

This Business Plan correlates to the [SCS Business Plan](#)

Kent Adoption Service Vision: To achieve an outstanding adoption service by March 2020 that ensures legal permanence for children either within their birth/extended family or with non-related adults via Adoption & Special Guardianship Orders

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 Service Business Plan April 2019 – March 2020

Kent County Council (KCC) 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 Kent Adoption 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

Target 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					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcome
Securing permanence for children through a timely Adoption process	Robust oversight and awareness of children who have or might have an adoption plan.	Ensuring the child is matched within 3 months of a placement order being granted	Head of Adoption, Adoption Managers	Weekly Tracking, Case audits, Supervision, Joint Tracking, Adoption Scorecard and monthly MIU performance data Weekly PPM tracking of unborn and children aged 0-10 subject to legal planning meetings and BLA	Children are matched within 121 days

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Increase use of foster-to-adopt	Adoption Service to deliver workshops to raise awareness with childcare professionals, IROs and Adoption Social Workers	Two workshops to be held per year	Amy Coombs	Weekly PPM tracking of unborn and children aged 0-2 subject to legal planning meetings and BLA	20% of children placed for adoption will have been placed in a foster to adopt placement.
	PPM lead to continue offering consultations and attending early PPMs	Weekly	Nina Gurung	Consider PPM tracking in weekly management linking meetings	
	Early identification of pre-birth and children under 2 entering care.				
	Attainment of the Coram BAAF Permanency Kite Mark	October 2019	Amy Coombs	Supervision	Award secured
Recruit enough adopters to meet the needs of children with an adoption plan	Recruit a minimum of 80 adopter households (based on number of placement orders granted in 2018/19, against proportion of placements for sibling groups.)	March 2020	RAS Team Managers FF Team Manager	Monitor TOD Case audits Supervision	20% of approved adopters (with no child identified) will have dual approval
	Family finding to complete all	Monthly	RAS Team Managers	Feedback forms	80 new

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	foster carer assessments linked to children.				approvals
	Hold recruitment events	Ongoing	RAS Team Managers	Linking meeting	Initial visits requested by a third of attendees
	Prioritise applications from families able to adopt children with complex needs and sibling groups	Ongoing	RAS Team Managers	Information events Feedback forms	Children are matched within 121 days
	Maintain and update website and social media regarding recruitment events and news				Minimum of 20 attendees at information events

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Secure adoption order at earliest opportunity	Every adopter is provided with support from allocated Adoption Social Worker	Minimum of six-weekly visits post placement following first LAC review	RAS & Family Finding Team Managers and Panel Advisors	Supervision, Case audits, adopter feedback, QA matching minutes and APR	Adoption Order application submitted, and Adoption Social Worker completes Annex A within ten weeks
	Every adopter is offered peer support via mentoring scheme	Matching meeting	RAS and Family Finding Team Managers	QA Reports Supervision Case audits	Prospective adopters feel supported and fewer disruptions
	Review children's adoption journey escalate concerns and potential delay to Service Managers and IROs	Monthly joint tracking meeting	Head of Adoption	Scorecard Joint tracking and Supervision	Timely progression of children's adoption plans
Ensure children with an adoption plan are safeguarded	Ensure Social Workers and Adopters understand Safeguarding issues	Assessment stage 1 & 2	Social Workers	QA of PAR, Feedback from prep training & Supervision	Children are safeguarded in adoptive placement
	Ensure each adoptive household has a risk	Assessment stage	RAS & Family Finding Team	QA of PAR	100% have risk assessment

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	assessment completed in time for approval		Managers		
	Safeguarding and mandatory eLearning training completed and annually refreshed by staff	Annually	Team Managers	PDPs	All staff complete and refresh course

Target 2: Outcome / Value					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. NMS 5,6,7,10,13 					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescale	Lead	Performance Management	Outcome
Ensure smooth and effective transition of pre and post adoption support services	Review the pre-order support plan template with a view to adding potential post order support needs	June 2019	PAST Team Manager	Matching meeting, APR, Adoption Panel QA and	Revised template
	FF social worker is responsible for completing APR	June 2019	Family Finding Team Manager	Supervision Panel audits	Greater clarity & improved timeliness
	Devise flow chart	July 2019	FF Team Manger & Panel Team Manager		APR reflects current and potential needs

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	<p>Explore option of the adoption service taking on role of Direct work with children &/or LSB/LLL's – prepare a paper for consideration.</p> <p>Explore option of RAS social worker working with adoptive parent on completion of the book</p> <p>Further development of Life Story information & training for Social Workers</p>	<p>June 2019</p> <p>June 2019</p>	<p>Head of Adoption</p>	<p>Four training events across county, Feedback forms, QA APR</p>	<p>Completion of good quality life story book when AO is granted</p>
	<p>Develop feedback & evaluation tool for mentees</p> <p>Explore possibility of mentors supporting adopters post order</p>	<p>June 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p>	<p>RAS1 Team Manager</p> <p>RAS 1 TM/PAST TM</p>	<p>Feedback from mentees</p>	<p>Improve quality of service</p>

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	Review and provide an effective use of Learning and Development workshops and Parenting Programme for 2019/20 academic year	July 2019	PAST Team Manager	Feedback forms & bookings	Revised rolling annual programme in place
	Review support offer by VSK & working with PAST	December 2019	PAST Team Manager & VSK		
	Review whole service training needs e.g. Theraplay techniques.	October 2019	Head of Adoption	Completion of workshop at service meeting, feedback from Social Workers	Social Workers confident in use of skills Ability to claim ASF

Target 3: Outcome / Value					
Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process. NMS1,6,15,18,27					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
Children's voice is heard throughout their care planning process and adoption journey	Agency adoptions Development of a Participation & Engagement Strategy	May 2019	Head of Adoption		Clarity regarding approach and delivery
	Pre-Placement Order at ADM stage – evidence of the voice of the child in CPR	ADM Stage	Panel Advisor	ADM QA Head of Service supervision File audit	ADM granted; voice of child recorded on CPR
	Adoption service to actively start family finding to include	ADM Stage	Family Finding Team Manager	Linking meeting Supervision File audit	Adoption Social Worker to

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	<p>minimum of one visit to child and foster carer(s)</p> <p>Family Finding Social Worker to ensure evidence of the voice of the child is present in matching meetings and APR</p> <p>Post-Placement, Pre-Adoption Order Adoption Social Workers to ensure adoptive family are supported in understanding and meeting the needs of their child.</p> <p>Post Adoption Order - continuous development of Participation Groups</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>From matching until adoption order</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>FF Team Manager</p> <p>RAS Team Managers</p> <p>Post Adoption Team Manager</p>	<p>Monthly audits and QA processes</p> <p>Supervision, Monthly audits and case tracking.</p> <p>Supervision and feedback from children and</p>	<p>understand needs of child and promote early family finding</p> <p>Match approved by panel and ADM</p> <p>Adoption Order application submitted at 10-week stage</p>
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	and activities for adopted children			adoptive parents	
	Promote opportunity for Adopted Young people to communicate with Corporate Parenting Panel (once per year)	May 2019	Head of Service and Post Adoption Team Manager	Record of attendance. Minutes of CPP	CPP informed of views of adopted child(ren)
	Effective consultation with Adopted young people (18-25) to shape development of the Service	October 2019	Head of Service and Post Adoption Team Manager	Feedback and suggestions	Adoptee advisory board established
	Employ adoptee apprentice to focus on participation and engagement	May 2019	Head of Adoption	Appointment made	Adoptee Apprentice employed
	Non-Agency Adoption				
	Views of the child evidenced in all Annex A reports filed to court	Ongoing	Head of Service, RAS Team Managers	Supervision Case audits	Court endorse plan

Target 4: Outcome / Value					
Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health and development of the children waiting to be adopted. NMS 5,10,13					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
Secure permanence for children who have an adoption plan	All children with adoption plan have allocated Family Finding Social Worker	ADM decision	Family Finding Team Manager	Tracking meeting Supervision Adoption TOD	Early Family Finding progressed
	Suggested link to be explored	Within 2 working days	Family Finding and RAS Team Managers,	Linking Meeting Adoption Scorecard Panel chair's report Panel evaluation forms Supervision	Presentation to adoption panel within six weeks of decision
	Visit to take place	Within 5 working days			
	Decision regarding outcome agreed	Within 2 working days of visit			
	Matching Panel booked	Within 1 working day of decision			
	Matching meeting to be held for all linked children	Within 10 working days of decision			

Target 5: Outcome / Value

- 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 2,5,11,12,13,14,17

Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
All children are prepared and supported throughout adoption journey to understand their story	Pre-Placement At ADM stage, allocated Family Finding Social Worker to offer support and guidance to CIC Social Worker with direct work and Life Story Book	Between ADM and match	Head of Service, Family Finding Team Manager	Supervision Chair of matching meeting to ask for status of Life Story Book Draft Life Story Book presented at matching panel	Every adopted child to have a Life Story Book and Later Life Letter
	Post Placement Adoption Social Workers to support and advise	From matching to adoption order	RAS Team Managers	Supervision	All adopters

	<p>adopters with their understanding of child's story and use of Life Story Book</p> <p>Post Adoption Order</p> <p>Develop full support around Life Story work, distinguishing between stages of development</p>	September 2019	Post Adoption Team Manager	Supervision Feedback forms	<p>will feel supported and able to use Life Story Book</p> <p>L&D workshops and support groups established</p>
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Target 6: Outcome / Value

Children and adults affected by adoption receive an assessment of their adoption support needs. **NMS 15**

- Children live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted and where they are able to access the services they need to meet their health needs. **NMS 5**
- The education and achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Children are supported to achieve their educational potential. **NMS 7**

Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
Support needs are identified for children and/or their adoptive family	<p>Pre-Placement</p> <p>Post ADM/Pre PO- Family Finding social worker will work with child's Social Worker, adopter's Social Worker, PAST and foster carer(s) and VSK to identify support and transitional needs</p>	ADM – Matching panel	Family Finding Team Manager	<p>Supervision</p> <p>Supervision QA of matching minutes and support plan</p>	Bespoke adoption support plans that meet child and family needs

	<p>Post Placement</p> <p>Adoption Social Worker to provide ongoing support to families and identify needs through support visits, PEPs and CIC reviews and amend support plan accordingly</p>	Ongoing	RAS Team Managers	Supervision Case audits	Adoptive families are well supported, and adoption applications are submitted appropriately
	<p>Post Adoption Support</p> <p>Development of a core offer</p>	June 2019	Post Adoption Team Manager		Increased internal provision and more timely access to intervention
	<p>Developing a process for accessing a post adoption support assessment</p>	<p>All requests for support will managed within 24 hours of request if required, a support and advice line call with a</p>	Post Adoption Team Manager	Liberi reporting	Timely response

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	<p>Refine process to access Adoption Support Fund</p>	<p>member of the PAST will be within 3 days of initial contact. If required, the offer of a PAS assessment within 8 weeks of support & advice line call. PAS assessment should be completed within 6 weeks of assessment meeting. Funding applications should be made within 48 hours of signed assessment being returned and uploaded to the system.</p>	<p>Post Adoption Team Manager</p>	<p>ASF Database</p>	<p>Timely applications</p>
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	Formalise partnership working with VSK to ensure adopted children, as “previously looked after “receive a service from them	Ongoing	Head of Service and Post Adoption Team Manager	Feedback from families Established group of Education Mentors Established arrangement with VSK	
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Target 7: 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					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
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 Service	6 monthly reports	Service provided

Additional expected outcomes (Values) for adopted adults and birth relatives

Target 8: Outcome / Value

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

Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
Provide responsive and positive service to stakeholders	Monitoring of contract for services for birth family and adult adoptee support	Ongoing	Head of Service	Quarterly contract meetings	A 'good, accessible' quality service provided
	Develop Adoption Advisory Board further with input from adopters and Adoption staff	Ongoing	Post Adoption Support Team Manager	Supervision	Established and effective advisory board meetings
	See Target 3 for details of				

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	development of Adoptee advisory board				
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Target 9: Outcome / Value					
Records are clear, accurate, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
A clear narrative for families through timely, accurate record keeping	Ensure all Adoption Service staff are aware of KCC recording policy guideline and are trained and competent in the use of Liberi	For new staff to complete within first month of employment Refresh training for current staff where required	Relevant Team Manager	Supervision Case audits	Case recording is accurate and up-to-date

Target 10: Outcome / Value					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 					
Objective	Action to be undertaken	Timescales	Lead	Performance Management	Outcomes
Ensure Kent Adoption Service complies with national policy and developments for adoption services	Completion of Panel chairs report	September 2019	Team Manager, Panel Team	Meetings with Panel chairs	Delivery of Panel Chairs report
	Report on service delivery & outcomes	July 2019	Head of Adoption		
	Reviewed Statement of Purpose Development of a Regional Adoption Agency – project plan produced and delivered in line with partners.	2020	Head of Adoption	Reporting to CPP, Cabinet and DfE	RAA established

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