National Adoption Strategy- Regional Adoption Leaders working together

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Achieving Permanence

'The best possible care involves giving children security, stability and love through their childhood and beyond.' (Action Plan DfE 2011 p.6)

- Applies to *all* children
  - ensuring permanence outside *or* within the care system
  - Implies a focus on the present *and* the future
  - a family for life
- Includes objective and subjective dimensions of permanence
  - Physical stability *and* emotional security

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National Adoption Strategy
Achieving Excellence Everywhere

Adoption is considered as a positive opportunity for all children

Adopters are actively encouraged to come forward from all walks of life. Recruited from all communities and that they experience a respectful and openminded response from agencies.

Children have their needs prioritised and get support when they need it from professionals who understand the impact of adoption.

Children to achieve their full potential and achieve positive outcomes in their education

Adopters are given the support to understand the needs of children and to build strong attachments

Adoption Support for young people in transition to adulthood

Voice and influence of adopters and children in decisions which affect them and the shape and development of services

DATA

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1 2022/23

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Families for Children

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Key Challenges

How do we modernise adoption to ensure that we respect children's identity and value significant relationships by providing support to all parties enabling relationships to be preserved in a safe and appropriate way?

Recruitment & matching- sufficiency/diversity/ decision making?

Falling numbers – is this right for children?

Given experiences of early trauma and harm, lifelong support is crucial for children and adult adopted people.

Regional Adoption Agencies

- 32 RAA's are now in place with the last Local authorities moving towards being part of an LA.

- There is clear support from the government through the RAA leaders group to improved and develop practice and services for children and families
- The single focus of adoption with RAA's is beneficial in the adoption system to provide more effective services at scale
- My role working with RAA leaders and other key stakeholders to support RAA's and LA's to continuously improve practice and services.
- Development of birth parent reference group and adopted persons reference group and committed to raising the voice and influence of these groups.

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RAA LEADERS PLAN: 2021-2024

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Our vision: working together to deliver high quality adoption services for children and families.

What we'll do:

Outcomes:

1. Children are found permanent and loving homes in a timely way
2. Children have good quality care, a good understanding of their identity, a sense of belonging and stability within their adoptive family
3. Children and families get help and support when they need it
4. Children, adoptive and birth families have an influence in the services provided nationally and regionally
5. Professionals understand the profound impact of care and adoption on children's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Priorities:

1. RECRUITMENT (NARSG)

- Reduce the time from entry into care to children moving in with their adopters
- Increase the number and diversity of adopters to better meet the specific and emerging identity needs of all children and to enable early placements
- Everyone is treated with respect and receives an open, honest and caring response throughout
- Raise the profile of adoption, by recognizing and valuing the achievements of adopted people and their families.

2. CHILD'S JOURNEY

- Improve permanence planning through better quality decision making and use of the evidence base
- Increase the number and improve the quality and consistency of early permanence practice
- Enable development of the highest quality care planning processes, systems and structures for children across RAAs and LAs
- Reduce delay in placement by improving matching practice and processes
- Improve the quality of information provided to adopters and children about the child's history
- Improve the planning and management of fostering placements which become adoptive placements (which are not early placements)

3. ADOPTION SUPPORT

- Each child has an individual adoption support plan at the point of placement, which identifies current and future needs. It is regularly reviewed with the child/ren and adoptive parents to ensure it meets the changing needs of the children and family.
- Children and adoptive families across the country have equal access to timely and pertinent adoption support core services.
- Adoption support services are evidence based with measurable aims.

How we'll do it:

- Monitor, evaluate & respond to service user feedback & performance data to continually improve
- Support our workforce to be skilled and capable that enable adoption services to thrive
- Work together across the sector with partners and those who are experts by experience in the working groups shown below

How we'll know if we've made a difference:

- Increased the numbers of adopters recruited and approved;
- Reduced timescale in which children are placed with adoptive parent/s
- High levels of family stability maintained;
- Service user feedback
- Evaluation from Adoption Support Fund

Other Projects from April 2023

Multidisciplinary Teams (Centres for Excellence)

National Commissioning

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National Strategic Lead
Programme Deployment Lead
Governance Group
Programme Manager
Priority
Recruitment
Priority
Child's Journey
Priority
Early Help &
Adoption Support
Data & Learning
P1
Recruitment
(NARSG)
P5
Child's Journey Steering
Group / Social Work
Practice, Systems and
Processes
P6
EP Working Group
Steering Group
P12
Adoption Support
Plans T&F
P13
Adoption Support
Data T&F
Marketing and
Communications
P2
Diversity (NARSG)
P7
EP Practice and Service
Development &
commissioning
P8
EP - Data and Research
P14
Adoption Support
Core Offer T&F
P15
AS Transfer Plans
Funding & Business
and Project Support
P3
Adopter Journey –
Adoption Front Door
T&F
P9
Matching Working
Group
P10
Matching Data T&F
P16
Centre of Excellence
P17
Transforming
Contact
Commissioning
P4
Adopter Journey –
Adopter Preparation
Criteria T&F
P11
Link Maker Working
Group
Voice and Influence

Recruitment

- Insights and research collected about assessment models/adopter views/mystery shopping/preparation training as is:

Now moving to focus on practice

- 2 task and finish groups
- a) Front door
- b) Preparation of adopters

Development of national standards/guidance for Recruitment and assessment of adopters

Early Permanence

- Early permanence
  - Issues with terminology
  - Issues with data collection
  - Inconsistency of practice
- 11 new initiatives withing the pan regions

  Training and raising awareness/resources
  Older children
  Peer Support to carers
  Contact
- Conference in February – North & South

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Matching – RAA/LA

- Deep Dive into Top 100- lessons learnt

- Best use of Linkmaker

- Decision making
- Siblings
- Life story work
- Planning - Ongoing relationships for children

- 9 pan regional projects
  - Children with disabilities – targeted recruitment and support packages
  - Bespoke family finding
  - Advanced Practitioners working across RAA's
  - Working with LA social workers on sibling assessments

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AS Projects

2021-22

2022-23

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Task and Finish Groups

Adoption Early Support Core Offer

To give recommendations for Adoption Support Core Services from universal to specialist provision, including specialist early support provision for family building within first 18 months after placement

Adoption Support Assessment and Planning

To make recommendations on the definition of National Principles for the creation and review of an outcomes-based Adoption Support Plan(s) including assessment of need, support planning, delivery and review and outcome measures.

Respecting Children's Identity and relationships

- Letterbox Contact
  - Prototype Letterswap
    - Link maker
    - 5 RAA's
    - University of East Anglia
    - PAC/UK
  - Changing the culture
  - Lifelong Links – adapt for adoption
  - Mapping of services for birth family's and adoption

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Maintaining Significant Relationships

- Maintaining Significant Relationships group

Purpose

- To modernise current adoption processes to ensure that significant relationships are maintained where safe and appropriate, with an emphasis on reducing unnecessary loss for the adopted person. To aim for this to be standard procedure in all adoption proceedings

Objectives

- Identify and share models of practice that support relationships at the different stages of the child's journey into care and through adoption.
- To influence behaviour change – adopters/ social workers/leaders in the system.

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The road ahead

We are embarking on the journey and have some way to go; it is clear there are a number of challenges

RAA leaders have a clear vision to work together to provide high quality adoption services for children and families

We are keen to listen and to involve adoptive families, adopted people and birth families and staff working with children and their families.

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Questions?

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