, Post approval group	Cardiff
Joy Bevan Dip SW and Masters	Senior Social Work Practitioner	Full-time	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Lindsay Short MA in Social Work, PQ consolidation practice	Senior Social Work Practitioner	Full-time	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Catrin Griffith-Williams Social Work BA(Hons)	Senior Social Work Practitioner	Full-time	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Rebecca Couch Dip SW and Masters	Senior Social Work Practitioner	Full-time	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Judith Jones CQSW, Masters SW PQ1 and 6	Senior Social Work Practitioner	30 hours	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Jodi Farley Morris BSC Social work	Senior Social Work Practitioner	30 hours	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Diane Morgan BA and CQSW	Senior Social Work Practitioner	Self-employed	Consortium Contact. Initial visits. Welsh speaker	Cardiff
Gail Donavan BA CQSW	Senior Social Work Practitioner	Self-employed	Assessment and supporting families	Cardiff
Jenny Mc Guggan	Senior Social Worker North Wales	Self-employed	Assessment and supporting families	North Wales

Administrators

9.4 The team is supported by a Business/ Office Manager, one part time senior administrator and one full time administrator supports the team:

Jackie Marston – Senior Administrative Worker (RSA stage 3 typewriting and shorthand)
Susan Harvey – Senior Administrative Worker (RSA stage 3 typewriting and shorthand)
Naomi Halling – Senior Administrative Worker (Hereford)
Daniel Warner- Social Work Assistant (Cardiff)

Organisational Structure

9.5 This is shown in Appendix 3. It shows the links between the Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive and the operational staff.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Service

10.1 St David's Children's Society is committed to ensuring that its services are effective, efficient and of a high standard. It continually monitors and evaluates the operation of the adoption team, the Adoption Panel and administrative procedures through

- performance monitoring
- gathering and monitoring service user feedback
- formal supervision and appraisals of staff
- auditing case files
- identifying trends in compliments and complaints
- responding to feedback from inspections

Service-User Feedback

10.2 St David's Children's Society is committed to seeking feedback from service-users and staff in order to inform future service provision and to assess the efficiency and quality of its service provision.

10.3 We seek services users' views throughout the adoption process. Information is used inform the future planning and development of the Agency's Adoption and Adoption Support

Services, for management reports and for dissemination through the Agency's Evaluation and Monitoring Programme.

10.4 Prospective and approved adopters are asked their views at the point of

- Initial Enquiry
- After the pre-approval preparation training
- As part of the Midterm assessment
- After attending the adoption panel
- After children are placed
- After an adoption order is granted
- Via support groups

10.5 Every effort is made to seek the views of children placed for adoption through the Agency and their views recorded to inform future adoption service planning. Post-adoption groups of children of various age ranges have usefully informed the development of the Agency's Adoption Support Services for Children

10.6 Staff, panel members and prospective adopters are asked to provide feedback after attending the adoption panel. In addition Panel Members' views are sought on an annual basis and their evaluations are used to inform the continuing development of the Panel process.

10.7 Service-users are represented on both the Board of Trustees and the Adoption Panel.

Staff Management Processes

10.8 The work of individual members of the team is monitored through regular supervision and appraisal. As part of supervision, files are audited for compliance with regulation and the adoption policies agreed by the Society**.**

10.9 Exit interviews are carried out with all staff leaving the Agency, where practicable and with their agreement, and their views taken into consideration in all aspects of the Agency's services and the suitability of the HR Policy and Procedures.

Performance Monitoring

10.11 Timescales for key operational process are monitored against performance indicators. This information monitored by the Management Team and reported to the Trustees.

10.10 The Society regularly collects data in respect of adopters and children, who are to be placed or have been placed for adoption. Information is also provided to the Welsh Adoption Register for Wales and the English Adoption Register.

Monitoring Complaints

10.13 The Agency's Complaints Procedure is readily accessible to all service-users, including children, and is highlighted to service-users at the first point of contact with the Agency.

The Board of Trustees

10.14 The Board of Trustees receives regular monitoring reports from the Chief Executive and the Deputy Director. These summarise the work of the Adoption Service and the Adoption Panel, highlighting any immediate service shortfalls or concerns about service standards. Where relevant suggestions are made as to how these are to be addressed. It also contains an interim budget statement.

Annual Report

10.15 The Agency Decision-maker receives copies of the Adoption Panel Annual Report, which informs the Chief Executive's Annual Report to the Trustees.

10.16 The Chief Executive's Annual will incorporate the Annual Report and Business Plan for the Adoption Panel, the Society's audited accounts and Business Plan for the forthcoming year.

In addition the annual report:

- summarises the work of the Adoption Team and Panel over the past year,
- highlights good practice during the year
- analyses performance measures
- highlights any concerns about the maintenance of adoption standards, unmet need and service

shortfalls and provides an action plan to address these

- contains a full budget statement
- details training needs for:
  - the Society staff,
  - the Adoption Panel,
- reviews the functioning of the Society and suggests changes or developments,
- outlines a work programme for the Society and for the Adoption Panel for the forthcoming year.

The Society Accounts

10.17 The Society accounts are formally audited each year.

11. Complaints and Representations

11.1 The Society positively encourages comments and criticisms concerning its services. The Agency has a formal Complaints Procedure, which is made available to all service-users at their first point of contact with the Agency.

11.2 The complaints' procedure emphasises the need for staff to address disagreements and difficulties before they become complaints. However, if matters cannot be resolved any complaints are forwarded to the Chief Executive, who initiates a formal investigation. Where necessary an independent person will be appointed to investigate the complaint. The Chief Executive monitors all complaints and reports on these with the annual report. A full copy of the Society's Complaints Procedure is available on request.

12. Registration Authority

For Services in Wales:

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

National Office
Welsh Government office
Rhydycar Business Park
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

T: 0300 7900 126
E: cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk
W: www.cssiw.org.uk

South East Wales Regional Office:

Welsh Government office
Rhydycar Business Park
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

T: 0300 7900 126
E: cssiw.southeast@wales.gsi.gov.uk

North Wales Regional Office

Welsh Government office
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
LL31 9RZ

T: 0300 7900 126
E: cssiw.north@wales.gsi.gov.uk

For Services in England

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

13. Children's Commissioner

For Children in Wales

Children Commissioner for Wales

Oystermouth House,
Charter Court,
Phoenix Way,
Llansamlet,
Swansea.
SA7 9FS

T: 01792 765600
E: post@childcomwales.org.uk
W: www.childcom.org.uk

For Children in England

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (England)

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT33

T: 020 7783 8330
E: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
W: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

14. St David's Children Society Contact Details

Cardiff Office

28 Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3BA

T: 029 2066 7007
E: info@stdavidscs.org
W: www.adoptionwales.org

Hereford Office

41 Bridge Street
Hereford
HR4 9DG

T: 01432 278188
E: info@adoptionherefordshire.org
W: www.adoptionherefordshire.org

Registered Charity No: 509163

APPENDICES

1 **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

2 **ORGANISATIONAL CHART**

APPENDIX 1: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

St. David's Children Society, welcomes enquiries from:

- people of all racial backgrounds
- people of any or no religious faith
- people with, or without children
- married couples
- cohabiting couples
- couples who are in a same sex relationship
- single people
- people whose children are grown up
- people of all ages, over the legal minimum age to adopt of 21 years

Whose relationship is, in the opinion of the agency, of sufficient stability

Our adopters reflect each and every one of the above criteria, in various combinations, just as each child's needs are different.

We are unable to accept an application from you if you

- are under 21.
- are a smoker or gave up smoking less than 6 months ago.
- have a recent criminal conviction or pending criminal charges; or a previous conviction for a violent offence or an offence against children (if you have an isolated historical conviction for a minor crime, we may be able to accept your application).

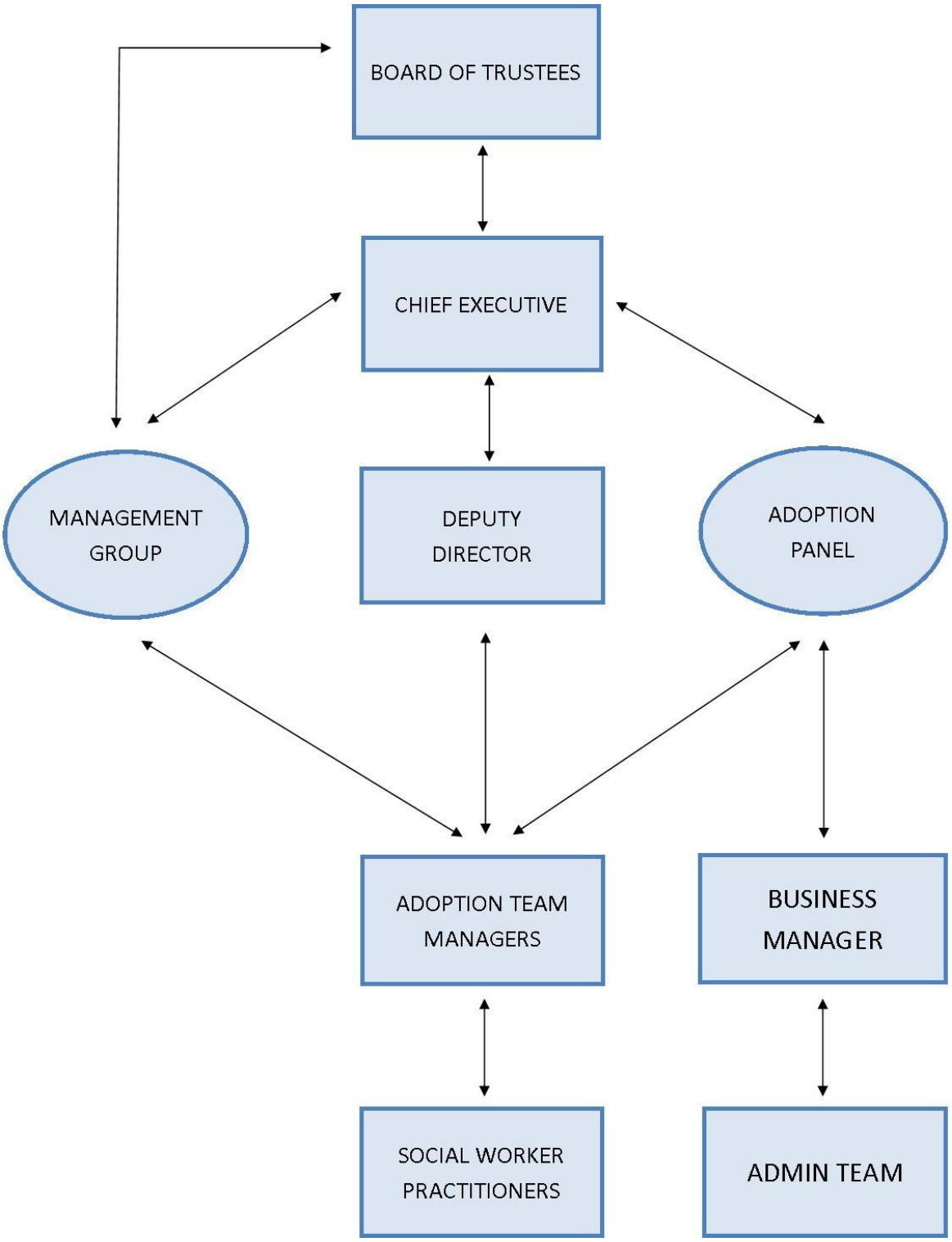
There is not a fixed upper age limit. However, we need to be sure that you will be fit and well to care for an adoptive child into their adulthood.

Sometimes infertility issues/treatments may need some time and further discussion to ensure the time is absolutely right for moving forward with adoption.

Health problems do not necessarily prevent approval to adopt, but all applicants are subject to a medical report and the agency works in line with government advice regarding a healthy diet, lifestyle and exercise. Factors such as obesity and alcohol consumption can affect whether adoption is achievable.

Where applicants have recently ceased smoking, they will have to evidence, via their GP that a period of at least six months has elapsed before an application can be taken up.

Income levels do not affect your ability to adopt, or whether you are in receipt of benefits. The important thing is that you can afford to care for a child until they reach adulthood.

Likewise it is not relevant whether you own your own home, or whether you live in rented accommodation. What is important is that you are settled, that you will not need to leave at short notice and that there is sufficient space and the accommodation is suitable for a child.

APPENDIX 2: St David's Children Society Organisational Chart