

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



**Adoption Partnership South East vision: To achieve an outstanding adoption service by March 2022 that ensures legal permanence for children either within their birth/extended family or with non-related adults via Adoption.**

**In November 2020 Bexley, Kent and Medway Adoption Services became part of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by joining in partnership. These agencies are building on the success of their pre-existing services to improve performance in meeting the needs of children who require permanence through adoption, by bringing together the best practice from each authority within the RAA.**

This document uses the National Minimum Standards (NMS) applicable to the provision of adoption services. The NMS together with the adoption regulations form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of adoption agencies and adoption support agencies.

## **Adoption Partnership Business Plan April 2021 – March 2022**

Adoption Partnership South East is committed to ensuring that children can remain in the care of their parents and birth families wherever possible. However, where it is not possible to achieve stability for the child within the birth family, we work to achieve alternative permanent arrangements for the child within a family setting and these include adoption. This Business Plan set out how Adoption Partnership intends to deliver its services to ensure timely progression for children whose care plan is adoption and the support that we aim to provide to them, their birth and adoptive families. It outlines Management and Leadership of the service to ensure the workforce is appropriately equipped to meet the requirements.

**Reviewed quarterly to ensure continuous development**

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



## Objective 1: Outcome / Value

The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.

**NMS 1, 4,10,13,15,22**

| Aim   | Action to be undertaken   | Timescales                          | Lead                               | Performance Management  | Outcome   |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Securing permanence for children through a timely adoption process. Every stage of process child(ren)'s safeguarding needs are paramount and evidenced. | Ensure early permanence placements are used when it is assessed the right plan for the child. |                                     | Early Permanence (EP) Team Manager | Weekly PPM tracking of unborn and children aged 0-7 subject to legal planning meetings and BLA. | 20% of children placed for adoption will have been placed in an early permanence placement. |
|   | Facilitate timely adoption plan decisions   | Agreed within 42 days of initiation | Panel Team Manager                 | Weekly Tracking using PowerBI   | Timely permanency plans agreed  |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|   |  |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|   | <p>Every child with an adoption plan decision is allocated a Family Finding Social Worker</p>            | <p>Recommended match should be within 183 days (6 months) of the agency decision</p>  | <p>Family Finding (FF) Team Manager</p>                    | <p>Weekly tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision</p>   | <p>At the point of placement order being granted, every child has a robust and detailed profile of their matching needs</p>  |
| <p>Matching rationale and support needs are reflected in adoption</p> | <p>Every child with a placement order will be matched and placed with best possible adoptive family.</p> | <p>A child should be matched within 121 days (4 months) from placement order date.</p> <p>Every child will be placed within 14 months (426 days) of becoming a LAC.</p> | <p>FF Team Manager.</p> <p>FF and Panel Team Managers.</p> | <p>Weekly tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision.</p> <p>QA of cases presented to panel for approval</p> | <p>Child(ren) matched and placed with adoptive family without delay. Where this is not achieved, there is a clear rationale and management oversight.</p> <p>All approvals reflect</p> |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:




|  |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
|  | placement report. Safeguarding needs will be identified and addressed. |   |   | by Panel Adviser; Panel Members; LA ADM.            | good/outstanding quality adoption placement report and meet national minimum standards.      |
|  | Children and adoptive parents are robustly supported post placement    | Adoption Order applied for after ten weeks  | Recruitment & Assessment Team Managers (RAS), EP Team Manager | Weekly tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision  | Legal permanence secured for child(ren)  |
|  | All children placed for adoption will have a Life Story Book           | Within 10 working days of adoption ceremony | FF, RAS & EP Team Managers                                    | Monthly tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision | All adopted children have a high-quality Life Story Book that their adoptive parents can use |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |  |   |                 |   |   |
|--|--|---|-----------------|---|---|
|  | All children with a placement order and no link will have their permanency plans reviewed regularly and revoked where appropriate  | Quarterly review of individual permanency plans | FF Team Manager | Tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision | Permanency plans are appropriate and achievable |
| Securing permanence for children through an effective recruitment strategy ensuring they are safeguarded | <p>Have a clear recruitment strategy agreed by Partnership Board.</p>  <p>Adoption Partnership Recruitn</p> | Annually  | Head of RAA     | Partnership Board governance                | Recruitment Strategy implementation             |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |   |            |                                   |  |  |
|--|---|------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
|  | Provide an Initial Enquiries service  | Ongoing    | Adoption Agency Coordinator (AAC) | Service user feedback; supervision; audits.                    | Provide a welcoming and responsive approach to initial enquiries to set tone for service   |
|  | Provide a bespoke and dynamic Adoption Partnership website and social media presence. | Ongoing    | AAC                               | Monitor website traffic and social media followers/interaction | Raise profile of agency online   |
|  | Recruit sufficient adopters for the children of the RAA                               | March 2021 | RAS/EP Team Managers              | Monitor BI Case audits Supervision                             | There will be enough approved and waiting adopters that meet the needs of the children who required early permanence or have a placement order within the RAA. |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |   |                         |                             |  |   |
|--|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
|  | <p>Recruitment is led by the needs of the child(ren) and prioritization will be given to applicants able to consider early permanence, sibling groups and children with complex needs, specific matching requirements such as ethnicity and/or religion. Risks around safeguarding will also be assessed.</p> | <p>Stage One review</p> | <p>RAS/EP Team Managers</p> | <p>Weekly tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision.</p> | <p>Sufficient suitable adopters are approved.</p>   |
|  | <p>Adopters in Stage Two are assessed and approved within DfE requirements. Safeguarding issues will need to be assessed as part of this.</p>   | <p>Four months</p>      | <p>RAS/EP Team Managers</p> | <p>Weekly tracking using PowerBI; audits; supervision</p>  | <p>Stage Two assessments are completed within timescale. Where this is not achieved, there is a clear rationale and management oversight.</p> |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |  |  |                                 |  |   |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
|  | All applicants are assessed robustly   | Weekly panels  | Panel Team Manager              | QA of cases presented to panel for approval by Panel Adviser; Panel Members; Head of RAA | All approvals reflect good/outstanding quality assessments and meet national minimum standards. |
|  | Develop and expand mentoring scheme for adopters at pre-order stage.   | July 2021  | Service and RAS Team Managers   | Cohort of mentors  | Peer support is available to prospective adopters.  |
|  | Once adopters are approved and linked with a child(ren) they will be offered peer support via mentoring scheme   | After matching meeting and prior to matching panel                                 | RAS, EP and Panel Team Managers | Panel minutes; APR support plan  | Legal permanence secured for child(ren)   |
|  | Once child(ren) placed with adopters, families will be supported by adoption Social Worker through visits and support calls in accordance with support plan. Any safeguarding concerns will be | Frequency to be determined on needs of individual families and agreed with manager | RAS and EP Team Managers        | Audits; supervision.   | Legal permanence secured for child(ren)   |



# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |  |          |               |                                |                                       |
|--|--|----------|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|  | addressed and LA safeguarding procedures followed. Should adopters need additional support then an assessment will be carried out to identify appropriate additional provision |          |               |                                |                                       |
|  | Safeguarding and mandatory eLearning training completed and annually refreshed by staff  | Annually | Team Managers | PDPs; LA reporting mechanisms. | All staff complete and refresh course |

DRAFT

## Objective 2: Outcome / Value

- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills leading to a successful adult life. Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully considered at all stages of the adoption process.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language, and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.

**NMS 1,2,5,6,7,10,11,12,13,14,15,17,18,27**

| Aim   | Action to be undertaken  | Timescale   | Lead                   | Performance Management  | Outcome  |
|---|--|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Adopted children thrive in all aspects of their lives within their adoptive families and are supported through the transition into adulthood. | Matching needs for every child are considered at the earliest stage possible and reviewed regularly. | One month after ADM decision; reviewed monthly thereafter | FF SW; FF Team Manager | QA of Matching Matrix; APR; Supervision; Linking and tracking meeting | All children placed for adoption have an individualised and robust support plan. |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |  |   |                                |  |   |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|--|---|
|  | Adoptive parents can request that their support plan is reviewed.                              | Up to age of 21 (or 25 with EHCP)   | Adoption Support Team Managers | Adoption Support assessment; Support & Advice line; Feedback from families | Families are well supported   |
|  | All children are prepared and supported throughout adoption journey to understand their story. | Pre-matching panel sections two and three of Life Story Book are completed. | FF SW; FF Team Manager         | Supervision; Tracking meetings.  | Every child will have a part-completed Life Story Book (LSB) at the point of placement. |
|  |  | Post-placement<br>Section 1 completed within ten weeks of placement.        | RAS SW; RAS Team Managers      | Supervision; Tracking meetings.  | Every adopted child has completed LSB.  |
|  |  | Section 4 completed within two weeks of adoption order.                     | RAS SW; RAS Team Managers      | Supervision; Tracking meetings.  | Every adopted child has a completed LSB   |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |  |   |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
|  | Continued delivery of life story training for adoptive parents   | Individual: Ongoing<br><br>Workshops: Quarterly   | AS Team Managers  | Tracking data  | Adopters feel able to support children with their life story   |
|  | Children's voice is heard throughout their care planning process and adoption journey (including non-agency adoptions) | Permanency Planning meetings<br><br>Adoption Plan decision<br><br>Family Finding allocation and matching.<br><br>Rule 14 submission | Early Permanency Planning Leads; EP Team Manager<br><br>Panel Adviser; Panel Team Manager<br><br>FF SW; FF Team Manager<br><br>RAS SW; RAS Team Manager | PPM write-up; Supervision; Tracking<br><br>Tracking; Supervision<br><br>Tracking; Supervision; Matching panel<br><br>Tracking; Supervision | Child's wishes and feelings are considered at all stages of permanency planning and are reflected in records throughout process. |
|  | Development of Participation Groups and activities for adopted children across the region.                             | Ongoing   | AS Service Manager  | Quarterly data reports received from VSK; feedback from participants.  | Children feel positive about having been adopted.  |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |   |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
|  | <p>Strengthening the Adoptables group</p> <p>Review and provide an effective use of Learning and Development workshops and Parenting Programme for 2021/22 financial year.</p> <p>Ongoing website development</p> <p>Ongoing development of Social Media (Facebook &amp; Instagram)</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2021</p> <p>Quarterly reviews (April 2021 onwards)</p> <p>Monthly</p> | <p>AS Service Manager</p> <p>AS Team Managers</p> <p>AS Service Manager, AS Team Managers, Adoption Agency Coordinator (AAC)</p> <p>AAC</p> | <p>Quarterly data reports from VSK.</p> <p>Supervision; Feedback forms; Data reports</p> <p>Supervision; service user feedback; Advisory Board</p> <p>Supervision; Advisory Board</p> | <p>Champion the voice of adopted young people.</p> <p>L&amp;D programme to be available on website for bookings.</p> <p>Effective communication with parents and young people to provide support and advice.</p> <p>As above</p> |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |              |         |                          |                               |          |
|--|--------------|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
|  | Mailing list | Ongoing | Business Support Officer | Monthly audit of mailing list | As above |
|--|--------------|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|

DRAFT

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



## Objective 3: Outcome / Value

Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, intercountry adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family. **NMS 11,14**

| Aim   | Action to be undertaken                 | Timescale      | Lead        | Performance Management | Outcome          |
|---|---|----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Ensure children from other countries for whom adoption is the plan are supported and timely assessments are completed | Commissioned inter-country adoption RAA | Annual renewal | Head of RAA | 6 monthly reports      | Service provided |

DRAFT

## Objective 4: Outcome / Value

- Children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected **NMS 12, 15**

| Aim  | Action to be undertaken   | Timescales | Lead  | Performance Management                   | Outcomes   |
|--|---|------------|---|--|--|
| Provide responsive and positive service to children, birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families. | Develop consistency of quality services for birth families, adult adoptees and facilitate post order contact, either directly or indirectly | Ongoing    | Head of RAA; AS Service Manager; AS Team Managers | Quarterly data reviews; contract reviews | A 'good, accessible' quality service provided.<br><br>Established and effective advisory |



# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |   |           |   |   |                          |
|--|---|-----------|---|---|--------------------------|
|  | Develop strong RAA Adoption Advisory Board with input from adopters and Adoption staff. | Ongoing   | Head of RAA; Service Managers           | Review minutes/actions of meetings                      | board meetings           |
|  | Develop adopter-led support groups.   | July 2021 | Service Manager; Adopter Advisory Board | Group establishment and membership; evaluation/feedback | Peer support for adopter |

DRAFT

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



## Target 5: Outcome / Value

Records are clear, accurate, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life.

| Aim  | Action to be undertaken   | Timescales  | Lead   | Performance Management   | Outcomes   |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| A clear narrative for families through timely, accurate record keeping | <p>AP induction plan created.</p> <p>All staff to complete relevant LA and AP induction plans.</p> <p>Ensure all Adoption Service staff are aware of partner's recording policies guideline and</p> | <p>April 2021</p> <p>For new staff to complete within first month of employment</p> <p>Refresh training for current staff where required.</p> | <p>HoS</p> <p>Team Managers</p> <p>Team Managers</p> | <p>Partnership Board</p> <p>Supervision</p> <p>Supervision</p> | <p>Employees integrate well into and across the organisation.</p> <p>Case recording is accurate and up to date</p> |

# Adoption Partnership

South East

Delivering adoption services for:



|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | are trained and competent in the use of case management systems. |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

DRAFT

## Objective 6: Outcome / Value

The agency is managed ethically, effectively, and efficiently and delivering a good quality service which meets the needs of children and other service users. **NMS 25**

| Aim   | Action to be undertaken                    | Timescales     | Lead                      | Performance Management            | Outcomes                        |
|---|--|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ensure Adoption Partnership South East complies with legislation, national and local authority policies and procedures. | Completion of Panel chairs report          | September 2021 | Team Managers, Panel Team | Meetings with Panel chairs        | Delivery of Panel Chairs report |
|   | Report on service delivery & outcomes      | July 2021      | Service Manager           |                                   |                                 |
|   | Develop TriX page for Adoption Partnership | April 2021     | Head of RAA               | Reporting to CPP, Cabinet and DfE | RAA established                 |