

# adopt south west

## Statement of Purpose 2023-2024



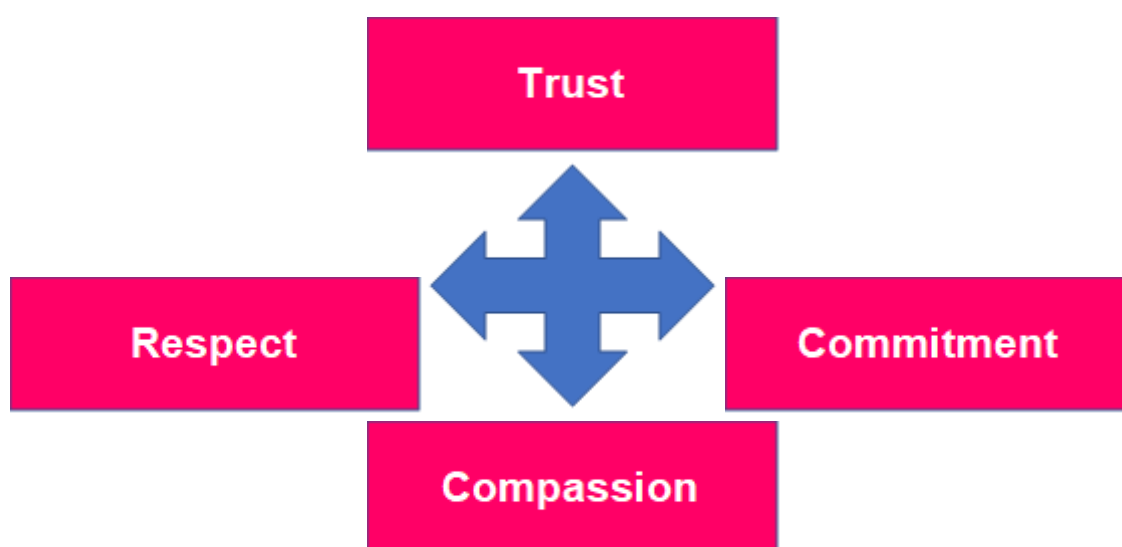
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**Adopt South West is an innovative and supportive regional adoption agency where best outcomes for children and people we work with, staff development and continued professional development are part of our core planning.**

## **Our values**



**Our values are a fundamental part of our collaborative working across our agency and four local authorities, they are reflected in our behaviours and what you can expect to see and receive in all interactions with us.**

## **Our behaviours**

**Tenacity + Curiosity + Openness**

## **1. Introduction**

This document is the Statement of Purpose for Adopt South West, a Regional Adoption Agency, established in October 2018, with delegated responsibility for discharging most of the adoption functions of Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council. The Adopt South West Regional Adoption agency is hosted by Devon County Council.

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that an adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, and a description of the service it provides. It can be used by children and young people and families as a guide to what they should expect a service to provide and to do.

This statement of purpose has been written in accordance with:

- Care Planning Regulations 2010.
- Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011).
- Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.
- Local Authority Regulations 2005.
- Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012.
- Care Planning, placement and Case and fostering services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.
- Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- Care Standards Act 2000.
- Working Together 2018

The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/336069/Adoption\\_NMS\\_July\\_2014\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf)

The 2013 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-statutory-guidance-2013>

## **2. Principles and values**

The values statements are adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards for Adoption and captures the important principles which underpin all adoption work within Adopt South West and within the four local authorities of Devon, Plymouth, Somerset, and Torbay in their permanency planning for children for whom adoption is the care plan.

### Values - children

1. The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
2. Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and where possible this should be within their own family.
3. Children's wishes and feelings are central to all adoption processes and will be sought and fully considered at every stage of the adoption process.
4. Delays in the adoption process can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.
5. The child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality will be fully recognised, positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.
6. The needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and considered when decisions are made.
7. 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.

### Values – adopted adults and birth relatives

1. Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual's life.
2. Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life.
3. Agencies have a duty to provide services that consider the welfare of all parties involved and should consider the implications of decisions and actions for everyone involved.
4. Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views and wishes in decision making.
5. Agencies should acknowledge differences in people's circumstances and have established policies that provide non-discriminatory services.
6. Adopted adults have their adoptive identity safeguarded and the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members.

### Values - adopters

1. The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child will be valued and respected.
2. All adoptive applicants will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. No applicant will be discriminated against on grounds of disability, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, gender, financial status or marital status.
3. All applicants are entitled to know what issues will be considered in their assessment and will be kept informed of progress throughout. They will receive a copy of their assessment report before an adoption panel meeting, can comment on the report and to attend panel and be heard if they wish.

### Equal opportunities

Adopt South West is committed to promoting diversity and non-discriminatory practice. The adoption service abides by equal opportunities legislation and the policies of Devon County Council. The service works positively and respectfully with all service users and partner agencies regardless of race, colour, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.

Adopt South West's intention is to improve the adoption process and services for children, their birth families and adopters by bringing together the best practices from the four regional adoption teams. Every attempt will be made to secure an adoptive family which meets a child's emotional and developmental needs considering their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability whilst considering the need to avoid undue delay.

## 3. Aims and objectives of the service

In accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, all local authorities have a duty to establish and maintain an adoption service in their area, to meet the needs of children who have or may be adopted, birth families and adopted adults. Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council have delegated most of those functions to Adopt South West. Further information can be found about this in the Schedule of Responsibilities in Appendix A. The Schedule of Responsibilities forms part of the Inter Authority Agreement between the four local authorities and it explains in detail what functions remain in the local authority and which have been delegated to Adopt South West.

Adopt South West aim is to build and strengthen families through adoption services. The agency aims to work within legislative framework, comply with the National Minimum Standards, Regulatory Requirements and best practice guidance for Adoption Services.

**The main objectives for Adopt South West are to;**

- Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need adoptive families.
- Adhere to permanency planning timescales to ensure that every child who needs an adoptive family is matched as soon as possible with a family that will meet that child's needs for stability, warmth, security, safety and belonging into adulthood and beyond.
- Ensure that every effort will be made to find an adoptive family to meet a child's emotional and developmental needs considering their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability, without undue delay and within the timescales laid down by Statutory Guidance.
- Ensure sufficient adopters, from diverse backgrounds are recruited and involved in a comprehensive assessment, preparation and approval process to help them understand the likely needs of children placed for adoption to enable them to offer the best possible standards of parenting, safety and protection for children in their care.
- Provide effective and efficient Adoption Panels to enable prospective adopters' assessments and matching decisions to be progressed without delay.
- Provide a comprehensive support package to achieve stable and successful placements.
- Provide an efficient and responsive assessment service for children, adopters and adopted adults in respect of adoption support services in conjunction with other agencies.
- Maintain and develop effective partnerships with the Local Authorities and other adoption agencies.
- Ensure that cost effective services are provided and commissioned which maximise available resources.
- Ensure the service works positively and respectfully with all service users and partner agencies regardless of race, colour, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.
- Ensure the service invests in the workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.
- Ensure the service will continually seek to apply best practice and innovation to ways of working. Actively listening to and learning from children, adults and staff to develop and improve the services provided.

#### **4. The Registered Manager / Responsible Officers**

Each of the local authorities making up Adopt South West has a Responsible Officer, often known as the Registered Manager, responsible for the delivery of the adoption service within that local authority area.

Local Authority	Registered Manager/Responsible Officer
Devon County Council	Kath Drescher, Head of Adopt South West
Somerset County Council	Paul Shallcross, Deputy Director Children's Services
Plymouth City Council	Jane Anstis, Children young people and families
Torbay Council	Becky Hopkins Divisional Director – Childrens Services

## 5. Organisational structure and service users

Adopt South West is led and managed by the Head of Adopt South West, Kath Drescher. Kath Drescher has responsibility for the service and is the Agency Decision Maker. Kath Drescher is a qualified social worker with over thirty years' experience of Children and Families' statutory social work. Kath Drescher has a CQSW (Certificate of Qualification in Social Work) 1990 from Croydon College and has a Diploma in Social Administration. Kath Drescher is qualified to Level 5 in the Institute of Leadership and Management. Kath Drescher has over 20 years' experience in adoption and fostering and has worked for the voluntary sector as well as Local Authorities in London and the South West. Kath Drescher has been Senior Manager for Adoption, Fostering Youth Offending Services and Atkinson Secure Children's Home prior to taking up the post of Service Manager Adopt South West in August 2018. Kath undertook the Regional Adoption Agency leaders programme under Deloitte's in 2019.

Adopt South West has three Operations Managers, Mark Berry (part time) Amanda White and Lucy Hextall (part time). Mark Berry, oversees the Adoption Support Service, Lucy Hextall oversees Quality Assurance and the Adoption Panels. Amanda White oversees the Assessment and Family Finding Services. Prior to taking up post in July 2019, Amanda had been Head of Service in Torbay Childrens services, with a responsibility for Adoption as part of her portfolio.

Prior to taking up the post of Operations Manager, Lucy Hextall was a team manager within the quality assurance team within Adopt South West since March 2019, Lucy has experience of working with children and families in both the voluntary and statutory sector including child protection, youth justice and adoption.

Mark Berry has been working for Devon County Council for over 20 years. He has worked in adult mental health as a community worker prior to working in child protection services for nine years as a social worker and team manager before joining Devon Adoption in 2015 as a team manager. Mark Berry was appointed as the registered (operations) manager for Devon



Adoption in 2017. Mark has acted as panel and ADM adviser for the Adoption Panels in Devon County Council.

The recruitment and assessment teams are managed by two managers, and they have 13.6 FTE social workers. All are registered with Social Work England.

There are two family finding teams, North and South. The family finding teams have nine social workers. All are registered with the Social Work England

There is a team of 5 Family practitioners managed by a Team Manager supporting recruitment and assessment.

There are two post adoption support teams, with two managers and fifteen social workers. All are registered with Social Work England.

The post adoption teams Team Manager manages nine family practitioners.

The service is supported by two senior business support and sixteen business support staff.

An organisational chart with details of staffing is attached at Appendix B.

**The Head office is based at:**

Adopt South West  
 Room 255  
 County Hall  
 Topsham Road  
 Exeter  
 Devon  
 EX2 4QD

**The other (main) Adopt South West office bases are:**

Devon	Devon	Plymouth	Torbay	Somerset	Somerset
Adopt South West, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes TQ9 5RS	Adopt South West Taw View, Civic Centre, North Walk, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 1EE	Adopt South West, Ballard House, West Hoe Road Plymouth PL1 3BJ	Adopt South West, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay TQ1 3DR	Adopt South West, Bridgwater House, P.O. Box 457, King Square, Bridgwater TA6 9GP	Adopt South West, County Hall, B1 South, Taunton TA1 4DY

Whilst we still have access to these offices, it should be noted that since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, staff have been largely home based, and this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

## **6. Adopt South West roles and responsibilities**

The successful delivery of the services provided by Adopt South West is dependent on a high level of collaborative working between Adopt South West and Adopt South West’s partner local authorities of Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council.

A children’s guide, completed by each of the Local Authorities is available for all children for whom adoption is the plan and it is given to a child when the decision has been taken that adoption should be their plan. This includes a summary of what happens at each stage.

The agency provides confidential one-to-one, and group support and advice to birth parents affected by adoption at any stage of the process.

The agency has an adoption support service advisor (ASSA), Mark Berry.

The adoption support teams undertake assessments for adoption support services, provide post-adoption support. Support groups and training sessions for adoptive parents are provided throughout the year. A letterbox service is provided to facilitate the exchange of correspondence between adoptive and birth families. The support team support view only photos and direct contact between adoptive and birth families

<b>Function</b>	<b>Adopt South West</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
<b>Recruitment and assessment</b>		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy		
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries		
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions		
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report		
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters		
Post approval training		
Matching		
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters		
<b>Permanence planning</b>		

Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption		
Support and advice to childcare social worker on the adoption process		
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement		
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		
Agency Decision Maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		
<b>Matching and placement</b>		
Family finding		
Looked After Child reviews		
Shortlist and visit potential families		
Organising child appreciation day		
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement		
Adoption Panel administration and management		
Agency adviser role		
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child		
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions		
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support		
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book		
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child’s care and care plan		
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order		
Preparation of later life letter		
<b>Adoption</b>		
Assessment for adoption		

Developing and delivering adoption support plans		
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post Adoption Order		
Adoption support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support groups</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Post adoption training</li> <li>• Independent Birth Relative services</li> <li>• Support with ongoing birth relative contact</li> <li>• Adoption counselling and training</li> </ul>		
<b>Non-agency adoptions</b>		
Step-parent/partner adoption assessments		
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support		

### Recruitment Policy

Adopt South West covers a large geographical area and aims to recruit suitable prospective adoptive families able to offer homes to children across the region needing adoption. Enquirers can access information on adopting with Adopt South West via the Adopt South West website ([adoptsouthwest.org.uk](http://adoptsouthwest.org.uk)) or make contact through the dedicated advice and support line (0345 155 1076).

The service works positively and respectfully with all service users and partner agencies regardless of race, colour, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.

Every attempt will be made to secure an adoptive family which meets a child's emotional and developmental needs considering their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability, considering the need to avoid undue delay.

## 7. Adoption Panel

Adopt South West operates approximately seven Adoption Panels a month, constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations and guidance. The panel has four independent chairs, and 36 members on a Central List from which each panel is drawn. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, usually six attend each panel, including the panel chair and a social worker. The agency medical advisers (AMAs) for the four local authorities are members and the AMAs for Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay attend the panel.

The panels are serviced by the three panel administrators and has access to legal advice if needed. The professional advice to the panels is provided by the two Panel Advisors, who attend each Panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.

Current membership includes individuals with personal experience of adoption; adopters and adopted adults. It also includes experienced social workers with direct experience of adoption work.

There are men and women on the central list, and we seek members of the central list from which individual panel membership to reflect the diversity of modern society as far as possible. Members include those who have personal experience of adoption and others with relevant skills and experience.

The main function of the Adoption Panel is to consider and make recommendations to the adoption agency on the following:

- To recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child.
- To recommend whether a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters is a suitable one.
- In circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no Placement Order is applied for, the panel will recommend whether the child should be placed for adoption.

Frequency of Panel	Adoption Panel Chair
Twice monthly	Dylan McLees-Taylor
Twice monthly	Alistair Macintosh
Monthly	Maria Kasprzyk
Monthly	Caroline Davis

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all panels have been held virtually. Feedback from adopters has been positive, and this arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.

The panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the time scales set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.

The Adopt South West Adoption Panel makes recommendations based on detailed written reports prepared by the child's social worker and adoption social worker, and the social worker and team manager's attendance at panel to clarify points if needed.

The recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final agreed minutes of the meeting, to the Agency Decision Maker, for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

The Head of Adopt South West is the agency decision maker to consider the approval of prospective adopters.

All decision making for children to be placed for adoption, or for a match for a child, is considered by the agency decision maker in the child's home local authority.

### **Adoption support services may include:**

#### **For adoptive families:**

The adoption support team will undertake an assessment of need with the family and will agree a support package based on the family's identified needs, including consideration of making an application to the Adoption Support Fund. Services provided to adoptive families may include:

- Advice and support line
- Monthly newsletter, and social media pages
- Co production group
- Adoption support clinics
- Support groups
- Training and Workshops
- Access to therapy trained workers
- Links with mental health and educational services
- Assistance and review of contact arrangements between adopters and birth relatives
- Social events for adoptive families
- Annual Adoption Conference

#### **Services to adopted children and young people may include:**

- Social groups and activities
- Offering training and advice for schools to help teachers understand adopted children's needs
- Working with children and their adoptive families around understanding their life stories
- Signposting to other organisations designed to help adopted children **Birth relatives:**
- Access to a confidential and independent advice and counselling support services.
- Support regarding letterbox and contact arrangements

- Groups for Birth parents **For adopted adults:**
- Birth record counselling
- Information about registering a veto.

## 8. Monitoring and evaluation of the adoption service

The Strategic Partnership Board meet as regularly as is necessary to perform its role, but in any event no less than six monthly.

The Operational Board meet as regularly as is necessary to perform its role, but in any event no less than every six weeks.

Adoption panels receive regular updates on the outcomes for children and prospective adopters considered at panel. There is three times a year adoption panel training to ensure that panel members keep up to date with current issues. There is a regular Panel newsletter. Panel members also have annual appraisals. Panel chairs provide annual reports regarding business over the year and meet twice a year with the Agency Decision Maker from the agency.

Evaluation feedback is sought from young people, enquirers, adoptive parents and other service users at key points in the adoption process.

The Adoption staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals of their performance. Training needs are identified and met through in-house training or through externally commissioned trainers.

A management information system is in place to ensure that the agency is meeting targets and objectives.

Local authorities comprising the agency are monitored by external inspections carried out by Ofsted. The work of Adopt South West is considered as part of these inspections. Reports are available from the Ofsted website or the registration address as below or direct from this service upon request.

## 9. Compliments, comments and complaints

All of those receiving a service in relation to adoption by Adopt South West are advised of their right to make representations or complaints. If people are unhappy with the service received, they can talk to their social worker or the Service Manager, who will try to resolve matters. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it will be passed to the complaints team, by the host authority, Devon County Council to be dealt with.

The Head of Adopt South West monitors the progress of all complaints and compliments. The service follows the Devon County Council protocol which defines how complaints are managed which are received by or about the services provided by staff in Adopt South West.

### Contact Details

Telephone our freephone number 0800 212 783

Email [sscomp@devon.gov.uk](mailto:sscomp@devon.gov.uk)

Or write to us at FREEPOST SOCIAL CARE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK. You will only need this line for your correspondence to reach the team, and there is no need to use a stamp

### Registration Authority

Ofsted inspects local authority adoption services and can be contacted at:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1  
2WD

<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-form> Customers can make complaints directly to Ofsted.

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England Can Be Contacted Directly by Young People at:

Office of the Children's Commissioner Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Freephone: 0800 528 0731 <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/get-advice>



## Appendix A: Responsibility /function matrix

The successful delivery of the services provided by Adopt South West will be dependent on a high level of joint working between Adopt South West and the partner local authorities of Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay. This document summarises respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families touched by or created through adoption.

### The child

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
<p>Case Responsibility</p> <p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>Children Act 1989</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</p>	<p>The local authority will retain case management responsibility for the child until the making of the Adoption Order</p> <p>The local authority will be responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Visits and Reviews</li> <li>• Management and supervision of contact between child and family members.</li> <li>• Administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers who care for children under Fostering for Adoption arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>The RAA will provide specialist advice and support to assist LA staff to fully understand the adoption process, influencing and promoting best practice</p> <p>The RAA will provide the supervision to foster carer's caring for a child under Fostering for Adoption arrangements.</p>

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
<p>Early identification of children requiring adoption</p> <p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>AAR 2005 as amended</p>	<p>The local authority is responsible for identifying, at the earliest possible stage, the children who may require adoption and making them and their needs known to the RAA, providing relevant and timely information.</p> <p>Birth parents to be referred to the Birth Parent support service at an early stage.</p> <p>Future potential contact arrangements to be considered at an early stage</p>	<p>The RAA will designate a Family Finder to each child identified as possibly requiring adoption to liaise with children’s social workers</p> <p>The RAA aims to develop working practises with each LA to ensure involvement in care planning to assist with the earliest identification.</p> <p>Making sure siblings placed with other adopters are considered by the LA.</p> <p>Staff from the RAA will be involved in identifying children for early permanence placement.</p>
<p>Communication during the family finding process</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</p>	<p>It will be the responsibility of the LA to keep the Child Permanence Report updated and to inform the family finder of any changes in the child’s development or circumstances (e.g. change of placement).</p>	<p>The RAA will keep the LA regularly updated about progress on family finding.</p>

Early Placement	The LA will arrange the Administration and finance of fostering for adoption placements and communication with foster carers who care for children under Fostering for Adoption arrangements as necessary.	Where appropriate, and in agreement with the local authority, the RAA will make available an Early Permanence Placement (EPP) e.g. a Fostering for Adoption Service for children who may benefit from
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SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
	<p>The LA Social Worker will understand the statutory responsibilities i.e. visits / reviews to the child whilst the child is in Early Permanence Placement</p> <p>The LA will be responsible for financial allowances for Early Permanence Placement carers.</p>	<p>the possibility of early placement with potential adopters.</p> <p>If there are no RAA Fostering for Adoption placements available, the RAA has a responsibility to search for a placement outside of the RAA.</p> <p>The RAA will support these carers whilst caring for these children in an Early Permanence Placement</p>
Multitracking of children requiring adoption	The local authority will track the progress of children in care proceedings or looked after under section 20 (Children Act 1989) to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of their potential need for an adoption placement	The RAA will also actively track all children for whom initial information indicates that adoption may be a likely plan

<p>Pre-placement Reports</p> <p>Children Act 1989 Adoption and children Act 2002</p>	<p>The LA will be responsible for the completion and cost of all reports prior to an adoption placement being made including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Placement Reports</li> <li>• QA reports</li> <li>• Sibling Assessments</li> <li>• Support Plans</li> </ul> <p>LA responsible for completing the profiles of the child once an ADM decision is made</p>	<p>The RAA can advise on and support the completion of the Child Placement Report and early profile of the child. The RAA will provide support and challenge to help ensure that the CPR's are of a consistent high quality across the partnership.</p>
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SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
	<p>The LA will liaise with the RAA before the final Care plan is completed and the Adoption Support plan to agree the plan specifically around birth family and sibling contact and ongoing support for the child/ren and Adopters.</p> <p>Final Care plans are to be completed by the LA but the RAA to be consulted on any support needs / contact arrangements post order.</p>	<p>The RAA will provide additional information and advice on the placement needs of the child and the likely need for post adoption support services, including financial support</p> <p>RAA to endorse Support plans and final care plans specifically around future contact and support needs to the LA on final care plans</p>

Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)	The local authority will be responsible for assessing the child's needs in respect of a future placement and in ensuring that any required financial support for a future adoptive placement is available prior to the Adoption Order	It will be necessary for the RAA and LA to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the child can be met, and that training support is sustainable. The training will be provided by the Panel Advisor to child Care Social workers to continuously improve practice.
Medical Information  Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)	The Local Authority will be responsible for obtaining all required medical information in respect of children who are being considered for adoption and will meet with prospective adopters to ensure they are fully aware of the child's future medical needs as appropriate.  The LA will be responsible for organising for the prospective adopters to have a consultation by phone / face to face prior	The RAA adoption co-ordinator / social workers will support the Prospective Adopters to attend appointments to fully understand the Childs needs.

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
	to Adoption Panel to discuss the Childs current and future needs.	

<p>Decision that adoption should be the child's plan</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</p>	<p>The Agency Decision Maker in each LA will be responsible for the 'Should be placed for adoption' decision.</p> <p>The LA will undertake a regular review of this decision and associated plans and keep the family finder in the RAA informed of any changes.</p> <p>LA to refer children with a possible plan of being relinquished to the RAA at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>The LA with advice from the RAA will refer birth family members to independent birth family support at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>The RAA will support the decision-making process as requested, particularly in the provision of Professional Advice to the LA's ADM.</p> <p>The RAA will provide an adoption panel for relinquished children's plans to be heard.</p> <p>Panel Advisor to provide panel minutes to the LA ADM.</p> <p>Independent birth family support is the responsibility of the RAA.</p>
<p>'Hard to Place'/Priority Children</p>	<p>The LA is responsible for identifying at the earliest opportunity where a child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aged three or over</li> <li>• From a BME heritage</li> <li>• Part of a sibling group of two or more</li> <li>• Has uncertainty about their development</li> <li>• Has a disability or medical condition</li> <li>• Sibling matches for new-born</li> </ul>	<p>RAA to track all children and all possible options explored, documented and shared with the LA.</p> <p>The RAA will either provide a service for Priority children which may involve some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased publicity – DVD, Photos etc.</li> <li>• Profile the child at specific events</li> <li>• Press and digital media advertising</li> <li>• Attempt to recruit Adopters specifically for the child</li> </ul>

<p>SERVICE AREA</p>	<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)</p>
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	<p>The LA will gather the relevant information, assess and forward to the RAA as soon as possible.</p> <p>LA to contribute to the learning to explore how children can be placed in permanent placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional training and preparation for potential Adopters</li> <li>• Advise on or assist with additional preparation work with the child.</li> </ul> <p>RAA to contribute to the learning to explore how children can be placed in permanent placements.</p>
<p>Preparation of the child</p> <p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</p>	<p>The LA will be responsible for preparing the child for an adoptive placement.</p> <p>The LA will be responsible for the preparation of the child's Life story Book/ work. This often needs to start early in the child's looked after career and will contain information to which the LA has immediate access.</p>	<p>The RAA will provide advice and guidance &amp; potentially training to the LA in the preparation of the child, particularly in respect of the future placement.</p> <p>The RAA will provide advice regarding completing a life story work/ later life letter.</p>
	<p>The LA will be responsible for producing the Later life letter</p>	<p>The RAA will provide advice and written guidance</p>
<p>Linking and Matching</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</p>	<p>The LA, by agreement, will meet the costs of introductions between children and Adopters.</p>	<p>The RAA will take lead responsibility for all aspects of the linking and matching process but will always involve the LA in the decision-making process.</p> <p>The RAA will chair linking/ matching meetings as part of the process.</p>

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
	The LA is responsible for updating of the Child Permanence Report, Delegation of Parental Responsibility report and the Adoption Placement Report, the section on the Child.	The RAA will be responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Report, apart from the section on the child.  The RAA will organise the Matching Panel
		The RAA will chair and organise life appreciation days for children over 3 years old.
MATCHING DECISIONS  Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)	The Agency Decision Maker in each LA will be responsible for the Matching decision for the child.	The RAA will support the process with information as required, including Panel Minutes and administrative support including letters regarding the decision.
PLACEMENT	The Local Authority is responsible for Placing the child/ren with prospective adopters.  The LA will commission the Letterbox function from the RAA.	The RAA will offer support and advice to the LA  The RAA will support the LA when a child is placed.  The RAA to work closely with the LA pre-order and can offer independent support to birth family.  The RAA will set up the Letterbox pre-adoption order and will be responsible for managing this day to day post order.



SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
<p>Adoption Support Fund</p> <p>The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005</p> <p>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</p> <p>Regulation 9A</p>	<p>LA to work closely with the RAA to provide the information to complete the ASF application for families/children who require therapeutic support.</p>	<p>RAA to submit the ASF application for families/children who require therapeutic support.</p> <p>RAA will provide the administration and contracting support to implement the operation of ASF funding.</p>

<p>ADOPTION ALLOWANCES</p> <p>The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005</p> <p>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</p>	<p>Allowances / One off payments will be paid by the LA - e.g. vehicles for larger sibling groups, Adoption</p>	<p>The RAA will complete assessments and will review these every 2 years and forward the assessments to the LA to consider.</p>
<p>SERVICE AREA</p>	<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)</p>

**Adopter recruitment**

<p>SERVICE AREA</p>	<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)</p>
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<p>RECRUITMENT OF ADOPTERS</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</p>	<p>The LA will signpost any enquiries from potential adopters to the RAA.</p> <p>The LA will ensure that information relevant to potential adopters is included in its own marketing materials and on its website, clearly signposting potential adopters to the website of the RAA.</p>	<p>The RAA will signpost fostering enquiries to the LA.</p> <p>The RAA will be responsible for recruiting adopters appropriate to the needs of children waiting in each LA.</p> <p>Marketing information will reflect the fact that the RAA is delivering the service on behalf of partnering LAs. This information will be provided on the website or prospective applicants can email or telephone and speak with a worker for further information.</p>
<p>Enquiries</p>		<p>The RAA will provide a centralised enquiry process for the region to meet all statutory requirements. Adopters can enquire via telephone / email / or by completing a Registration of Interest form.</p> <p>The RAA will provide written information to potential adopters and will hold information events.</p>
<p>SERVICE AREA</p>	<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)</p>
		<p>The RAA may at times signpost potential adopters to other agencies/ return to Fostering in LA's if they are unlikely to be able to meet the needs of the children needing placement.</p>
<p>Stage One</p>	<p>The LAs will provide all information required for statutory checks of potential adopters resident in the LA.</p>	<p>The RAA will undertake all Stage one functions</p>

Stage Two		The RAA will undertake all Stage Two functions
		The RAA will complete the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR)
Approvals		The RAA will manage the Adoption Panel. The RAA Agency Decision Maker will be responsible for all approvals
POST APPROVAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING		The RAA will provide post approval support and training to approved adopters

### Post adoption support services

SERVICE AREA		RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
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<p>ADOPTION SUPPORT ASSESSMENTS/ PLANS &amp; SERVICES</p> <p>Adoption and Children act 2002</p> <p>Adoption Support Regs</p>		<p>Respite / Short term breaks – if this service is assessed by the LA as being required this will be provided by the LA.</p>	<p>The RAA will undertake assessments of adoption support needs.</p> <p>The RAA’s core offer will provide general adoption support services: newsletter, social events for children and young people; social/training events for adoptive parents; advice and signposting for adoptive families; independent support and advice to birth relatives; post box services etc</p> <p>The RAA will undertake applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children and commission services agreed by ASF for families/children</p> <p>.</p>
<p>Adoption Support Fund (ASF)</p>		<p>Match Funding – Pre-3 years of adoption order – LA responsible for match funding.</p>	<p>Match funding – post 3 years of adoption order – RAA responsible for Match funding.</p>

<p>SERVICE AREA</p>		<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)</p>
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		<p>The LA will signpost requests from adoptive families for adoption order support to the RAA. Alongside needs directly related to adoption, a family may have needs identified that meet threshold for LA intervention, such as child in need. The LA will be responsible for completing these assessments and providing any identified services.</p> <p>Where a safeguarding referral is made to the LA the LA will conduct any appropriate section 47 enquiry and will allocate an LA social worker where thresholds are met, but will notify the RAA of any referral involving an adopted child.</p> <p>If adopted child/young person accommodated, LA will be responsible for social work support to child/family.</p>	<p>The RAA will undertake the assessment of adoption support needs of the child and family and produce an adoption support plan. Where appropriate, the RAA will make a referral to the early help service or multi-agency safeguarding hub. The RAA will offer support to the adoptive family during any section 47 enquiry if the case is open to the RAA.</p> <p>RAA will complete any specific work needed e.g. Life Story work or application to ASF for therapeutic support for families/children.</p>
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SERVICE AREA		RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)
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Out-of-hours services		All adopters will have access to the LA's Emergency Duty Team out of core hours.	
Indirect/ Letterbox contact  Adoption and Children Act 2002  AAR 2005			The RAA will provide a Letterbox service between adopted children and their birth families. This RAA can carry out ongoing assessments to consider whether contact is in the best interest of the child.
Supervised & Sibling Direct Contact  Adoption and Children Act 2002 & Adoption Support Regs		Cost of arrangements agreed in the pre- adoption support plan e.g. travel & accommodation expenses will remain with the LA.	Responsibility for arranging / supervising Direct Contact requirements will transfer to the RAA.
ADOPTION ALLOWANCES		Adoption allowances will be paid for by the LA	RAA to undertake appropriate assessment

SERVICE AREA		RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)
Adoption support Regs			
ADOPTION SUPPORT FUND  The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005  The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003			The RAA will be responsible for undertaking all funding applications to the Adoption Support Fund and all contracting arrangements  Existing contracting resources to transfer to the RAA



<p>ACCESS TO CHILDREN'S ADOPTION CASE RECORDS</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983</p> <p>Sections 56–65 of the Adoption and</p>		<p>LA to store historic children's adoption case records. For RAA adoptions the LA will have access to records if the case becomes open to them as a CIN / LAC / Safeguarding.</p>	<p>RAA to store and hold new files</p> <p>Existing record keeping resources to transfer to RAA</p>
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SERVICE AREA		RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)
<p>Children Act 2002 and the Disclosure of Adoption Information (PostCommencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005 (AIR)</p>			
<p>BIRTH RECORDS COUNSELLING</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</p>		<p>Existing budget to transfer to the RAA</p>	<p>RAA will be responsible for delivery of counselling.</p>

INDEPENDENT SUPPORT TO BIRTH PARENTS		Existing budget to transfer to the RAA	RAA will be responsible for delivery of support.
ACCESS TO ADOPTERS RECORDS  Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005  The Local Authority Adoption Service		LA to signpost Adoptees to the RAA where appropriate	RAA to store and hold new files

SERVICE AREA		RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)
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<p>(England) Regulations 2003</p> <p>The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003</p> <p>Disclosure of Adoption Information (PostCommencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005</p> <p>The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous</p>			
<p>SERVICE AREA</p>		<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)</p>

Amendments) Regulations 2005			
STEP PARENT ADOPTION ASSESSMENT		LA to sign post adopters to the RAA	RAA to be responsible for assessments

### Service user engagement

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
Adopters		The RAA / commissioned agency will engage with adopters, individually and in groups, with the aim of improving the services available
Adoptees		The RAA / commissioned agency will engage with adoptees, individually and in groups, with the aim of improving the services available
Birth parents		THE RAA / commissioned service will engage with and birth parents individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available
SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)

Special Guardians  The Children Act 1989 as amended	Initial assessment, placement, the support plan and payments and allowances are the responsibility of the LA including contact arrangements and the cost of any supervised contact.	The RAA has no responsibilities in support of Special Guardians
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### Performance management and inspection

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
Data provision	Each LA will need to provide specified key data to the RAA on performance.  Each LA is responsible for the ALB Child return	RAA is responsible for production of ALB Adopter return
Data analysis		The RAA will produce a 3-monthly report to each LA on performance against an agreed set of indicators
OFSTED	OFSTED will inspect through the LA lens: evaluating how the RAA is delivering the local authority's statutory responsibilities. Each LA is still responsible for demonstrating how the arrangements comply with their statutory responsibilities and meet the needs of local children. OFSTED have the right to access records relevant to the performance of a LA, wherever	The RAA will make available to OFSTED any records required for the purposes of an inspection.

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
	<p>they may be held. It remains the LA's responsibility to demonstrate how the individual needs of children are met when the plan is adoption, even when delivered through an RAA.</p> <p>The director of LA children's services should notify the RAA that an OFSTED inspection has started.</p>	
Freedom of Information applications	The LA / RAA will cooperate within the timescales to enable information to be made available to the applicant	The LA / RAA will cooperate within the timescales to enable information to be made available to the applicant

#### Miscellaneous services

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE		<p>The RAA will provide take responsibility for updating this for the functions that have been delegated to the RAA.</p> <p>The RAA will take responsibility for completing each LA statement of purpose regarding the functions left with the LA, in consultation with the LA.</p>
REGISTERED MANAGER		The RAA will provide a registered manager for their adoption functions.

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)
ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE ADVISOR  The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005  The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003		The RAA will undertake the role of Adoption Services Advisor for each LA.
CHILDREN'S GUIDE FOR ADOPTION	Each LA has a responsibility for this	The RAA could provide advice and guidance

SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)
ANNUAL SERVICE REPORT		RAA to complete an annual public facing service report
CHILDREN'S GUIDE FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT		The RAA will update the Children's guide for adoption support
STEP PARENTS/RELA TIVES WHO WISH TO ADOPT (NON- AGENCY ADOPTIONS)		RAA to be responsible for providing this service – this service will be commissioned out.



<p>INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION</p> <p>Adoption with a Foreign Element Regulations 2005</p>		<p>RAA will provide this service; it will commission advice and information on intercountry adoption from a specialist agency. Service users will have to meet cost of assessment and approval process in the commissioned agency</p>
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SERVICE AREA	RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)
Regulation 19		

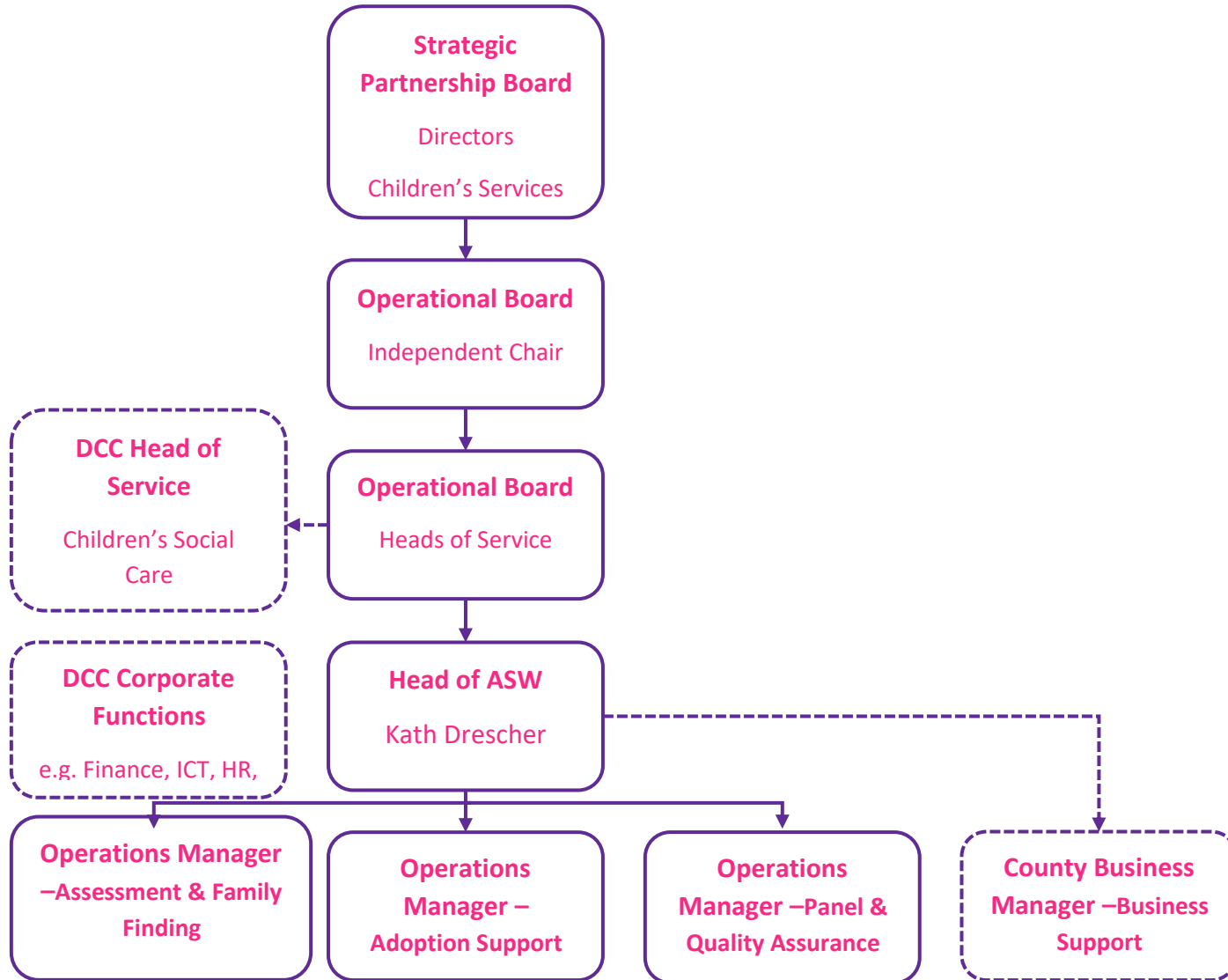
<p>ADOPTION PANELS</p> <p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</p>	<p>The three larger LA's to provide a social work representative to sit on panel twice a month and the smaller LA once a month.</p>	<p>The RAA will provide adoption panels across the region and will appoint Independent panel chairs and retain a central list and will provide training and support for panel members.</p> <p>The adoption panel will provide a quality assurance report for the partnership on a 6-monthly basis</p>
<p>TRAINING FOR LA staff</p> <p>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England)</p>		<p>The RAA can provide training for social workers regarding the adoption process/ writing of CPR's/APR'S/Support plans and preparing for Adoption Panel</p>

<p>SERVICE AREA</p>	<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)</p>
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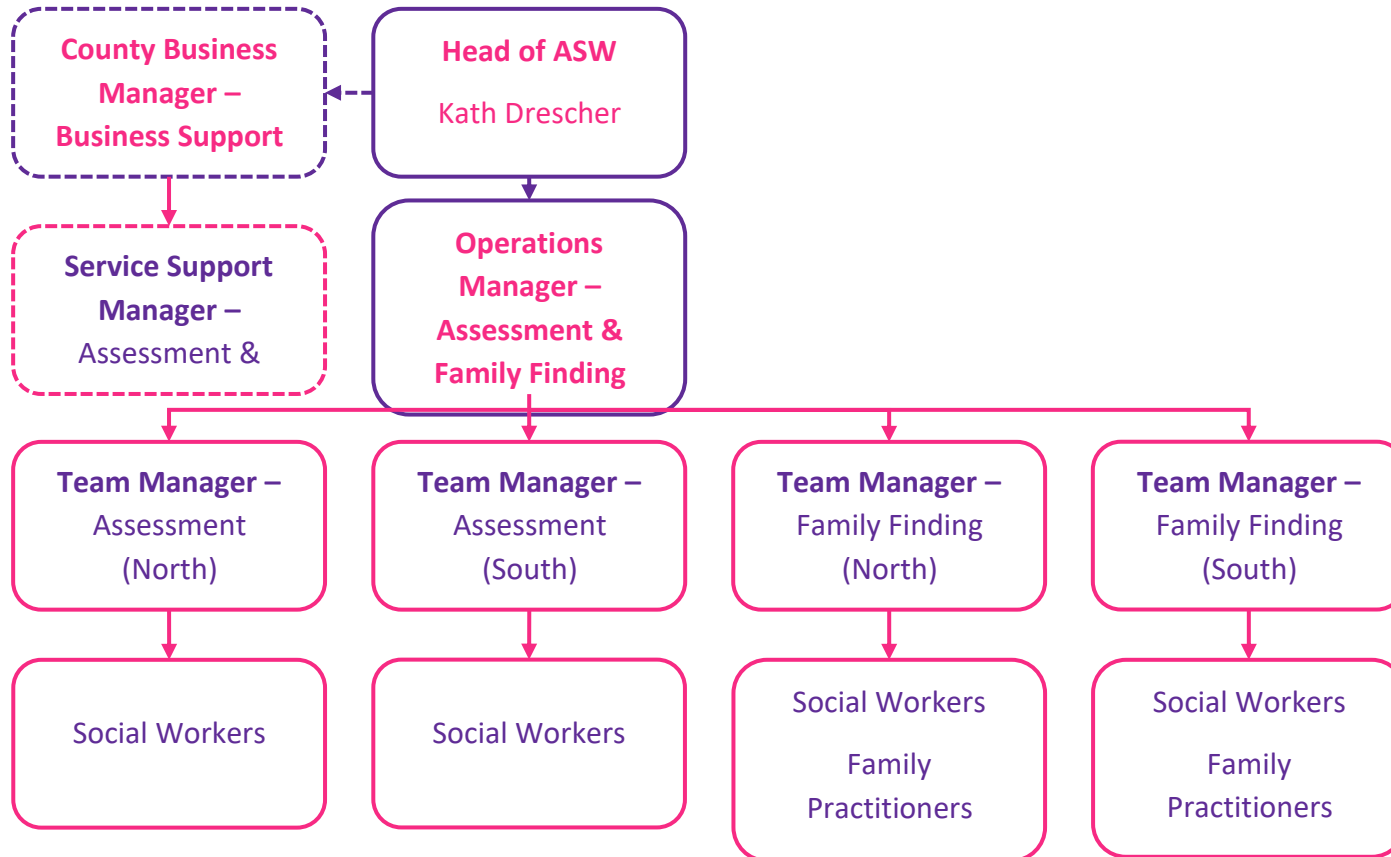
<p>Regulations 2003</p> <p>Regulation 12 Employment of staff</p> <p>The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003</p>		
<p>ADOPTEE COUNSELLING</p>		<p>The RAA will signpost applicants to independent services and will not provide an intermediary service.</p>
<p>DISRUPTIONS AAR 2005</p>	<p>LA to contribute to the disruption process</p>	<p>RAA to undertake the disruption process. Panel Chairs and other professionals will be invited to contribute to this process.</p>
<p>SERVICE AREA</p>	<p>RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</p>	<p>ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC  (acting as host of the RAA)</p>

<p>ALLEGATIONS</p> <p>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</p> <p>Regulation 9 Arrangements for the protection of children</p>	<p>LA is responsible for initiating this process prior to the Adoption order being granted. The RAA will contribute to this process.</p>	<p>RAA is responsible for initiating this process post the Adoption order being granted. The LA will contribute to this process if necessary.</p>
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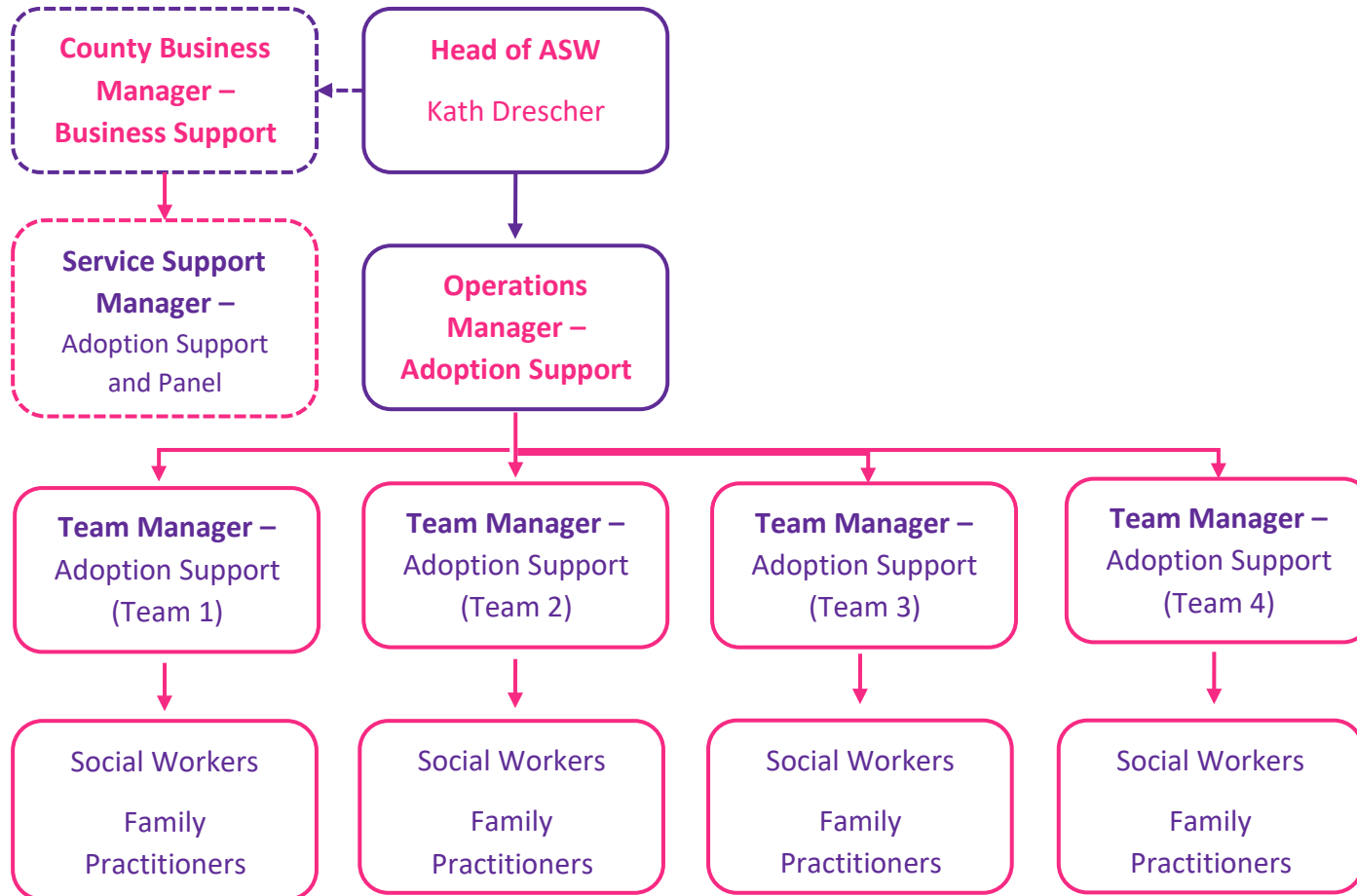
**Appendix B – Organisational structure (governance / senior management team)**



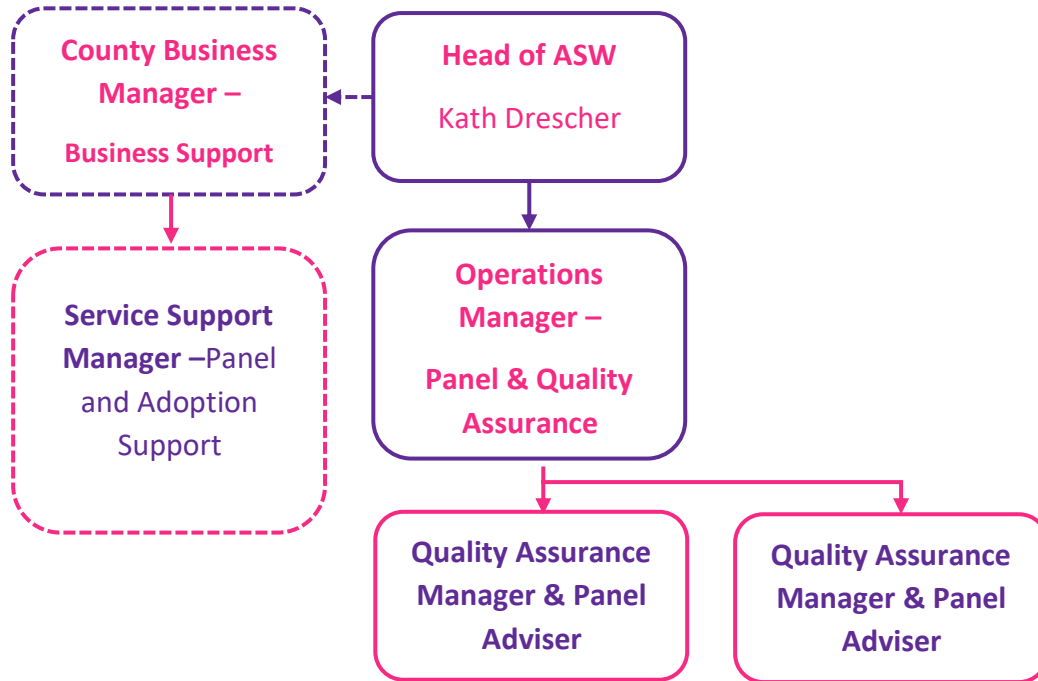
Organisational structure operational team 1 (assessment and family finding)



Organisational structure operational team 2 (adoption support)



Organisational structure operational team 3 (adoption panels)





Organisational structure operational team (business support)

