Individuals in a live-in relationship will once again be able to adopt children from and within India after the country’s nodal adoption agency decided to withdraw a circular issued earlier this year disallowing them from doing so.

The Child Adoption Regulatory Authority (CARA), in a circular issued on May 31, barred applicants in a live-in relationship from adopting a child on the ground that “the Authority would like the children to be placed only with a stable family and individuals in a live-in relationship cannot be considered as stable family.”

“We have decided to withdraw the circular and applications from prospective adoptive parents will be examined on a case-by-case basis,” Secretary, Women and Child Development Ministry, R.K. Shrivastava told The Hindu on Thursday.

The decision was taken at the last meeting of the steering committee of CARA, chaired by Mr. Shrivastava, in August, and will benefit both domestic and international applicants.

The eligibility criteria under Adoption Regulations, 2017, permit single women to adopt a child of any gender, while single men can adopt only boys. When a married couple seeks to adopt a child, it needs to give its consent for adoption and should be stable marriage for at least two years. Applicants have to be physically, mentally and financially stable to raise a child.