

## **NoW Governance Structure & Functions**

### **Structure and Functions**

The core business of the Regional Adoption Agency is to deliver the following services :-

1. Provide a high quality and efficient family finding service for children who have a plan for adoption.
2. Services for adopters to include :-
  - a) Delivery of an effective recruitment strategy for adopters that results in a supply of adopters to meet the needs of 60% rising to 80% of the RAA's children.
  - b) Prepare, assess and approve prospective adopters in line with statutory timeframes.
3. Provide adoption panels to meet the need of the six local authorities
4. Support the panels through the role of a panel advisor and advise and support the Agency Decision Maker in each authority in the process of deciding that a child should be placed for adoption and matching a child with adopters.
5. Provide adoption support services for adopters and adopted children / adults.
6. Host regional adoption agency commission for birth parent support.
7. For those authorities who hold children's adoption cases in their adoption teams then to support them to continue to do so within the RAA.
8. To support each of the six local authorities in care planning and considering adoption as a permanent option for children at the earliest opportunity.

**These service will be delivered under three work streams :-**

1. Care planning and family finding
2. Adopter recruitment and assessment
3. Adoption support

The main tasks within these areas are as follows :-

#### **Care planning / family finding**

- Find families for all the children who have a plan for adoption
- Utilise the RAA IT system to link potential families with children
- Utilise national and local methods for family finding such as activity days, exchange days, Linkmaker, National Adoption Register etc. Prepare and support children in these events as required.
- Provide support to help social workers prepare children for adoption and in some cases provide a worker to do that preparation.
- Provide a worker to attend early care planning meetings in each local authority to advise on permanence options and in particular in relation to early permanence.

- Advise children's social workers in the process of preparing paperwork for SHOBPA (Agency decision to adopt) and matching.
- Providing a duty system to ensure that there is always advice available on issues relating to adoption
- For those authorities that hold children's adoption cases, supporting them to continue to do so.
- Provide information and court statements (as required) to advise courts about availability of families and prospects of successful adoption for children.

### **Adoption Support**

- Respond to all requests for support received from adopters – this may be to offer advice, signpost to another service, provide a short intervention or provide a full assessment of need that may lead to therapeutic work or other forms of support being offered.
- Support the process of 'adoption support fund' applications
- Support staff with therapeutic skills to utilise those skills effectively within the RAA.
- Provide a range of adoption support events across the RAA including social events, training events, groups for children and adopters.
- Commission some therapeutic support services (on a case by case basis).
- Ensure that referrals to local authorities are made when thresholds are met for 'child in need' or 'child protection'.
- Provide support to adult adoptees seeking information about birth relatives and / or wishing to access their adoption records.
- Support birth parents with letter box arrangements and promoting access to independent birth parent provision.

### **Adopter assessment and recruitment**

- Deliver against an effective adopter recruitment strategy
- Build on existing data and develop RAA data to evidence 'what works' in recruitment across the region.
- Develop specialist recruitment services for Asian heritage adopters.
- Provide recruitment events, activities and advertising campaigns
- Develop and maintain an effective web site for the RAA
- Provide a duty system to respond effectively and efficiently to prospective adopters
- Provide preparation groups for prospective adopters
- Assess and approve adopters within the required timeframe
- Support adopters through the process of being approved at panel, finding a child and that child being matched and placed through to the making of the adoption order.

The following staffing structure is proposed to support delivery of those functions.

