**PART TWO: SERVICE SPECIFICATION (LOT 1) - Advice and Guidance**

1. **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE**

1.1The Aim of the Service is to provide an independent support service to people whose lives are affected by adoption in conjunction with government guidelines and legislation.

1.2 To provide a high quality support, advice and counselling service to parties of adoption and help people negotiate the differences adoption brings to people’s lives.

**2**. **ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SERVICE**

To be eligible for these services applicants should meet the following criteria:

* The adopted person as a child or adult
* The adoptive family
* Birth families (including parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives)
* Other professionals within the field of adoption/child care
* Child or Carer who is subject to Special Guardianship

**3. REFERRAL PROCESS**

Referrals shall be made by Blackpool Council staff on behalf of the service user or shall be made directly by the service user, providing they fit the eligibility criteria as outlined in clause 2 of the Service Specification. A suitable referral pathway to be established by the provider in consultation with Blackpool Council.

Self-referrals should be communicated to the Adoption Team as part of a Risk Assessment, particularly in regard to both parents where there may be known issues.

**4. THE SERVICE TO BE PROVIDED**

The Service to be delivered by the Provider shall include the following:

* A help line service that will give information, advice and counselling to those eligible for the service on the following:
  + Advice and information to Adopted Adults about how to access adoption records
  + Advice to Adopted Adults about contact registers
  + Advice to Adopted Adults about searching methods and an intermediary service for adoptees wishing to contact a birth relative
  + Information to Birth Relatives about the adoption process and what can be/is available to them
  + Information to Birth Relatives about contact registers, leaving information on files etc.
  + Help for parents to talk to their children about adoption as they grow up particularly sharing difficult information
  + Access to telephone advice for Young People
  + Signposting to other services
    - Post Placement support for those adoptive families for whom Blackpool is responsible can access independent and confidential advice, information and counselling appropriate to their needs for as long as required from the point at which they are matched to a child to include:
  + Support for parents where children are exhibiting difficult behaviour that may be linked to early experiences
  + Direct work with children to explore adoption related issues.
  + Help for parents and young people to talk about adoption
  + Support for parents whose children as adults are contacting birth families
  + Support with reunions
  + Information and support relating to attachment difficulties
  + Identity work
  + Disruption support
  + Opportunities to meet and share experiences with other adoptive families
    - Independent support to those birth parents who have already lost or are in the process of losing their children to adoption through contested adoption proceedings. Through face to face support and counselling, the Service will seek to enable parents to understand and take part in negotiating appropriate levels of post-adoption contact and deal with grief and loss.
    - Support for Adopted Adults over the age of 18 who wish to search or access their birth records. Support through reunions and counselling at any stage of the process.
    - To provide intermediary services to all ‘persons with a prescribed relationship’ with an adopted person, i.e. anyone related to an adopted person by blood (including half-blood and descendants), marriage or civil partnership or by virtue of the adoption.
    - With regard to the above services to be provided the Service Provider shall allocate a qualified support worker to each referral and ensure that contact is made within a stated timescale.

For all:

* Signposting to other services
* Leaflets
* Access to websites
* Promotion of services

**5. SERVICE OUTCOMES**

It is expected that:

* Professionals are able to access specialist advice on post adoption issues
* Service Users and professionals are able to access telephone advice and referral line and leaflets

Individual Outcomes:-

* Provided with information as requested
* Increased knowledge and understanding of own situation
* Enhanced self esteem through being listened to
* Increased confidence through being able to express their feelings and views
* Feel supported and less alone
* Awareness of how to access appropriate services
* Ability to make a complaint appropriately
* Contact with family and friends
* Increased ability to problem solve
* Ability to engage in decision-making process
* Increased ability to cope with change
* Increased understanding of options available
* Service User feels empowered
* Awareness of how to access welfare or other appropriate benefits
* Service Users are able to deal with their feelings through counselling and support in adoption matters; specifically feelings of loss, grief, guilt and stigma
* The confidence of adopters is increased in their parenting role

**6. LOCATION OF THE SERVICE**

The Service will be organised by *xxxxxxxxxx* it will provide a base at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and offer appointments in local venues e.g. Blackpool Women’s Centre, or undertake home visits, as appropriate. In addition a nationwide service with a limited amount of work will be provided by contact with other adoption agencies

1. **FREQUENCY OF THE SERVICE**
   1. The premises in *xxxxxxxxxx* will be open daily from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm. Weekend and evening cover will be available as follows:

Helplines & Management Support

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DAY** | **TIMES OPEN / ACCESSIBLE** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Activities and Events as required.

* 1. The general help line shall be in operation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DAY** | **TIMES OPEN / ACCESSIBLE** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

* 1. The help line must be available that is applicable and appropriate for the different categories of service users, these include:-
* Adult Adoptee
* Adopted Child
* Adoptive Parent / Adoptive Family Member
* Birth Parent
* Birth Relative

**8. STAFF AND PERSONNEL**

8.1 The Service Provider shall ensure that its staff are at all times properly and sufficiently qualified, competent, experienced, supervised trained and instructed with regard to operation of the Service and in particular with regard to:

* 1. The provision of this Agreement
  2. All relevant Policies and Procedures of the Authority
  3. The tasks that such persons have to perform in relation to the provision of an Advocacy Service

8.2 The Service Provider must check all staff (including agency and part-time volunteers with access to children) with the Criminal Records Bureau. *(Please refer to Part One: Clause 15.2)*

8.3 Direct work with children and families will be undertaken by qualified social workers or equivalent and trained volunteers will be used in a supporting role where appropriate, as directed by the Service Provider.

**9. SAFEGUARDING**

* 1. The Service Provider will be expected to operate in accordance with appropriate and relevant Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Legislation. Policies should be comprehensive to meet the needs of the service and safe practice. *(Please refer to Part One: Clause 29).*
  2. The Service Provider shall retain within its administrative office a copy of the appropriate Safeguarding Procedures, which describes the actions and responsibilities in respect of the parties in cases of alleged or suspected abuse that may involve Service Users or others towards whom the Authority has a statutory responsibility. The Service Provider shall be responsible for ensuring that the staff involved in the delivery of the Service have an adequate working knowledge of the procedure through regular training and supervision.
  3. The Service Provider must ensure all safeguarding incidents are also immediately put in writing as well as verbally reported in line with policy and procedures.

**10. MONITORING**

10.1 The Service Provider shall supply to the Authority a quarterly monitoring report. A quarterly review meeting will be held to discuss the monitoring report, the performance of the contract and any other issues that arise.

This report shall contain the following monitoring information:

**Quantitative**

* The number of referrals received per quarter
* The sources of referrals
* Total number of people/families provided for defined by:
* Name and address
* The type of service user
* Age
* Gender
* Ethnic origin
* Duration of whole period of support
* Details of each service/support provided
* Number of people being assisted via the help line service broken down per category of service user.
* Number and names of professionals who have accessed specialist advice on post adoption issues

**Qualitative**

The Service Provider shall supply to the Authorised Officer the following information:

* Individual Case Closure Outcomes Review Monitoring Form Outcomes (Appendix 4)
* Information regarding all complaints/compliments/concerns/comments over the review period and outcome of complaints. *(Please note any complaints must be reported and managed in line with appropriate procedures)*
* Information regarding any Serious Untoward Incidents *(Please note these must be reported in line with appropriate procedures)*
* Service user feedback form completed for each person terminated over the review period.

The Service Provider shall at all times permit the Authorised Officer access to the Service Provider’s premises occupied for the purpose of monitoring the performance of the Service.

10.2 The Provider shall ensure that the manager assigned to the Service and other appropriate members of staff attend the quarterly monitoring meetings, together with such other meetings as are reasonably required by the Commissioning Manager and Contracts Officer in relation to the performance of the Service. The Service monitoring meetings shall convene to discuss and formulate any necessary actions in the following areas:

* The continuous and efficient running of the service, salient issues or problems
* The functioning of the Service as measured against the terms of this Agreement and Service Users’ individual assessed needs
* The impact of new legislative requirements and changes in policy
* The means of achieving Best Value and the process for achieving continuous quality improvements within the service.

10.3 Where the Provider or any of its staff become aware of any incident, accident or any other matter which may give rise to a claim or legal proceedings in respect of the provision or failure to provide the Service, it shall notify the Contract Officer immediately in writing.

10.4 The Commissioning Manager, Contracts Officer and/or authorised officers shall at all reasonable times be permitted access to the Provider Premises for the purpose of monitoring or reviewing the service.

10.5 Service User feedback forms will be sent out to each service user from the Commissioning and Contracts Team. The responses to these forms will be kept within the Commissioning and Contracts Team and collated to form a report, which will not identify any individuals. This report shall be made available to the Adoption Team and also to the Service Provider.

**11. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Service Provider shall use a recognised Quality Assurance System. Blackpool Council is currently committed to the implementation and development of the following Quality Assurance systems:

* EFQM Excellence Model
* ISO 9000
* Investors in People

However, there must be, as a minimum, records that demonstrate the following:

* Written statements of philosophy, objectives, standards and action plans
* Arrangements for the appropriate supervision, inspection and assessment of the Service
* Involvement of Service Users and staff in setting standards, objectives and plans and in reviewing the Service
* Regular self monitoring of the Service based on Service Users’ experiences and views
* Implementation and monitoring of equal opportunities, including sex, sexuality, marital status, colour, race, nationality (including citizenship), national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, religion or language. *(Please refer to Part One: Clause 7)*

**APPENDIX TWO**

**FINANCE SCHEDULE**

***Total value of this contract is £xxxxxx for 1ST May 2016 to 30th April 2017***

1. The Provider shall provide hours service at £xxxxxx per hour.
2. The cost of the Helpline Service will be £xxxxxx .
3. In consideration of the terms of this agreement the sum of £xxxxxx (broken down as £xxxxxx for hours and £xxxxxx for the helpline) will be paid to The Provider by Blackpool Council, Social Work and Safeguarding, Children, Adult & Family Department where full delivery of service is undertaken.
4. The total payable of £xxxxxx is an inclusive value and will include all on-costs. There will be no additional charges made for items such as resources, travel costs (including all travel time and mileage), work preparation time, cost of activities etc; and any extra costs incurred will not be payable by Blackpool Council.
5. Payment shall be made on submission of a 6 monthly-itemised invoice, the first part to be paid at commencement of the contract and the second part to be paid on satisfactory receipt of the second quarter’s monitoring.
6. The number of hours provided over the period of the agreement will not exceed more than the agreed hours, unless requested by the Authority and agreed by both parties. If requested and agreed these will be charged at the £xxxxxx hourly rate.
7. In the event the Provider is unable to honour their commitment to provide the hours and full delivery of the Helpline, the Provider shall only be paid for actual sessions / service delivered.
8. These financial arrangements and agreement do not exclude The Provider from making other arrangements with the Authority with respect to discrete pieces of work outside of the agreement. Furthermore The Provider retain the right to develop other services and agreements with other agencies