**Family Finding in Scotland**

We have links and shared services, with other neighbouring authorities out with Inverclyde.

Scotland’s Adoption Register was established in 2011 with funding from Scottish Government to link children and families across Scotland for adoption. The Scottish Adoption Register is a computer based system designed to assist in the matching of children and approved families on a national scale. Adoption agencies refer children who need adoptive families and families who are approved for adoption to this database.

Where there are no children waiting within Inverclyde HSCP who could be considered a suitable match for you, the social worker supporting you will begin the process of looking for children outside the area from links with shared services. The social worker supporting you will complete the required documentation which outlines your approval age range and the children you are interested in adopting. This will be recorded and logged on the register. We would usually do this after three months of exploring matches with children within the local authority area and exploration of shared services.

However, you are free to refer yourself to the register at any time. The Adoption Register works in conjunction with many local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies to organise large national events called Adoption Exchange Days, these are closed events held across Scotland. The event is attended by social workers, foster carers, and approved adopters. All those supporting family finding for children, work together to present a profile of a particular child and or sibling group. This can include photographs, moving images, (video clips) and foster carers talking about what a day in the life of a child involves and bring the child to life. Adopters can express an interest in finding out more about a particular child or sibling group. You will need to be invited to Exchange Days because of the sensitive nature of the information about the children. You should discuss the possibility of attending these days with your social worker if you think it is an option you’d like to explore. Exchange Days can be exhilarating you might find information about your future son or daughter on the day – but they can also feel a bit overwhelming. There is a lot of information about children needing families. You are likely to be given a time slot to help manage the flow of people so that you have the best chance to review all the information about the children.

**Adoption Activity Days**

Adoption activity days are organised events that give approved adopters, or prospective adopters at an advanced stage of approval, the opportunity to meet a range of children who need adoptive placements and engage with them in a fun environment.

These events allow the children and prospective adopters to get involved with lots of fun activities such as face painting, climbing, craft and soft play.

Children are very carefully prepared by their social workers and foster carers the emphasis is on having fun, not finding new parents.

Adopters are offered a lot of support and somewhere to have time out if the emotion of the day gets too much. The children’s foster carers and social workers are also on hand for extra support.

Adoption Activity Days have proved successful in finding matches as they give prospective adopters and children a chance to make a real connection. An advantage of activity days is that adopters often find that their preconceptions about the kind of child they initially feel they might want to adopt changed once they had the opportunity to meet the children in person. This means that children who may not have been considered “on paper” have a greater chance of being adopted.

These events which were piloted from 2011 –2013 are now regularly used. Through any of these avenues you and the supporting social worker could identify possible children. As this process is ongoing, any one of these linking systems may identify possible children in differing local authorities at the same time. In each case the child’s social worker will identify the needs of the child and this will inform your social worker as to whether the families that enquire are likely to match the child’s needs. The child’s social worker will not have the task of family finding for the child.

This is the responsibility of the Adoption Team social worker. The social worker supporting you will make contact on your behalf to the relevant child’s agency regardless of which route the potential match has come through. Your social worker will speak about you in more detail to the social worker in the child’s agency who has the family finding responsibility for the child. Should the family finding social worker consider your profile a potential match for the child they will request your Form F Home study assessment.