

National Adoption Strategy- Why, Where and When?

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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



National Adoption Strategy Achieving Excellence Everywhere

- Adoption is considered as a positive opportunity for all children
- 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
- Adoption Support for young people in transition to adulthood



National Adoption Strategy Achieving Excellence Everywhere

- 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
- Adopters are given the support to understand the needs of children and to build strong attachments
- Voice and influence of adopters and children in decisions which affect them and the shape and development of services



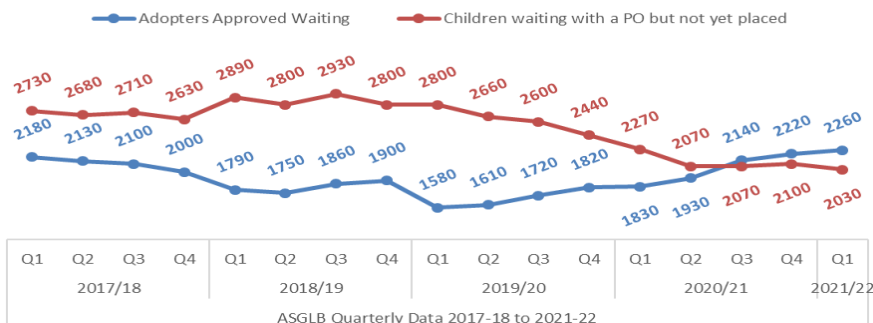
Key Challenges

- Falling numbers of children with a plan for adoption- is this right for children?
- Recruitment and matching – sufficiency/diversity/resilience of adopters/support? Decision making regarding matching?
- How do we modernise adoption to ensure that we respect children's identity and value significant relationships by providing support to all parties enabling these to be preserved in a safe and appropriate way.
- Given experiences of early trauma and harm lifelong support is crucial for children and adult adopted people.

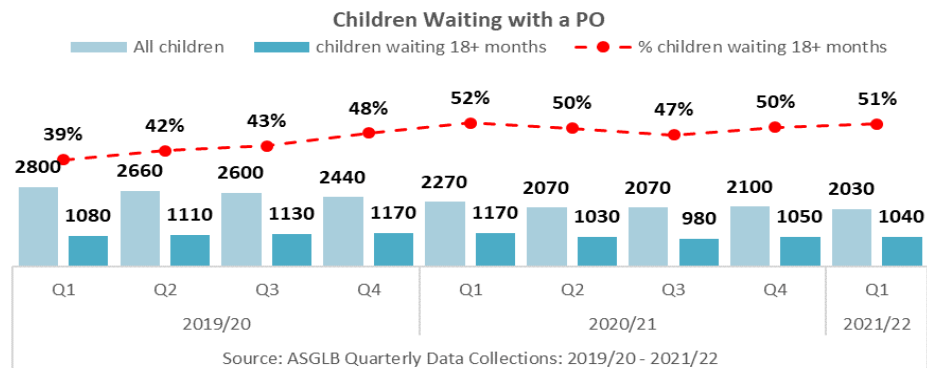


DATA

Sufficiency: Number of Adopters Approved waiting and Children waiting with a PO but not yet placed



Families for Children




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
- The RAA's have pooled resources to drive forward national work focussed on recruitment and have improved the front door and assessment and approval process (RAA evaluations)
- The voice of adopted children, adopted adults and birth parents are being listened to in order to shape and develop services



RAA LEADERS PLAN: 2021-2024



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

<p>What we'll do:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p style="text-align: center;">Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RECRUITMENT (NARSG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>How we'll do it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <div style="text-align: center; margin: 20px 0;">  </div> <p>How we'll know if we've made a difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
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Recruitment

- Deep Dive (Top 100 Children/adopters waiting)
- Activity Days across the country
- Plans for 22/23 recruitment
 - Focus on children's voices and needs
 - Priority Children who we know wait longer
 - Pilot in Bristol re Black adopters
 - National Adoption Week



Child's Journey

- Early permanence
 - Survey to assess (as an activity rather than an indicator)
 - Consistency of provision
 - Identify areas of expertise
 - Review the usefulness of current definitions
- 11 new initiatives within the pan regions
 - Training and raising awareness
 - Older children
 - Support to carers
- Matching and RAA/LA relationship
 - Best use of Linkmaker
 - Thinking about innovation
 - Decision making
 - Siblings
 - Life story work



Adoption Support

- Adoption Support services are evidence based with measurable aims
 - Dataset group
- Children and adoptive families across the country have equal access to timely and pertinent adoption support core services.
 - Adoption Support self assessment and audit



Respecting Children's Identity and relationships

- Letterbox Contact
 - Prototype Letterswap
 - Link maker
 - 5 RAA's
 - University of East Anglia
 - PAC/UK
 - Changing the culture



Sharing Good practice

- Front line social workers and managers
 - March – London and Manchester
(Workshops and key note speaker)
- Webinars for staff on variety of topics
 - National adoption week
- Themed events
 - Adoption Support



Final Thoughts

- 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 at the start of the journey and some way to go
- We are keen to listen and to involve and support staff working with children and their families.



Reflections



