


**London Adoption Board**  
**7<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 12.00 – 1.30pm**

Chair: Finola Culbert (FC)

Attendees: Paul Angeli (PA), Hilary Bull (HB), Annie Crombie (AC), Bryan Edmonds (BE), Helen Edwards (HE), Lisa Garnett (LG), Carol Homden (CH), Steve Lidicott (SL), Richard Morris (RM), Julie Wheeler (JW)





Additional Attendees: Catherine Hardy (CORAM) (CHa), Vas Patel (Dfe ASF) (VP), Kara Renno (NELCSU) (KR)

Apologies: Carolyn Fair, Jan Fishwick, Karen Gibbings, Ian Lewis, Miranda Mercado-Gregory, Marie-Louise Sauerberg, Alison Twynam

1	<p><b>Previous Minutes (16.01.2017) and Actions</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were approved and the action log was updated.</p>	
2	<p><b>Regionalisation Update - Regionalisation Workshops output</b></p> <p>Kara Renno attended for this item and gave a presentation ‘workstream update and review of outputs’, giving an overview of the outcomes from the regionalisation service design workshops. The following arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern was expressed that staff had fed back that they felt unable to be controversial at the workshops. Unfortunately very few feedback forms have been received from the workshops to inform this.</li> <li>Virtual schools should be included as part of the core adoption support offer.</li> <li>KR to circulate more detailed output from the workshops.</li> </ul> <p>Slides 5 and 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Recruitment and assessment’ sections should include detail about national standards, systems and learning.</li> <li>‘Family finding’ – clarity is needed about who has responsibility for the child and the matching. The potential for drift needs to be tackled – tough even within a single LA.</li> <li>Reference to VAAs to be added (HE stressed that VAAs are integrated into every part of RAA development).</li> </ul>	 <p>LAB 07032016 Paper 3) 170225 LAB feedb</p> <p><i>LAB172</i> KR to circulate detailed output from workshops.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to CAFCASS and the judiciary to be added to ‘early permanence’ and ‘family finding’ sections.</li> </ul> <p><b>Slides 12 – 15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the workshops, option 4, which uses current consortia arrangements, was the preferred option. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern was expressed about using the consortia option as consortia activity is inconsistent across London, and there are different levels of demand, ie some consortia would need more family finding than others.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>AC raised the following risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interplay between the LA and the RAS could mean that relationships are disrupted – where would the care responsibilities sit if children later present with difficulties?</li> <li>Challenges around matching (especially complex children) due to new finance model (RAA funding vs. LA funding).</li> <li>Quality and coverage of support services, and risks around transitions.</li> </ul> <p>KR to capture the feedback from this meeting and circulate to LAB members for final comment in advance of the Steering Group meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March. Once agreed by the Steering Group, the proposal will be submitted to the DfE for agreement to proceed.</p>	<p><i>LAB173 KR to circulate updated proposal in advance of steering group meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March</i></p>
3	<p><b>Adoption Support Fund</b></p> <p>Vas Patel joined the meeting for this item and outlined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since May 2015 £40m has been given to over 13,500 families.</li> <li>For the next financial year there will be 2 fair access limits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist assessment fair access limit - £2,500</li> <li>Therapy fair access limit - £5,000</li> </ul> </li> <li>Match-funding will continue.</li> <li>Funding guaranteed until 2020 – need to move to a position where it’s sustainable after that.</li> <li>ASF is intended to complement, not as a substitute for adoption support.</li> <li>Over the next 2 years the ASF will be funding centres of excellence to look at effective models with integrated offers of support (with ie CAMHS, schools, LAs).</li> <li>Questions for regional adoption boards had been circulated in advance of the meeting – VP advised that these could be used as prompts for thinking, responses don’t have to be sent.</li> </ul> <p>The following arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns was expressed that some LAs struggle with match funding expensive specialist support, and sometimes have to withdraw support. VP as not aware of this, he will look into it.</li> <li>Although not intended as a substitute for local adoption support, in some cases ASF is the only support provided.</li> <li>Local CAMHS offers are variable; some members felt that LAs who put in low ASF requests because they have good</li> </ul>	<div data-bbox="1939 1117 2007 1181" data-label="Image"></div> <p>LAB 07032016 Paper 6) Questions for all</p> <p><i>LAB174 VP to look into concerns around match funding</i></p>

	<p>local services are criticised for a low application rate to ASF. Others felt that there is a considerable amount of support we could be helping adoptive families to access in addition to CAMHS, even if that is very good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption support is part of the regional plans, making it part of the while child's journey.</li> <li>• It would be interesting to review by LA how much they are spending on ASF, and for how many children. HE to extract figures from last year's adoption support budgets.</li> <li>• Important to include adopter voice/adopter engagement in any proposals.</li> <li>• It was agreed that a workshop to look in more detail and help understand the adoption support figures would be really useful to LAs (with a wider audience than just LAB members). VP and HE to discuss. The following suggestions were made for inclusion in the workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Marie-Louise Sauerberg and John Simmonds to be invited to present their perspectives.</li> <li>➢ CH and JF to work on referral pathways to bring to the workshop.</li> <li>➢ Debate around outcomes for London's children.</li> <li>➢ Discussion around the questions for regional adoption boards mentioned above</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>ASF Regional Dashboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed that the following additional data would be helpful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Data around ASF applications to support Special Guardianship applications</li> <li>➢ Age of the children</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Please let VP know if there is anything else you would like included in the dashboard..</p>	<p><i>expensive specialist support.</i></p> <p><i>LAB175 HE to extract figures on LA spending on adoption support from adoption support budgets</i></p> <p><i>LAB176 VP and HE to discuss workshop around ASF figures</i></p> <p><i>LAB177 CH and JF to work on referral pathways for ASF workshop</i></p>
4	<p><b>ALB Update and Items to Feed Back</b></p> <p>AC advised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data for quarter 2 will be circulated shortly, and AC to circulate draft narrative for members' comments. The following are the headlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ New decisions have fallen from 1850 in q2 2013/14 to 1050 in q2 2016/17</li> <li>➢ The number of new placement orders has also decreased</li> <li>➢ Reversals of decisions is stable</li> <li>➢ Reduction in number of children waiting.</li> <li>➢ Increase in the number of care proceedings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work is currently being done on adopter sufficiency. RM to provide data on the numbers of children coming into care.</li> <li>• National Adoption Leadership Board meeting is on 20<sup>th</sup> April. AC to circulate questions in advance so members can have an input.</li> <li>• Data Reference Group is meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March – LAB members are welcome to attend.</li> <li>• Data analysis meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March (11.00am – 4.00pm, Holloway Road) – LAB members welcome to attend.</li> </ul>	<p><i>LAB178 RM to provide data on the numbers of children coming into care</i></p>

5	<p><b>Activity Progress:</b></p> <p><b>Beyond the PAR Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HE advised that the second event is taking place today, first one was well received.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sufficiency of Adopters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HE is gathering data from consortia and will consider the national data when ALB publish it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Data of children on the national register managed by Coram Baaf</b></p> <p>CHa circulated the Adoption Match Monthly Report for London, February 2017. The following arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liz Bee is the regional business partner for London. She is happy to meet with agencies any time.</li> <li>This register runs alongside Link Maker – matches are not double-counted.</li> </ul> <p><b>Linkmaker Regional Reports</b></p> <p>Reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for information.</p> <p><b>SGO Breakdown Survey – next steps</b></p> <p>HE met again with John Simmonds and Lorna Rook. They will carry out further investigation and come up with a plan.</p>	 Adoption Match Monthly Report - Lo  LAB 07032017 Paper 7) Match Q3.pdf  LAB 07032017 Paper 8) Match Q4.pdf  LAB 07032017 Paper 9) Usage.pdf
9	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <p><b>Expression of Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CH reported that 2 of the 4 bids Coram submitted are through to the next stage.</li> <li>The EOI to 'develop and implement to regional approach to matching in London' requires sign up from 8 – 10 LAs who are interested in being early participants in the project. Further information is being circulated by Chris Munday. The full bid has to be submitted to DfE by 24<sup>th</sup> March; if you are interested in participating please contact Kevin Young (<a href="mailto:kevin.young@coram.org.uk">kevin.young@coram.org.uk</a>).</li> </ul> <p><b>Education Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BE advised that consortia hosted an education event on 8<sup>th</sup> February with national leads from virtual schools. (HE to circulate a feedback summary from Jane Tilton.)</li> <li>It was well represented from various agencies - education, adoption, adoption agencies.</li> </ul> <p><b>London Councils Website</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KR advised that in future minutes from LAB meetings will be published on London Councils website.</li> </ul>	

<b>10</b>	<b>Date of next Meeting</b>  Wednesday, 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2017, 12noon – 1.30pm.	