

ADOPTION

This LOP is developed to guide clinical practice at the Royal Hospital for Women. Individual patient circumstances may mean that practice diverges from this LOP.

1. AIM

- Support and care of woman considering adoption of her neonate, with respect to her individual circumstances and in accordance with NSW Health policy

2. PATIENT

- Any woman who is considering adoption of her neonate

3. STAFF

- Medical, nursing and midwifery staff
- Social workers
- Administration officers

4. EQUIPMENT

- Nil

5. CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Make a referral to the Social Work Department for counselling and resources as soon as possible after woman has disclosed that she is considering adoption
- Advise woman social work will contact her to:
 - explore the circumstances of the pregnancy and discuss alternatives to adoption as possible outcomes
 - provide supportive counselling for woman and father of neonate (if involved), and give information with regards to legal process and policies regarding adoption in NSW
 - explore options of care for the woman during pregnancy and options of care for her neonate postpartum
 - provide contact details, along with written information and liaison with selected adoption agency
 - consult with midwives and midwifery managers with regards to woman's preferences of care for herself and neonate
- Facilitate completion of relevant documentation by medical officers (two legally required forms necessary Adoption Act forms 13 and 15)
- Facilitate discharge of neonate to temporary foster care (social work will create with the woman memory books for herself and the neonate)
- Ensure delivery of standard postnatal pathways for care of the woman. Make sure that Child and Family Health are advised **not to contact the birth mother** for postnatal universal home visit
- Create two Child Health Records "blue books" (one for foster family and one for woman)

6. DOCUMENTATION

- Medical Record
- Adoption Act Forms 13 and 15

7. EDUCATIONAL NOTES

- The Adoption Act 2000 has specific principles for the adoption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, which are intended to ensure that children are placed with adoptive parents from within either of their parents' communities or with a family from another appropriate community

ADOPTION cont'd

- Mother of neonate (and father if involved) retain full parental responsibility and make all decisions relating to treatment of her/their neonate, until she/they have signed formal consent to adoption, or a temporary foster care agreement
- Mother of neonate (and father if involved) have the right and should be encouraged to name her/ their neonate and register the birth. If no name is given the neonate will be registered as “unnamed male” or “unnamed female” which may be distressing for the child should they access their original birth certificate in the future. The name given to the neonate remains the child’s name unless changed by the legal process
- Legal adoption in NSW can only be arranged through an accredited agency. The process involves lengthy counselling and exploration of all alternative options, prior to formal court proceedings

8. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/CLINICAL PRACTICE LOPS

- Adoption of a Child: Guideline for Hospitals and Maternity Staff in Response to Parents considering. NSW Health PD2005_545
- Adoption Act 2000 – Release of Information. NSW Health PD2016_036
- NSW Legislation Adoption Act 2000 No 75
- Department of Communities and Justice – Adoption <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/adoption>

9. RISK RATING

- Low

10. NATIONAL STANDARD

- CC - Comprehensive Care

11. REFERENCES

- 1 Siegel D 2003 Open adoption of infants: adoptive parents’ feelings seven years later Social Work 48:3 409-19
- 2 Reamer, Frederic G. & Siegel, Deborah H. (2007). Ethical issues in open adoption: Implications for practice. Families in Society. Vol. 88, No. 1: 11-18
- 3 Family and Community Services, Mandatory Written Information on Adoption, January 2016
- 4 Family and Community Services, Additional Information for Parents of an Aboriginal Child, January 2016 <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=349077>

REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY

Endorsed Maternity Services LOPs 6/7/21
For further review when NSW Health reviews the Adoption of a Child Policy Directive, due Oct 2016
Approved Quality & Patient Care Committee 5/5/16
Reviewed and endorsed Maternity Services LOPs 26/4/16
Approved Quality & Patient Safety Committee 21/10/10
Approved Quality Council 18/12/01 – titled *Care of Baby for Adoption on Postnatal Ward*
Endorsed Maternity Services Clinical Committee 11/12/01

FOR REVIEW : JULY 2026