

## EQIA Submission – ID Number

### Section A

**EQIA Title**

Independent Adoption Support Services

**Responsible Officer**

Robin Cahill - ST SC

**Type of Activity****Service Change**

No

**Service Redesign**

No

**Project/Programme**

No

**Commissioning/Procurement**

Commissioning/Procurement

**Strategy/Policy**

No

**Details of other Service Activity**

No

**Accountability and Responsibility****Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

**Responsible Service**

Integrated Children's Services

**Responsible Head of Service**

Sarah Skinner - CY SCS

**Responsible Director**

Kevin Kasaven - CY SCS

**Aims and Objectives**

Kent County Council (KCC) has outsourced the service known as Connecting Adoptive Families Independent Service (CAFIS) for more than 10 years. The services encompass a range of independent adoption support services. Delivering these services is a statutory requirement and they are underpinned by a comprehensive specialised legislative framework.

The current contract for this service is due to end on 30 September 2023.

The specification for the proposed new service is currently being developed with key stakeholders.

The aim of the activity is to commission and re-tender for the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) a contract for Independent Adoption support services from 1 October 2023, ensuring equal access to all eligible birth parents, adopted children, adult adoptees adoptive parents and birth families and that there are no restrictions based on protected characteristics.

Service Objectives are as follows:-

1. Statutory Obligations

Ensure that our strategic partner delivers our statutory obligations regarding the provision of birth parent counselling, access to birth records and intermediary services and ensuring that family time is protected,

promoted, and delivered as per agreed Contact Plans.

## 2. Manage Risk Effectively

To identify, assess, control, and monitor risks and opportunities associated with the re-commissioning of the services.

## 3. Improve Outcomes

To meet the needs of children, birth families, adoptive parents and adopted adults and all those who are subject to or who are affected by Adoption.

## 4. Participation and Engagement

Ensure the voices of children, birth families, adoptive parents and adopted adults and all those who are subject to or who are affected by Adoption are sought and listened to.

The process will include consultation with service users prior to going out to procurement.

No change - The evidence suggests that there is no potential for discrimination and all appropriate measures have been taken to advance equality and foster good relations between the protected groups.

## Section B – Evidence

**Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?**

No

**It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?**

No

**Is there national evidence/data that you can use?**

No

**Have you consulted with stakeholders?**

Yes

**Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?**

Quantitative and qualitative feedback has been sought from service users regarding what aspects of the current services they have found to be the most helpful along with views on what could be improved or considered for inclusion in any new service design. Similar feedback was sought from the RAA staff and children in care teams.

Service user feedback identified 87% of those who responded would recommend the service and that their views were listened to.

**Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?**

No

**Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?**

Yes

## Section C – Impact

**Who may be impacted by the activity?**

**Service Users/clients**

Service users/clients

**Staff**

No

**Residents/Communities/Citizens**

Residents/communities/citizens
<b>Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of Positive Impacts</b>
<p>The re-tendering of the Independent Adoption Support Services through a procurement exercise will offer the opportunity to build on lessons learnt from the previous contracts and improve the overall service offering.</p> <p>The aim of the activity is to ensure service users are accessing advice and support in a safe and secure way as well as ensuring the statutory duties of Kent County Council are fulfilled in an open and transparent manner.</p> <p>In 2014 a change in legislation extended the provision of intermediary services to facilitate contact between persons with a prescribed relationship. This is defined as individuals who still have a relationship with the adoptee by blood, marriage, or civil partnership.</p> <p>Service users who present with life limiting conditions and terminal diagnosis are prioritised and additional support and appointments are offered to ensure a timely completion of the case.</p>
<b>Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for age?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of negative impacts for Age</b>
Low negative impact due to these services being subject to their own specialised legislative framework which specifies age ranges
<b>Mitigating Actions for Age</b>
It is specified within the legislation who can access services, and this will remain applicable in any new tender and resulting contract. Any supplier will be expected to ensure that all service users are treated as individuals and that their needs are met through adopting a person-centred approach. This will be monitored through contract management processes
<b>Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</b>
Sarah Skinner, Head of Adoption Partnership (SE)
<b>20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Disability?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</b>
Low negative impact
<b>Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
It is specified within the legislation who can access services, and this will remain applicable in any new tender and resulting contract irrespective of any disability. Any supplier will be expected to ensure that all service users are treated as individuals and that their needs are met through adopting a person-centred approach. If required, additional appointments over that what is specified within the contract, will be made available to take into consideration those who have a disability or health issue. This will be monitored through contract management processes.
<b>Responsible Officer for Disability</b>
Sarah Skinner, Head of Adoption Partnership (SE)
<b>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sex</b>
No

<b>Details of negative impacts for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Sex</b>
Not Applicable
<b>22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Race</b>
Yes
<b>Negative impacts for Race</b>
No impact has been identified at this stage. Race does not restrict access to the services, eligibility is identified within the relevant legislation.
<b>Mitigating actions for Race</b>
Alternative information formats and access to interpreting services are made available if required and information in this regard is requested with referral.
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race</b>
Sarah Skinner, Head of Adoption Partnership (SE)
<b>24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>

Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Yes
<b>Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Low negative impact
<b>Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
<p>If service users require their carers to accompany them this is permitted with no restriction. Carers of service users with life limiting conditions will be prioritised through the case allocation process.</p> <p>If the service user is a carer this does not restrict access to the services provided, they meet the eligibility criteria specified within the legislation.</p>
<b>Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Sarah Skinner, Head of Adoption Partnership(SE)