

Service information

Brief description of the service

The London Borough of Lambeth provides a comprehensive and anti-discriminatory adoption service, undertaking all statutory responsibilities associated with current legislation. The primary aim is to ensure that children, whose care plan is adoption, are placed as a matter of priority within a loving and supportive family, who can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

The duties include the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of adopters; the matching, introduction and placement of children with adopters; the support of adoption placements; post adoption support to those whose lives have been touched by adoption, including birth records counselling and intermediary work; support to birth parents of children placed for adoption or who have been adopted. Lambeth also undertakes assessments of applicants who wish to adopt from overseas and step parent adoptions. The office premises are located in Brixton.

Lambeth is part of the South London Adoption Consortium. Therefore, it provides advice to prospective applicants about the other local authorities in the consortium, where applicants do not match the needs of Lambeth's children.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was a key, announced inspection, conducted by two inspectors. Field activities took place over four days, approximately.

Children benefit from a service which has a strong approach to matching them with suitable families. Recent recruitment activities to attract black adopters are being successful in addressing an identified and long-standing gap. Excellent access to medical advice and the good quality of training prepare adopters on the realities facing adopted children and families. There is sound scrutiny of assessment of suitability of adopters and of matching decisions, to ensure that they safeguard children and are likely to result in successful placements. Families are supported in maintaining stable placements and in enabling children in understanding their situation. Support for birth parents, post adoption, is good, with thoughtfully set and well monitored contact arrangements. However, pre-adoption support is insufficient and uptake of what is provided is minimal. This means that birth families do not benefit from support that meets their needs at some crucial times. The service is managed effectively, both operationally and strategically. There have been some excellent initiatives to address long-standing issues and historical concerns.