

## **East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency**

### **Introduction**

In 2015, the Government announced its intention to establish new Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) across the country by 2020. Since then three Voluntary Adoption Agencies and nine Local Authorities in the East Midlands have been working closely together to develop a regional agency to improve outcomes for children and adopters in our region.

The DfE is currently providing funding for the East Midlands (EMRAA) to develop plans to move towards a regional delivery model for adoption.

### **Q. Who are the EMRAA agencies?**

The Voluntary Adoption Agencies are:

- Coram East Midlands
- Faith in Families
- Family Care

The Local Authority agencies are:

- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Rutland County Council
- Peterborough City Council

### **Q. Has the change in Government affected the RAAs?**

As you will know there has been a recent change in Government and Robert Goodwill is the new Children's Minister in the Department of Education, replacing Edward Timpson. We are told this change has not affected the government's drive to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and the DfE have stated that the Minister remains committed to the development of regional adoption agencies.

### **Q. What is the Voluntary Adoption Agencies involvement in the RAA?**

The three Voluntary Agencies involved in the East Midlands RAA have been working alongside our LA partner agencies to develop a range of options for integrated and high quality adoption services. Coram, Faith in Families and Family Care play a central role in the development of EMRAA in the partnership.

When a regional agency is established our VAA partners will maintain their independence, their unique identity and individual services, offering potential adopters a choice of agencies whilst working closely with the RAA to provide the best possible outcomes for children.

**Q. Will adoption services remain local?**

We have a clear commitment to maintaining the best aspects of a locally delivered service within any new regional structure. Service leads and practitioners from all EMRAA agencies have been meeting regularly over the last year to create systems and develop practice to ensure children and families will experience the best services possible whilst local knowledge, expertise and delivery of these services is retained.

**Q. Aren't we doing this already through the East Midlands Adoption Consortium?**

For more than 15 years agencies within the East Midlands have enjoyed collaborative working arrangements across LAs and VAAs as part of the consortium. The development of the East Midlands RAA is building on this well established and trusted collaboration by aligning and integrating services for the benefit of all children, young people and adults effected by adoption.

**Q. What is happening now? Next?**

As you may know we are moving towards a pilot phase of the East Midlands RAA. The LA's have been grouped into two areas to test and implement aspects of the regional adoption service. D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire) are currently establishing Children's Permanence Teams to progress children's plans for adoption, they will work closely with Children's Field Workers who will manage care proceedings; these teams are looking to 'go live' in July 2017.

Both D2N2 and LLLR (Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland) and our Voluntary Agency partners are trialling joint Homefinding and Matching Meetings for Priority Children. Initial meetings have been extremely positive, resulting in a number of possible links, and are set to continue regularly.

Other aspects of the pilot, recruitment, assessment and support, are being aligned and testing will begin later in the pilot phase.

**Q. How will the RAA be paid for in the future?**

Lead members and DCS's are keen to ensure that any RAA proposal represents good value for money whilst improving outcomes. They have commissioned an independent analysis of what is currently spent on delivering adoption services and is considering the findings of that report.

**Q . How can I find out more?**

The project team continues to work closely with staff to understand what the operating model for any RAA may look like. Alongside this work continues with adopters and other key stakeholders to understand how an RAA may best be delivered.

Information on the RAA programme has been published online by the DfE [here](#).

Locally, there are a regular email bulletin to updated interested individuals and organisations on the development on the East Midlands RAA. More information will be circulated as soon as this has been created. Information will also be hosted on East Midlands Consortium website, <http://www.adoption4eastmidlands.co.uk/regional-adoption-agency-news/>

**For further information on the RAA, or to sign up for newsletters, please contact the project team via Anne Denman – [anne.denman@familycare-nottingham.org.uk](mailto:anne.denman@familycare-nottingham.org.uk)**