

Strategy 2024 - 27



Our Vision



Adoption England aims to modernise adoption to better meet the needs of children and families.

Adoption England is a collaboration of regional adoption agencies working together, supported by a small central team working nationally.

Our Mission

Adoption England will:

work effectively together, through support and challenge, to strengthen practice, solve common problems and influence and enable change regionally and nationally.

use research and evidence-based practice and experts by experience to influence sector wide continuous development.

embed agreed EDI principles across our systems and processes to ensure that they are valued, understood and adhered to by the workforce. As a result, all children and adults that we work with achieve better lifelong outcomes.

create forums for learning, training, collaboration, and collective engagement with key stakeholders to influence change nationally.

support the development of a more diverse workforce who are valued and supported and have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children and families.

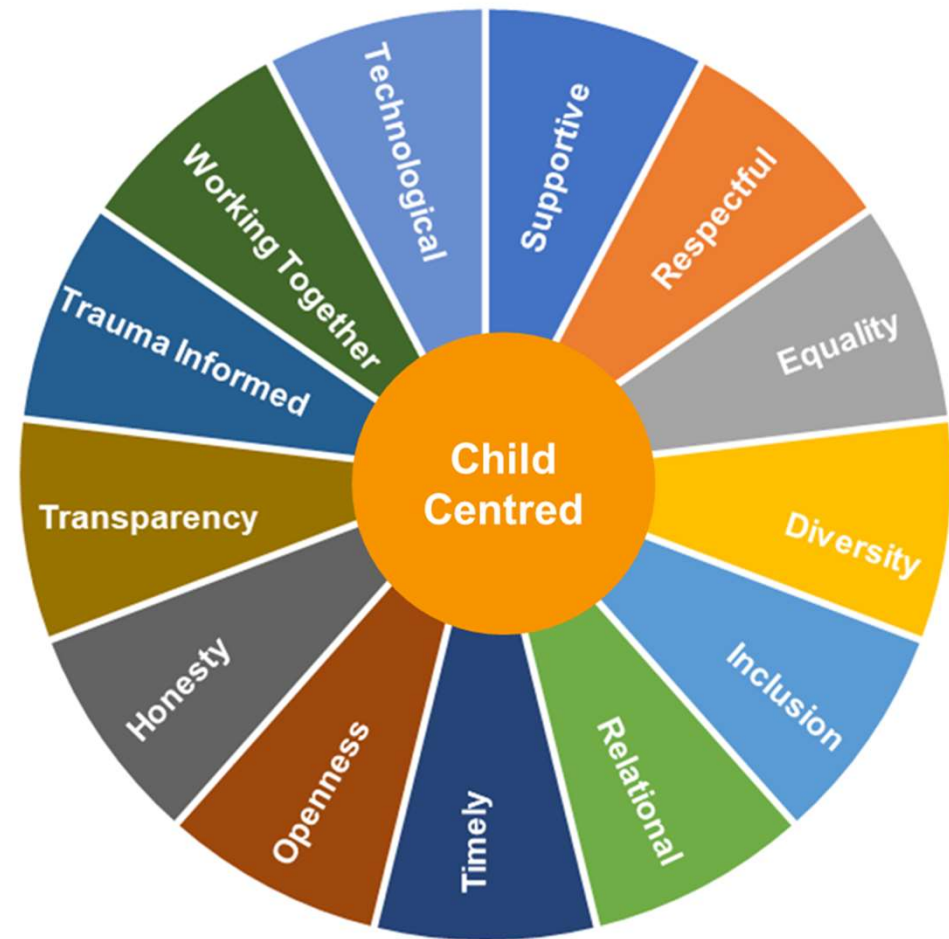


collaborate pan-regionally and nationally, develop, and deliver services and improve performance – to build a framework of national practice standards in key areas of adoption practice.

work in partnership with Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA's) and the judiciary to address delay for children.

Values in Modern Day Adoption

A modern adoption system in England should be a progressive and inclusive system that prioritises the well-being of children, provides robust support to adoptive families, birth families and adopted people and respects diversity in all its forms.



Our Outcomes

Adopted people maintain relationships with people important to them and have a good understanding of the reasons why they were adopted.

Adopters from diverse communities are recruited, prepared and supported to meet children's needs.

Children and young people, adopted adults, adoptive and birth families are listened to and have an influence in the practice and services provided nationally and regionally.

Children are matched and move in with their permanent family in a timely way. Their needs are understood and met, and their feelings are held in mind and responded to sensitively.

Adopted people and their families get tailored help and support when they need it.

Children and young people, adopted adults, adoptive and birth families are listened to and have an influence in the practice and services provided nationally and regionally.



What will the RAAs do?

- I. Work to develop opportunities for young people to meet together and to influence development of adoption support and services.
- I. Develop opportunities for adopted adults and birth families to have increased voice and influence within their RAA.
- I. Work with adopters to ensure they have an influence in the development of support and services in their region.

What will the national team do?

- I. Accelerate the opportunities for children and young people to come together and amplify their views about their lived experience and increase the skills and capacity of staff to develop this work.
- I. Continue to develop and facilitate reference groups for adopted adults and birth families to share their views about key priorities for change in the adoption sector.
- I. Develop an increased understanding and improve the coordination of the voice and influence of adoptive parents in the development and delivery of adoption services regionally and nationally.

Children and young people, adopted adults, adoptive and birth families are listened to and have an influence in the practice and services provided nationally and regionally.



How will we measure the progress?

- I. The National Youth Forum workshops events undertaken.
- II. Feedback from young people.
- III. Evaluation of projects undertaken.
- IV. Young People's Voice and Influence Forums functioning in all RAA areas either regionally or pan-regionally.
- V. The number of adopted people and members of birth families who are involved in the reference group across England.
- VI. Feedback from adopted people and birth parents.
- VII. Adoptive parents express views that they feel they have a voice and influence the development of support and services in their regions.
- VIII. Feedback from staff about the development of skills and knowledge to better develop this work.

Adopted people maintain relationships with people important to them and have a good understanding of the reasons why they were adopted.

What will the RAAs do?

- I. Work with their local authority partners to use tools and material available to promote and support the relationships between children and the important people in their lives.
- II. Work with their local partners to ensure all adopted adults across England have access to support they need.
- III. Some RAA's to pilot the Lifelong links services to adopted young people to help them to connect with important people in their lives.
- IV. Work with their local partners to ensure birth families across England can easily find out what support is available for them and address the gaps.

What will the national team do?

- I. Continue with the culture change programme of work in respecting, supporting and maintaining important relationships for children who are adopted.
- II. Develop tools and material for professionals to encourage innovative ways of promoting maintaining relationships.
- III. Improve services for Adopted Adults (IASA)
- IV. Adapt and develop the Family Rights Group's Lifelong Links model for adopted children and young people.
- V. Develop a better understanding of support for birth parents and produce an interactive and informative map that supports birth families with services available in their area (birth family mapping)

Adopted people maintain relationships with people important to them and have a good understanding of the reasons why they were adopted.

How will we measure the progress?

- I. All adopted children have life story work undertaken by the adoption order. Birth parents and adopted parents meet up prior to the adoption order being made. Plans for staying in touch with their families are more creative and less prescriptive.
- II. Adopted adults increasingly have access to services they need.
- III. Evaluation of the Lifelong links pilot.
- IV. Information about birth family support is easily available in all parts of England and gaps understood and starting to be addressed.

Adopters from diverse communities are recruited, prepared and supported to meet children's needs.



What will the RAAs do?

- I. Run recruitment campaigns and use other opportunities to meet local needs.
- II. Address bias and discrimination in processes and decision making to encourage recruitment of adopters that reflect the diversity of the children needing adoption in their area.
- III. Develop the diversity of adoption panels and staff and ensure the commitment to the EDI principles is demonstrated through their behaviours, decisions and actions.
- IV. Implement the Adopter Journey - National Practice Standards and preparation of adopters - framework.

What will the national team do?

- I. Raise the profile and understanding of modern adoption and promote the evidence-based benefits for children through national campaigns.
- II. Promote through projects, communities of practice and learning opportunities to address bias and discrimination in systems and processes and encourage diversity in the recruitment of adopters.
- III. Promote learning and opportunities to development of greater diversity and better cultural competence in adoption panels and the adoption workforce and the commitment to the EDI principles.
- IV. Deliver and implement with RAA;s the National Practice Standards and preparation of adopters - framework.

Adopters from diverse communities are recruited, prepared and supported to meet children's needs.



How will we measure the progress?

- I. Evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment and marketing campaigns nationally and locally.
- II. Adoption data to look at sufficiency and diversity of adopters to meet children's needs.
- III. Increased diversity of adoption panel members and staff from diverse communities.
- IV. Evaluation of national projects to support targeted work to evidence impact and learning.
- V. Feedback from adoptive parents (Adoption Barometer Report)
- VI. Ofsted reports

Children are matched and move in with their permanent family in a timely way. Their needs are understood and met, and their feelings are held in mind and responded to sensitively.



What will the RAAs do?

- I. Work with local stakeholders to support the workforce to strengthen the quality of permanence planning.
- II. Identify and understand delay for children and adopters through an EDI lens and strengthen matching practice, process and decision making.
- III. Work with local stakeholders to implement and embed the recommendations outlined in the Early Permanence National Standards.
- IV. Work to implement and embed the recommendations in the Matching National Standards.
- V. Start to improve the quality and consistency of approach regarding life story books and the provision of late life letters.

What will the national team do?

- I. Support activity to improve permanence planning through better quality decisions making and use of evidence base about different routes to permanence for children.
- II. Identify, raise awareness and understand delay for children and adopters through an EDI lens to strengthen matching practice, process and decision making and to give each child an opportunity to thrive in the longer term.
- III. Through targeted project work and activities increase the number and improve the quality and consistency of Early Permanence (EP) practice with judiciary and VAA's
- IV. Start to improve the quality of information provided to adopters and children about the child's history (Life Story Work) and improve sibling assessments.

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How will we measure the progress?

- I. National data in children matched.
- II. Feedback from Adoption Panels and agency decision makers on quality of CPR and matching information provided.
- III. Feedback via Agency Decision Maker drop- in sessions demonstrating improved confidence and knowledge levels.
- IV. Fewer matches disrupt before adoption order.
- V. Adoption data regarding Early Permanence (EP) data
- VI. Survey to RAAs to understand progress made on the implementation of national practice standards.
- VII. Feedback from practitioners
- VIII. Feedback from families
- IX. Number of quality assured EP resources downloaded from the Adoption England website.

Adopted people and their families get tailored help and support when they need it.



What will the RAA's do?

- I. Implement the new Adoption Support Plan from October 2024 onwards following the national pilot.
- II. Implement the new early support framework and Purple Book from March 2025 onwards following the national pilot.
- III. Work to develop their Adoption Support case management system so that the required data can be submitted by the national deadline of Q1 2025/26.
- IV. The multidisciplinary approaches programme creates evidence and blueprint for more regional multidisciplinary models.
- V. National commissioning helps the RAAs to work across regions and innovative procurement.

What will the national team do?

- I. Support the implementation of the new adoption support plan and a clear early support offer for all new adoptive families.
- II. Develop and implement a national adoption support data set to ensure adoption support services are evidence based with measurable outcomes.
- III. Support projects and targeted activity to develop a multi-agency approach with health and education partners to support and meet children and families' needs.
- IV. Further develop pan regional and national commissioning for adoption support.
- V. Develop principles virtual school heads that recognise the specific needs of adopted children in relation to education.
- VI. Initiate work in partnership with adopted young people to address gaps in services and develop better understanding of what helps.

Adopted people and their families get tailored help and support when they need it.



How will we measure the progress?

- I. Every child / family has an Adoption Support Plan (Barometer / Surveys)
- II. Early support framework and Purple Book is standard practice in all RAAs (Barometer / Surveys)
- III. All RAAs provide adoption support data.
- IV. The grant funded multidisciplinary models continue providing services with a sustainable funding arrangement.
- V. Increased number of multiagency / multidisciplinary models operating across England.
- VI. RAAs are supported by commissioning professionals to explore innovative ways of providing services.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 27



EDI Vision



Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy sets out our commitment to achieving equity throughout the adoption services.

Delivering services that give each child the same opportunities to thrive in the longer term, is integral to the EDI vision and mission of Adoption England

What is EDI for Adoption England?



Equality

- creating fairness in our services
- everyone is treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination.
- challenging and reimagining the systems, processes and environments that limit an individual's opportunities to thrive.

Diversity

- representation of different individuals within society and the workplace.
- recognising, understanding and valuing the differences that individuals bring
- understanding, valuing and embracing the differences to reflect those who need our services.

Inclusion

- taking informed action to create an environment and culture where everyone belongs, can participate and are valued for their contribution, experience and perspective.

EDI Strategic Priorities



- Address bias and discrimination in systems and processes at all stages of recruitment; matching and support.
- Improve outcomes for children and families affected by adoption through the application of EDI frameworks in decision making.
- Achieve greater diversity across the workforce to ensure that it better reflects the diversity of the children needing adoption.
- Ensure that the workforce is better able to demonstrate commitment to EDI principles through behaviours, decisions, actions and outcomes as a result of this strategy.

Phase 1

Addressing Racial Disparities

- Black children remain over-represented in the care system
- Black children continue to wait longer for a match and placement for adoption
- Black children, particularly boys, still tend to fare less well through health and education services.

Aims of Phase 1

Positively Address:

- The experiences of Black children who need adoption.
- The experiences of Black families who wish to adopt.
- The representation of Black workers across RAAs.