

Kent County Council

## Equality Analysis/ Impact Assessment (EqIA)

**Directorate/ Service:**

Children Young People and Education / Corporate Parenting

**Name of decision, policy, procedure, project or service:**

Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – business case

**Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer:**

Caroline Smith, Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting, Children’s Social Work Services

**Version:**

Version 03

**Author:**

Sarah Skinner, Interim Head of Regional Adoption Agency for Kent County Council, London Borough Bexley and Medway Council

**Pathway of Equality Analysis:**

Version	Author	Date	Comment
01	Permila Clare	Jan 2020	First draft
01	Sarah Skinner	Jan 2020	Review
01	Akua Agyepong	Jan 2020	Recommendations
02	Permila Clare	Jan 2020	Completion of recommendations
02	Sarah Skinner	Feb 2020	Review
02	Permila Clare	Apr 2020	Suggestions
02	Permila Clare	Apr 2020	Amendments
02	Caroline Smith	Apr 2020	Review
02	Sarah Hammond	Apr 2020	Review
03	Sarah Hammond	May 2020	Discussion & Recommendations
03	Caroline Smith	May 2020	Discussion & Recommendations
03	Sarah Skinner	May 2020	Discussion & Recommendations
03	Permila Clare	May 2020	Discussion & Recommendations
03	Permila Clare	May 2020	Additional data information/ review
03	Sarah Skinner	May 2020	Review

Update 24/06/20

1

This document is available in other formats, please contact  
[alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk)

## Summary and recommendations of equality analysis/impact assessment

### Context

In March 2016, the government announced changes to the delivery of adoption services setting a very clear direction that all local authorities' adoption services must be delivered on a regionalised basis by 2020. Discussions regarding the development of a RAA have been taking place between the London Borough of Bexley, Kent County Council and Medway Council and work is underway to form a Partnership subject to a legal agreement. This RAA framework is in accordance with the following legislation:

- i. Education and Adoption Act 2016
- ii. Adoption and Children Act 2002
- iii. Children and Adoption Act 2006
- iv. Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- v. Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005
- vi. Children Act 1989
- vii. Local Authority Social Services Act 1970

The RAA plans to 'Go Live' from October 2020

This document considers the equality impact of a new Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) through combining the adoption services of the London Borough of Bexley, Kent County Council and Medway Council to provide a cohesive, efficient and effective use of resources and promote the development of practice for the benefit of children, adopters and others who gain from adoption services.

### Aims and objectives

The service development plan aims to model an effective service capable of delivering the best possible outcomes for children and adoptive families. In order to achieve this the methodology includes:

- The development of working groups with front line adoption staff who know and understand the challenges in their services.
- Hearing the voice of adopters and adopted young people who know what support they need and what works for them.
- Consultation with key partners and stakeholders; especially those who influence outcomes such as the judiciary.
- An understanding of current research and evidence-based practice such as equality as highlighted in the screening / analysis.
- An understanding of current performance: locally, regionally and nationally.
- Development of a learning culture of support, challenge and reflection.

Update 24/06/20

2

This document is available in other formats, please contact  
[alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk)

The Bexley, Kent & Medway RAA aims to place itself at the forefront of adoption services nationally and this applies to timescales, performance and quality service delivery. The intention is to ensure that in year 1 of the RAA going live, performance continues *at the very least* in line with the previous year's performance. This would mean that regionally, the RAA is meeting the national targets for the A1 and A2 indicators.

*National target*

A1	<i>Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)</i>
A2	<i>Average time between a Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)</i>

The RAA also intends to ensure that all Local Authority performance moves towards the best performing Local Authority in the partnership to ensure regional performance that competes with the highest performing RAA's nationally by year 2 of the model.

The key aim in combining services to create a single Regional Adoption Agency is to achieve the highest possible quality outcomes for all children and young people with adoption plans in the region. Local Authorities will come together and combine adoption services into a new regional agency to benefit children and their adoptive families, with larger operating areas giving a wider pool of adopters and children, more effective matching and better support services.

**Summary of equality impact**

There is diversity amongst children who need to be adopted and adults who wish to be assessed and approved as adoptive parents. The initial screening checklist identifies that the service is of 'relevance' to equality and performance measures can be looked at with regards to the protected characteristics to improve outcomes and build an improved service that taken this into account and seeks to mitigate them where this is required following analysis of the data .

Although age is not a protected characteristic for children, the impact assessment considers the effect that can have on the likelihood of a child being adopted and highlights the improved possibility of adoption through increasing the pool of possible adopters.

The service serves all protected groups and it is expected that the changes will have a positive impact across the protected characteristics for reasons detailed in this assessment.

**Adverse Equality Impact Rating Low**

Low rating

**Attestation**

I confirm that I have read and paid due regard to the equality analysis/impact assessment concerning the staying put policy and I agree with the risk rating and the actions to mitigate any adverse impact(s) that has/have been identified.

**Head of Service**

Signed:

Name: Caroline Smith



Job Title: Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**DMT Member**

Signed:

Name: Sarah Hammond



Job Title: Director of Integrated Children's Services East (Social Work Lead)

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

<b>Part 1 screening.</b> Could this policy, procedure, project or service, or any proposed changed to it, affect any Protected Group (listed below) less favourably (negatively) than others in Kent? Could this policy, procedure or service promote equal opportunities for this group?				
<b>Please provide a brief commentary on your findings. Fuller analysis should be undertaken in Part 2.</b>				
<b>Protected group</b>	<b>High negative impact (EqIA)</b>	<b>Medium negative impact (screen)</b>	<b>Low negative impact (evidence)</b>	<b>High, medium or low positive impact (evidence)</b>
Age	No	No	<p>Age is not a barrier for children to be adopted although data shows children aged 0-7 are most likely to be adopted.</p> <p>Older children in care can be adopted if it is deemed to be in their best interest. Foster carers may wish to provide legal and emotional permanence for a child through adopting.</p> <p>Data published by DfE 2019 reports for the year ending 31 March 2019 3,570 children were adopted in England. The average time from entry to care and adoption varies by the age of the child at the start of the period of care with older children tending to wait longer.</p>	<p>Older children waiting for adoption may be positively impacted by an extended 'pool' of adopters. Data for Medway shows those children adopted aged 7 and over for the 3-year period is 21%, compared to Kent at 6% and Bexley at 4% which is very positive for older children.</p> <p>Adoption agencies are charged, under statutory guidance, to develop a plan to secure enough potential adopters to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption. This includes considering how prospective adopters might be encouraged and supported to meet children's needs, including older children, who they might not have initially considered themselves able to adopt.</p> <p>The Government's minimum expectation is that RAA's use a wider geographical base to increase the scope for matching and ultimately increasing placement opportunities. This will be particularly helpful in assessing adopters for older children who can be harder to place. Statutory guidance states that potential adopters must be at least 21 years of age. There is no upper age limit for adopters and adoption agencies must not refuse to accept registration of interest based on age. The guidance remains in place with the move to RAA's.</p>

Update 24/06/20

Disability	No	No	No	<p>Low positive impact. Children who are placed for adoption can have a range of complex needs, which can include a physical disability, and/or neurological diagnosis, but children can also have emotional needs relating to early life experiences of trauma and physical/emotional abuse. These can result in a child experiencing attachment issues.</p> <p>For children with disabilities and complex needs the RAA offers a greater chance of being successfully adopted given a larger and more diverse adoption pool and greater scope to develop specialist expertise in placing children with disabilities.</p> <p>For adopters the range of children they will be considered for may increase as the number of children for whom adoption is the plan, will now extend to partner agencies. The RAA will provide access to services across the region as opposed to just within one Local Authority.</p> <p>The RAA will also continue to abide by statutory regulations that advises adopters should not be precluded from applying on the grounds of disability, but will be assessed in order to be satisfied that they are able to take on the task of adopting a child and have the expectation of caring for the child through childhood and into adulthood.</p> <p>As with other protected characteristics the extended service is thought to have a positive impact on those seeking to adopt, as well as for the children placed for adoption.</p>
------------	----	----	----	---

Sex	No	No	No	<p>Sex is not a barrier for children to be adopted and applications are welcomed from prospective adopters regardless of what sex they are.</p> <p>National adoption data for the period 2015-2019 shows that more boys are placed for adoption than girls. The current data for males for Kent over the 3-year period was 54%, for Medway this was 51% and Bexley were 74%.</p> <p>An extended adopter pool will have a positive impact for children waiting to be adopted, regardless of their gender.</p> <p>Sex is not a barrier to adults adopting a child.</p>
Gender Identity / Transgender	No	No	No	<p>Gender identity or transgender is not a barrier to adoption and transgender people are able to be adopters. The impact of the RAA will not adversely impact this group.</p>

Race(including ethnicity)	No	No	No	<p>The RAA will still be required to abide by statutory guidance for adoption, which states that adoption agencies must not refuse to accept a registration of interest for adoption on the grounds of a prospective adopter's ethnicity or because they do not share the same ethnicity or culture as the children waiting for an adoptive family.</p> <p>As with other protected characteristics the extended service is thought to have a positive impact on children waiting to be adopted for all children including BAME and young people as the pool of adopters increases opportunities for adoption.</p> <p>Whilst racial origin and cultural background are among the matters to be considered in determining the appropriate match for a child, only in very exceptional circumstances should matching a child with prospective adopters be delayed solely on the ground that the available prospective adopters do not match the child's racial origin or cultural or linguistic background. The agency must assess a prospective adopter's ability to parent, and meet the needs of, the child throughout childhood, whether they share all or any of those characteristics. Where the child is matched with prospective adopters who do not share those characteristics, the agency must provide them with flexible and creative support as necessary.</p> <p>It is an aim of the development of RAA's that they will be able to develop greater specialisms and more innovative practice, which will help to support recruitment (including that from particular communities) and the pre and post adoption process and support.</p>
---------------------------	----	----	----	---

Update 24/06/20



Religion and Belief	No	No	No	<p>Religion and Belief is not a barrier for children to be adopted, but generally a child would be placed with a family of the same religion or belief. An extended adopter pool will provide greater opportunities to meet the needs of children with wide ranging religious beliefs.</p> <p>Statutory guidance on adoption states that whilst religious persuasion is among the matters to be considered in determining the appropriate match for a child, the agency must assess a prospective adopter's ability to parent and meet the needs of the child throughout childhood, whether or not they share the same religious persuasion.</p>
Sexual Orientation	No	No	No	<p>Sexual orientation of adopters is not a barrier to adoption and the current data show that most adopters are heterosexual and those from the gay/lesbian community over the 3 years was 15% for Kent, 26% for Bexley and 10% for Medway. The development of the RAA will not adversely impact this protected group.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	No	No	No	<p>Care planning for children can commence pre-birth if adoption is identified as the care plan. The RAA will seek to recruit prospective foster carers who wish also to be considered as adoptive parents to avoid unnecessary moves for very young children, who cannot return to the care of their birth family following legal proceedings or are placed for adoption at the birth parents request. The move to a RAA could have a positive impact in relation to helping to ensure a more efficient permanency placement process offering a wider pool of foster to adopt carers.</p>

Marriage and civil partnerships	No	No	No	Adopters can be married, in a civil partnership, or single. Nationally, for the 2018/19 reporting period, 12% of children were adopted by single adopters and 88% by couples. Of the 3,570 children who were adopted in 2018/19 15% were adopted by same sex couples.
Carer's responsibilities	No	No	No	This is not a barrier for adopters, but it is important to feel confident that they are able to provide enough time to parent a child and meet their current and future needs.

## **Part 2: Equality analysis /impact assessment**

### **Protected groups**

None of the protected groups will be negatively affected as the proposal for local authorities to combine adoption services into a new regional agency for the benefit children and their adoptive families. The larger operating area will offer a wider pool of adopters for children providing greater opportunity for more effective matching and better support services.

### **Information and data used to carry out your assessment**

The data used to carry out this assessment is based on the Kent Adoption Annual Report 2018/19, SCS scheduled reports, MIU, Bexley and Medway data.

The following information is for all 3 local authorities and compares each data to the same information.

***\*\*Note data have been suppressed to protect individual identity and grand totals removed \*\****

#### Adoptions

Year (Kent)	Total
2017/18	102
2018/19	95
2019/20	62

Year (Bexley)	Total
2017/18	15
2018/19	8
2019/20	<5

Year (Medway)	Total
2017/18	35
2018/19	24
2019/20	17

Disability (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
No	102	93	62
Yes	<5	<5	<5

Disability (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
No	15	8	<5
Yes	<5	<5	<5

Disability (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
No	33	22	16
Yes	<5	<5	<5

Gender (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Female	49	47	24
Male	53	48	38

Gender (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Female	6	<5	<5
Male	9	<5	<5

Gender (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Female	17	14	6
Male	18	10	11

Ethnicity (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
A1 - White British	90	85	50
A2 - White Irish	<5	<5	<5
A3 - Any other White background	<5	<5	<5
A4 - Traveller of Irish Heritage	<5	<5	<5
A5 - Gypsy/Roma	<5	<5	<5
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	<5	<5	<5
B2 - White and Black African	<5	<5	<5
B3 - White and Asian	<5	<5	<5
B4 - Any other mixed background	<5	<5	<5
D2 - African	<5	<5	<5
E2 - Any other ethnic group	<5	<5	<5

Ethnicity (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
A1 - White British	12	<5	<5
A3 - Any other White background	<5	<5	<5
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	<5	<5	<5
B2 - White and Black African	<5	<5	<5
B4 - Any other mixed background	<5	<5	<5
D2 - African	<5	<5	<5

Ethnicity (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
A1 - White British	31	20	16
A2 - White Irish	<5	<5	<5
A3 - Any other White background	<5	<5	<5
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	<5	<5	<5
B3 - White and Asian	<5	<5	<5
B4 - Any other mixed background	<5	<5	<5

Age at Adoption (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
0	17	12	11
1	27	31	18
2	15	16	12
3	13	14	6
4	7	7	6
5	8	7	<5
6	6	<5	<5
7	<5	5	<5
8	<5	<5	<5
9	<5	<5	<5

Age at Adoption (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
0	9	<5	<5
1	<5	<5	<5
2	<5	<5	<5
3	<5	<5	<5
4	<5	<5	<5
5	<5	<5	<5
6	<5	<5	<5
7	<5	<5	<5

Age at Adoption (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
0	<5	<5	<5
1	8	9	<5
2	6	<5	<5
3	<5	<5	<5
4	<5	<5	<5
5	<5	<5	<5
6	<5	<5	<5
7	<5	<5	<5
8	<5	<5	<5
9	<5	<5	<5
10	<5	<5	<5
12	<5	<5	<5
15	<5	<5	<5
16	<5	<5	<5

#### Adopter data household approvals

Year (Kent)	Total
2017/18	88
2018/19	81
2019/20	66

Year (Bexley)	Total
2017/18	18
2018/19	18
2019/20	14

Year (Medway)	Total
2017/18	14
2018/19	11
2019/20	16

Sexuality (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Gay/Lesbian	13	10	13
Heterosexual	75	71	52
Not recorded	<5	<5	<5

Sexuality (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Gay/Lesbian	<5	9	<5
Heterosexual	16	9	12

Sexuality (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Gay/Lesbian	<5	<5	<5
Heterosexual	14	9	11
Unknown	<5	<5	<5

Relationship status (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Civil Partnership	<5	<5	<5
Co-habiting	13	8	17
Common law marriage	<5	<5	<5
Divorced	<5	<5	<5
Married	59	67	43
Same sex partnership	<5	<5	<5
Single	10	<5	6

Relationship status (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Civil Partnership	<5	<5	<5
Co-habiting	<5	<5	<5
Common law marriage	<5	<5	<5
Divorced	<5	<5	<5
Married	<16	18	11
Same sex partnership	<5	<5	<5
Single	<5	<5	<5

Relationship status (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Civil Partnership	<5	<5	<5
Co-habiting	<5	<5	<5
Common law marriage	<5	<5	<5
Divorced	<5	<5	<5
Married	12	7	10
Same sex partnership	<5	<5	<5
Single	<5	<5	<5

Adopter 1 Ethnicity (Kent)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
A1 - White British	79	71	59
A3 - Any other White background	7	5	<5
B4 - Any other mixed background	<5	<5	<5
C1 - Indian	<5	<5	<5
C2 - Pakistani	<5	<5	<5
D1 - Caribbean	<5	<5	<5
D2 - African	<5	<5	<5
D3 - Any other Black background	<5	<5	<5
E2 - Any other ethnic group	<5	<5	<5

Update 24/06/20

15

This document is available in other formats, please contact  
[alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk)

<b>Adopter 2 Ethnicity (Kent)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
A1 - White British	70	67	49
A3 - Any other White background	5	7	6
B4 - Any other mixed background		<5	
C1 - Indian	<5		
C4 - Any other Asian background	<5		<5
D2 - African		<5	
D3 - Any other Black background			<5
E2 - Any other ethnic group			<5

<b>Adopter 1 Ethnicity (Bexley)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
A1 - White British	14	15	8
A3 - Any other White background	<5		<5
C1 - Indian	<5	<5	
D2 - African	<5	<5	<5

<b>Adopter 2 Ethnicity (Bexley)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
A1 - White British	11	10	<5
A3 - Any other White background	<5	<5	<5
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	<5		<5
C1 - Indian		<5	
C4 - Any other Asian background			<5
D2 - African	<5	<5	<5
E1 - Chinese	<5		
E2 - Any other ethnic group		<5	

<b>Adopter 1 Ethnicity (Medway)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
A1 - White British	12	11	15
A3 - Any other White background	<5		
C4 - Any other Asian background			<5
D2 - African	<5		



<b>Adopter 2 Ethnicity (Medway)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
A1 - White British	11	9	13
B4 - Any other mixed background	<5	<5	
C4 - Any other Asian background			<5
E2 - Any other ethnic group	<5		
Not recorded	<5	<5	<5

<b>Adopter 1 Religion (Kent)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Christian	34	28	24
Church of England	<5	<5	<5
Hindu	<5	<5	<5
Jewish	<5	<5	<5
Muslim	<5	<5	<5
None	49	45	40
Other Religion or Belief	<5	<5	<5
Unclassified	<5	<5	<5

<b>Adopter 2 Religion (Kent)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Christian	27	32	18
Church of England		<5	
Hindu		<5	
Jewish	<5		
Muslim	<5		
None	46	39	40
Other Religion or Belief	<5	<5	<5
Unclassified		<5	

Adopter 1 Religion (Bexley)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Christian	14	9	12
Hindu		<5	
Jewish			<5
None	<5	8	
Other			<5

Adopter 2 Religion	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Christian	13	8	10
Hindu		<5	
Jewish		<5	
Muslim			<5
None	<5	8	
Other			<5

Adopter 1 religion (Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Christian	5	5	5
Hindu	<5		
Buddist		<5	
None	8	5	7
Other Religion or Belief			<5
Unclassified			<5

Adopter 2 religion Medway)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Christian	7	<5	<5
Hindu	<5		
None	5	5	7
Other Religion or Belief		<5	<5
Unclassified	<5	<5	<5

The following data is the latest unpublished adoption performance (2018-2019) incorporating Bexley, Kent & Medway. This suggest that performance continues to significantly exceed national averages in both Bexley and Kent in relation to all 3 A1, A2 and A3 indicators. In Medway, however, timescales have increased against the A1, A2 and A3 indicators.

		A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)  <b>DfE Target 425 days</b>	A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)  <b>DfE Target 121 days</b>	A3: Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)
Medway	LA's 3-year average (2015-18)	469	184	75 (51%)
	18-19 Average	569	217	8 (37%)
Bexley	LA's 3-year average (2015-18)	339	120	55 (81) %
	18-19 Average	340	74	(1) 100%
Kent	LA's 3-year average (2015-18)	392	151	285 (73%)
	18-19 Average	363	120	73 (77%)
National	England 3- year average (2015-18)	486	201	11010 (56%)
	18-19 Average	558	226	47%

## Future RAA Performance

When the RAA goes live, its performance will be measured through a new framework which will consider the performance of both the RAA and Local Authority in relation to difference aspects of the child and adopter journey as below

In addition, the protected groups can be analysed to ensure fairness through out.

<b>Timeliness*</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Matching (RAA)</b>	<b>Recruitment (RAA)</b>	<b>Support (RAA)</b>
<p><b>LA and RAA</b> Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions. <b>(A.10)</b></p> <p><b>RAA</b> Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family. <b>(A.2)</b></p> <p><b>LA</b> Average time (in days) between entering care and placement order. <b>(New)</b></p> <p><i>* Both a single year average and a three yearly average.</i></p>	<p>Number of ADM decisions. <b>(A.15)</b></p> <p>Number of new placement orders granted. <b>(A.16)</b></p> <p>Children for whom permanence decisions has changed away from adoption. <b>(A.5)</b></p> <p>Number of children in a Fostering for Adoption / Concurrent Planning foster placement. <b>(A.17)</b></p>	<p>Total number of children not placed after placement order after 3, 6, 12, 18 months. <b>(New)</b></p> <p>Number of approved adoptive families waiting to be matched after 3, 6, 12, 18 months. <b>(New)</b></p> <p>Percentage of adoptive families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to matching decision. <b>(A.12)</b></p>	<p>Number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected). <b>(A.13)</b></p> <p>Number of adopter approvals. <b>(New)</b></p> <p>Number of applications commencing Stage 1. <b>(New)</b></p>	<p>Average time (in days) from request from adopter to assessment. <b>(New - subject to ASGLB data collection)</b></p> <p>Number of disruptions. <b>(New - subject to ASGLB data collection)</b></p>

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

This document has been developed with statutory obligations and is heavily influenced by statutory guidance and legislation.

Consultation regarding service development, design and service delivery has taken place with the following services and personnel:

- Adoptive parents
- Management Information Unit (MIU)
- Bexley Adoption service
- Medway Adoption Service
- Adoption Service – Kent
- Finance
- Commissioning
- ICT
- HR
- Operational Board
- Executive Board

Update 24/06/20

20

This document is available in other formats, please contact [alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk)

- Designated Doctor for Looked After Children
- Medical Advisers
- VSK
- Panel Chairs/Members

*(HR have completed an EqIA with regards to staffing)*

### **Analysis**

The Local Authority and Adoption Agency is bound to work within a legal framework and adhere to statutory guidelines. Within these, is the need to consider the welfare of a child and seek to achieve 'Permanence' for children in a timely way. Their wishes and feelings are considered within the care planning process.

Relevant legislation and Statutory guidance:

- The Education and Adoption Act 2016
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Adoption Agencies Regulations and Guidance 2013
- Adoption National Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act 2000)

Kent adoption service statement of purpose

The purpose of the adoption service is to provide a comprehensive service to meet the needs of children who have been or may become adopted

### Core Values

Some of the core values for the RAA and adopted from the Kent adoption service is as follows:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond
- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process
- The child's wishes, and feelings will be actively sought and fully considered at all stages. The preferred communication methods of each child should be promoted and supported
- Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language will be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made
- The needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and considered when decisions are made

The adoption service aims to place children with a family which understands and will promote their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language. Placements will be secured in a timely manner. For a small number of children finding the best possible match will exceed expected timescales. However, we are

Update 24/06/20

21

committed to finding legal permanence for all our children. Current data shows most children who have been adopted have been White British, this is not due to any other ethnicity being treated unfavourable but due to there not being many children of another ethnicity placed for adoption. This is evident from the data below for the reporting 3- year period.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Kent</b>	<b>Bexley</b>	<b>Medway</b>
White British	87%	67%	89%
Other	13%	33%	11%

Data also shows the younger the child the more likely of that child being adopted when compared to those children over the age of 7, however the data for Medway was positive with regards to children aged over 7 in comparison to Kent and Bexley.

The adoption service works in an open and transparent way with prospective adopters to ensure they are well informed about a child's needs, so they can fully consider the implication of a child's history and the possible impact of this on the child's health, development and wellbeing, both in the present and in the future.

### **Adverse impact**

Information collected to date shows that there are no adverse equality impacts across our children and young people's protected characteristics. We will be more active in checking and sampling our data to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

### **Positive impact**

The business case forms a framework which will encourage the work delivered by the RAA to have positive impact across all protected characteristics and the EqIA is the assessment of the protected characteristics. The RAA will mean having better chances to place children for adoption across the region.

### **Judgement**

There are no implications with regards to having any negative impact on the relevant protected groups.

**No major change** - no potential for discrimination and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken

**Internal action required:** Yes  
Continuous monitoring and review

## **Equality impact analysis/assessment action plan**

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications
All	Some strategy's or policy's do not have EqlA in place	EqlA's to be undertaken for all the project streams identified in the strategy	Those individuals responsible for writing their policy/procedure to ensure EqlA are in place	Head of Service	On the production of any document produced	
All	No issues identified but to ensure good practice	More active in checking and sampling our data and performance by analysing the protected groups to ensure fairness throughout	To enhance good practice	Head of Service	On the production of any document produced	

**Have the actions been included in your business/ service plan? Yes**

Please forward a final signed electronic copy and Word version to the Equality Team by emailing [diversityinfo@kent.gov.uk](mailto:diversityinfo@kent.gov.uk). If the activity will be subject to a Cabinet decision, the EqlA must be submitted to committee services along with the relevant Cabinet report. Your EqlA should also be published. The original signed hard copy and electronic copy should be kept with your team for audit purposes.