

Appendix 1 to RAA Delegation Report

Central East Regional Adoption Agency – Background Paper

October 2018

RAA Programme - National Context

- In 2015, DfE launched the Regionalising Adoption programme, encouraging all LAs to work with other LAs and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) to regionalise their adoption services, and consider alternative delivery models.
- Many RAAs are working towards an LA-hosted model which involves a LA delivering the RAA on behalf of other LAs rather than the establishment of a new entity (such as an LA Trading Company) or tendering for a VAA to operate the service
- As of May 2018 there were 10 operational RAAs incorporating 49 LAs. The projects under development cover a total of 90 LAs, leaving only 13 LAs which are not part of an RAA.

RAA Programme - National Context (Cont.)

- The aim is for RAAs to offer greater scale and consistency across adopter recruitment, matching and support to improve the extent and timeliness of adoption for children where it is in their best interest.
- In practice this means integrated delivery of these functions across a number of, under a single brand and management structure, and by a single organisation.
- The DfE have seven criteria for forming an RAA:
 - Single line of accountability
 - Core functions are transferred to the RAA
 - Pan-regional approach
 - Recruitment, support and matching
 - Management responsibility
 - Pooled funding
 - Partnership with the voluntary sector.

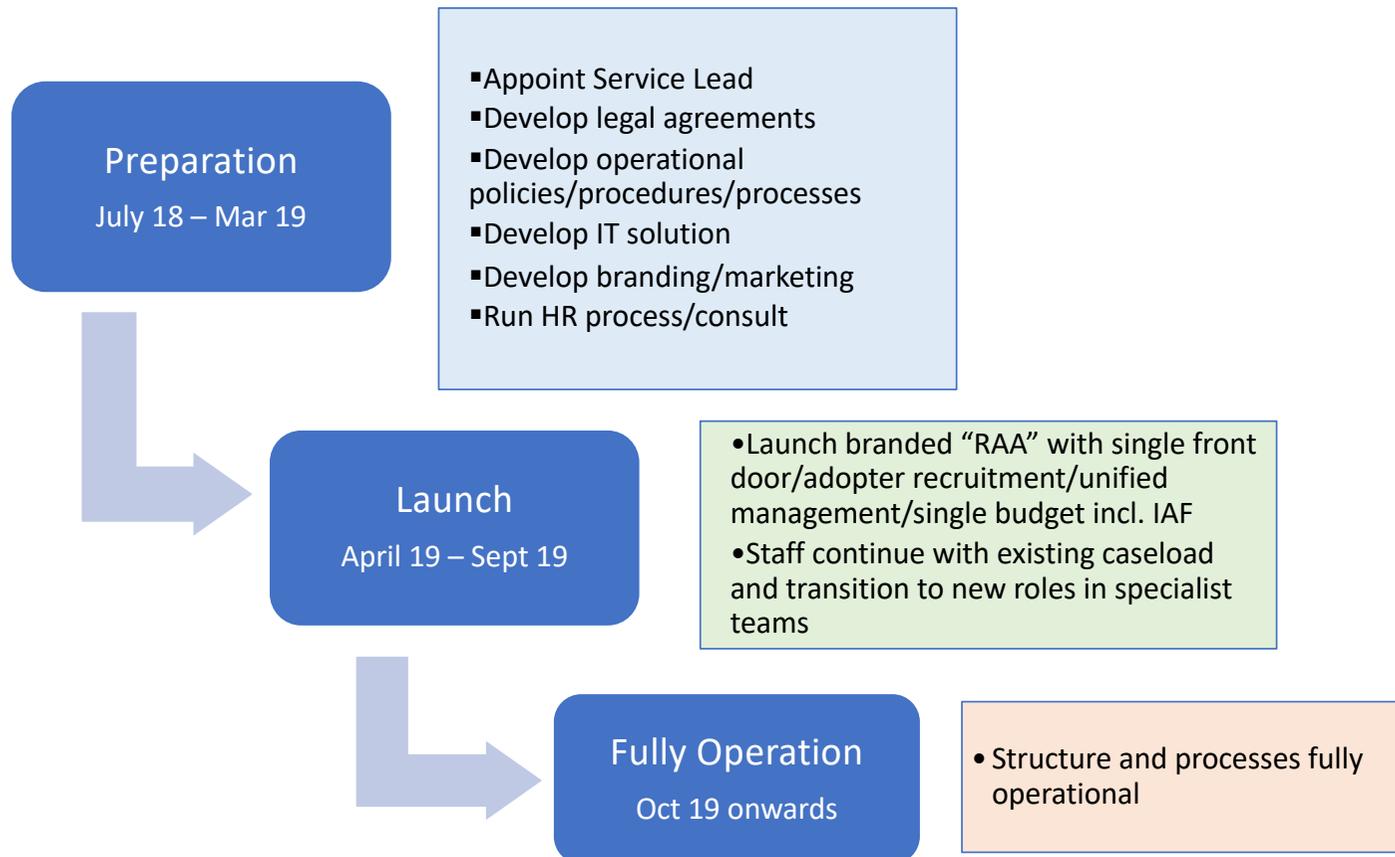
Benefits of working in a RAA

- Milton Keynes and Central Bedfordshire Council's both have very strong adoption teams which would benefit by working together to develop greater specialisms and commission services on a wider scale
- CBC already hosts a joint adoption panel with Bedford Borough which works very well. Milton Keynes will join this arrangement.
- MK's performance with adoption timescales is good but there is always room for improvement and the less time children spend waiting for their 'forever' families is better for them
- There is a statutory requirement to join an RAA by 2020 as set out in the Children and Families Act

Background to Central East RAA

- Under an initial development led by Coram, Central East RAA was made up of Central Bedfordshire, Bedford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.
- Until January 2017 development was led by Coram and focused on establishing best practice across the region
- In June 2017 Central Bedfordshire took on the lead role and worked with other LAs to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) to support an LA hosted model completed in October 2017.
- After considering the OBC it was decided that Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire would explore other options.
- Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Milton Keynes worked together to prepare a full Business Case (FBC) for an RAA hosted by Central Bedfordshire.
- In June this year Bedford Borough requested more time to consider their approach whilst maintaining close links and joint working where appropriate.
- DfE supported CBC and Milton Keynes to proceed to implementation with a view to others joining once the RAA has become established.
- The plan is for the newly branded joint service to 'go live' in April 2019.

RAA – Implementation



Implementation (Cont.)

- DfE have provided grant to support the implementation and a Project Manager has been engaged
- Six workstreams have been identified and are in progress:
 - Legal and governance
 - Finance
 - Operations
 - Human resources
 - IT and performance
 - Marketing
- A key workstream is the development of the RAA Partnering and Hosting Agreement – This is being developed by LGSS Legal (CBC's Lawyers) and will be closely reviewed by MK's legal team
- Staff engagement in the process from both Milton Keynes and CBC staff has been very positive to date with front line staff and managers co-constructing the design.

Central East RAA – Agreed vision and design principals

Vision

'To achieve the best possible outcomes for children, and local areas - through high quality services that place children with the right adopters at the right time with the right support'

Better life long outcomes for children and adopters

The experiences and life long outcomes of children and adopters will improve

Adoption will be an option for a wider range of children (including older children and those with complex needs)

More families will be able and willing to adopt

The RAA will recruit adopters in line with children's needs

A better environment and opportunities for the adoption workforce

RAA will retain and develop the right skills, experience and talent in support of high quality services

RAA will support and encourage professional and career development

Design Principles

Better value for money

Investment will be efficiently and effectively managed

Opportunities to reduce cost will be identified and acted on

Outcomes will be clearly defined and measured

Set up and implementation costs will be low

Adoptions services will be transparent and collaborative

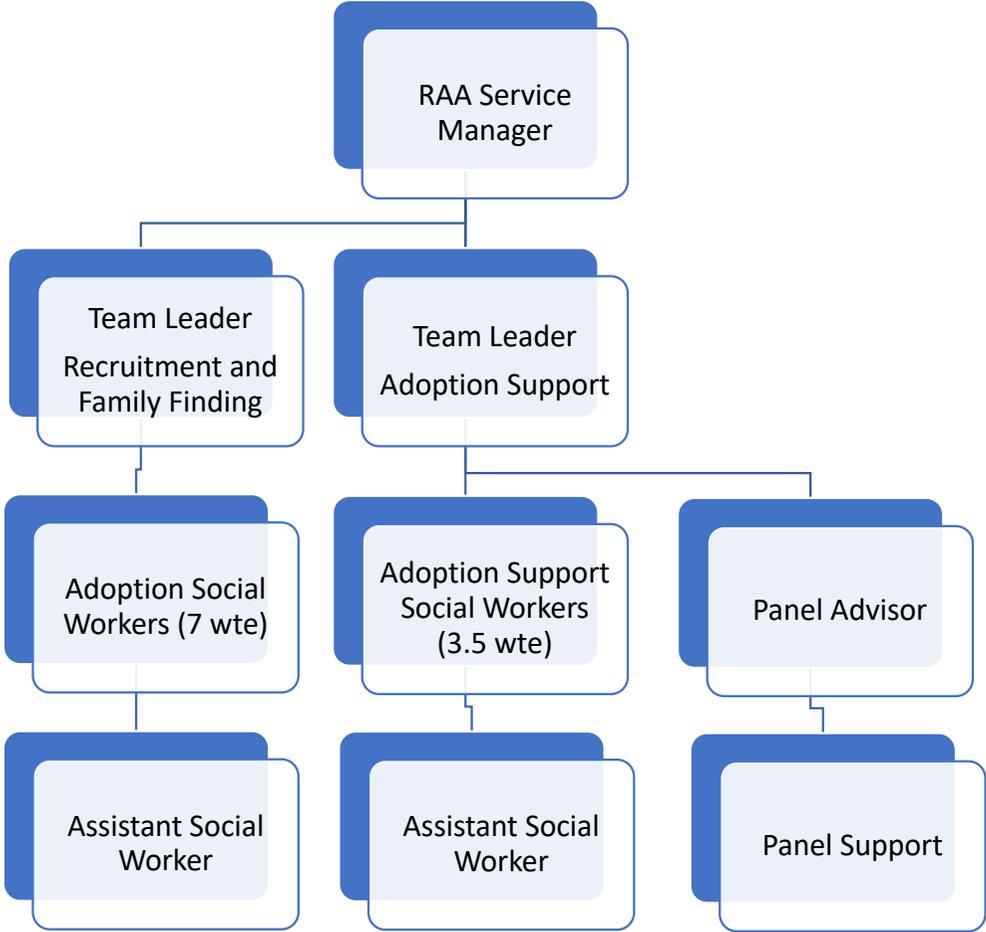
What RAA is and what it does will be clear and understandable

Local authorities will have influence over service delivery

There will be local presence of skilled adoption expertise

RAA will work collaboratively with local authorities and maintain regular and open communication

RAA Organisation Structure



CBC/MK RAA – Draft Budget

Expenditure	FTE	Full Year
Employees		£000s
Head of Service	1.00	76
Recruitment of Adopters	11.20	503
Adoption Support Service	5.90	270
Panel Management/other support	2.00	79
	20.10	928
Non-Pay Expenditure		
Staff Related		38
Panel Member Fees/Expenses		35
Contracted services		310
Subscriptions/Licenses		13
Other Expenditure		19
Other support to Clients		30
		445
Gross Expenditure		1,373
Income		
Adoption Support Fund		-287
Inter Agency Fees (Net)		-80
Panels - contribution from BB		-50
LA Baseline Contributions		-1,020
Surplus		-63
Other Potential Costs		
Host support costs		35
Potentially unreleased indirect staff budgets		25
Revised surplus		-3

RAA Proposed Governance Structure

