



Brighter
Futures for
Children

Adoption Statement of Purpose 2023 – 2024

Brighter Futures for Children

SUMMARY

This document provides details of Brighter Futures for Children VAA's structure, staffing and functions, including the division of our adoption agency roles and responsibilities between Brighter Futures for Children and with our Regional Adoption Agency; Adopt Thames Valley

OWNER

Maria Young – Director for Children's Social Care

VERSION

V 1.0

DATE

March 2023

REVIEW DATE

March 2024

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Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

Contents

1. Introduction and context	3
2. The agency’s statement of purpose	3
3. Principles and values statement	4
Values statement	5
Values – Children	5
Values – Adopted adults and birth relatives	6
Values – Adopters	6
4. The Regional Adoption Agency and the division of responsibilities.....	6
5. The organisational structure and management of the service	10
Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC)	10
Qualifications and experience	11
Adopt Thames Valley (ATV)	12
6. Adoption panels	12
7. Notified adoptions	13
8. Inter-country adoptions.....	13
9. Children’s guides to adoption	14
10. Systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of services	14
BFfC’s adoption services	14
ATV services	15
The Independent Reviewing Mechanism (The IRM)	16
11. Commendations and complaints	16
12. The registration authority.....	17
13. Feedback	17
14. Appendix A – Schedule of responsibilities.....	18
The child.....	18
Adopter recruitment.....	27
Preparation of the adult for permanence	29
Permanence support services	29
Service user engagement	38
Performance management and inspection	38
Miscellaneous	39
15. Appendix B – The organisational structure of the agency	40
Comment(s) obtained before submitting this policy/procedure	42

1. Introduction and context

Brighter Futures for Children's Adoption Service is a registered Voluntary Adoption Agency¹ which holds responsibility for discharging the adoption functions of Brighter Futures for Children².

The agency's registration permits it to provide the following adoption services:

- Domestic adoption services
- Intermediary services
- Birth records counselling.

Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) is also a member of the Adopt Thames Valley Regional Adoption Agency (ATV) and contracts to that agency all services relating to:

- The recruitment, assessment, training and support of prospective and approved adopters at all stages of the adoption process
- Family finding for children in the care of BFfC who require placement for adoption (including those requiring fostering for adoption)
- The provision of support services to all prospective and legal adopters living in the Reading borough who are entitled to receive adoption support services
- Services to non-agency adopters living within the borough who are seeking to adopt a child via a notified adoption (see section re Notified Adoptions below)
- Services to adults living within the borough who are seeking to adopt a child from abroad via an inter-country arrangement (see section re intercountry adoptions below)
- Birth records counselling and intermediary services for adopted adults.

(See section 4 below for further details about the regional adoption agency)

BFfC Adoption is subject to the Adoption Agencies Regulations (AAR) 2005 and subsequent amendments (2012) and the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2014).

2. The agency's statement of purpose

The Adoption National Minimum Standards set out the requirement for adoption agencies to compile a statement of purpose explaining:


- what services are provided
- the governing principles, and
- details of the management of the Service.

The statement of purpose is for:

- Children and young people who have been or are to be placed for adoption
- Birth relatives of children who have been or are to be placed for adoption

¹ Ofsted Registration Number: 2509643

² Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) is a Community Interest Company which holds responsibility for providing the full range of statutory and regulatory services required of local authorities, on behalf of Reading Borough Council.

- 
- Potential, approved and legal adopters
 - Social workers and social care managers internal and external to the agency
 - Adoption panel members
 - Elected members
 - BFFC board members
 - Ofsted
 - Members of the public

BFFC's Voluntary Adoption Agency's Statement of Purpose is formally considered and signed-off by the BFFC Operational Leadership Group. The BFFC Adoption Committee also considers the Statement of Purpose and is able to make recommendations regarding practice.

The statement is reviewed annually and revised as appropriate.

3. Principles and values statement

The principles and requirements of the following legislation and regulations all underpin the work of BFFC's Adoption Agency:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Adoption & Children Act 2002 and accompanying Regulations and Statutory Guidance
- The Children Act 2004
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013
- The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Education and Adoption Act 2016
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

and,

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (and associated child protection guidance).

BFFC's Adoption Agency is committed to providing comprehensive adoption services, operating within all current regulations, statutory guidance and best practice principles.

Key documents can be found by clicking the following links:

- [The Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013](#)
- [The Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014](#)

BFFC's Voluntary Adoption Agency is part of a range of BFFC services, which seek to promote the upbringing of children by their families in accordance with the spirit and provision of the Children Act 1989. When this is not possible, and where it is seen to be in the best interests of the child, BFFC's Adoption Agency undertakes to find a permanent substitute family in which the child is given the opportunity of a secure and stable environment, taking into account the child's specific needs and circumstances.

Values statement

The values statement below is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards, and reflects the values agreed by BFFC and the other six local authorities who are our partner agencies within the Adopt Thames Valley Regional Adoption Agency (ATV). These values are equally applicable to children and adults affected by both adoption and special guardianship.

Values – Children

- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills in order to best equip them to achieve successful adult lives
- Every child is entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet his or her individual care and parenting needs during childhood and beyond
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and must be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process
- Delays should when-ever possible be avoided as they can have a significant negative impact on the future health and development of children who are waiting to be adopted; given this the possibility of achieving early permanence through Fostering for Adoption should be considered for every child for whom placement for adoption is the Care Plan or the preferred placement option within a parallel plan
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children to develop a positive sense of self, their individual ethnicity, cultural background, religion, language, and sexuality need to be properly recognised and positively valued and promoted
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with additional health needs must be fully recognised and taken into account
- Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in his or her own country, intercountry adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family
- Children, birth parents/families and guardians, and adoptive parents/families must be valued and respected
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential for the National Minimum Standards to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies.

Values – Adopted adults and birth relatives

- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved – adopted adults, and birth and adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate and resurface at different times and stages throughout an individual’s life
- Adopted people should have access to information and services to enable them to address adoption-related matters throughout their lives
- Agencies have a duty to provide services that consider the welfare of all parties involved and the implications of any decisions reached, and actions taken, for everyone involved
- Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views and wishes when making decisions
- Agencies should acknowledge the differences in different individuals’ circumstances and have established policies and procedures that provide non-discriminatory services
- Adopted adults should have their adoptive identity safeguarded and they have the right to decide for themselves whether to be involved in contact or communication with their birth family members.

Values – Adopters

- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child should be valued and respected
- All adoptive applicants must be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. No applicant should ever be discriminated against on grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, gender, financial status or marital or partnership status
- All applicants are entitled to know what issues will be considered in their assessment, and to be kept informed of progress throughout. They have the right to receive a copy of their assessment report before the adoption panel meeting where their application is to be considered, and to have the opportunity to comment on the report and to attend the panel and be heard if they wish.

BFFC’s Adoption Agency is committed to promoting diversity and non-discriminatory practice in all aspects of our work with and on behalf of children, their carers and their birth and adoptive family members.

4. The Regional Adoption Agency and the division of responsibilities

Adopt Thames Valley (ATV) is a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), established in December 2017, with delegated responsibility for discharging most of the adoption functions of Reading Borough Council (now Brighter Futures for Children), Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Swindon Borough Council, West Berkshire Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

ATV also works in partnership with PACT Adoption Agency (Reading).

As detailed above, BFFC has delegated most of its adoption functions to ATV, however, BFFC still retains corporate responsibility for all Reading borough children looked after, even where we have delegated functions to ATV.

Role / Responsibilities / Function	Adopt Thames Valley	BfFC VAA
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF ADOPTERS		
Marketing and recruitment strategy	✓	
Adopter recruitment and enquiries	✓	
Assessment of prospective adopters – all stage one and stage two functions including training	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report (PAR)	✓	
Agency decision maker for approval of adopters	✓	✓ ³
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	✓ ⁴
PERMANENCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to childcare social work teams on the adoption process	✓	✓

³ Note: Responsibility for making ADM decisions regarding the approvals of prospective adopters on behalf of the RAA is generally held by the Head of Service for ATV. Where the ADM approval relates to prospective adopter(s) who are seeking approval to adopt with a view to being matched to a specific child(ren) and the recommended approval of the prospective adopter(s) and the proposed 'match' are considered by the same Panel, the ADM who holds responsibility for the child will also make the ADM decision regarding the approval of the prospective adopters at the same time as considering the proposed match.

⁴ Note: While ATV will be responsible for the matching of all ATV approved adopters, if a proposed match is to a BfFC Child Looked After, BfFC will be fully involved in all decisions relating to the match with the prospective adopter(s)



Role / Responsibilities / Function	Adopt Thames Valley	BfFC VAA
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement		✓
Preparation of the child permanence report		✓
Agency decision maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		✓
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	
Child looked after reviews		✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	✓
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement		✓
Adoption panel administration and management	✓	
Agency advisor role	✓	
Agency decision maker for matching prospective adopters and child		✓
Placement planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation and provision of Life Book		✓
Independent review officer monitoring of quality of child’s care and care plan		✓



Role / Responsibilities / Function	Adopt Thames Valley	BfFC VAA
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for adoption order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter		✓
Setting up of any agreed post adoption contact arrangements		✓

ADOPTION SUPPORT		
Assessment for adoption support	✓	✓ ⁵
Developing and delivering adoption support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre- and post- Adoption Order		✓
Adoption support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption training • Independent birth relative support service • Support with ongoing birth relative contact including Letterbox • Specialist life story work practitioners • Birth records counselling and services for adults affected by adoption 	✓	

⁵ Note: While ATV will be responsible for any assessment for adoption support that are completed post-order, BfFC is responsible for completing and signing off all initial Adoption Support Plans that are agreed at the time of matching and are responsible for meeting and/or funding any commitments made within them.

Financial support to adopters including adoption allowances		✓
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		
Notified adoption assessments, including, stepparent/partner adoptions	✓	
Inter-country adoption assessments and post-approval and post-order support	✓	

(See [Appendix A – Schedule of Responsibilities](#) for further details as to which functions remain the responsibility of BfFC and which have been delegated to ATV).

5. The organisational structure and management of the service

Brighter Futures for Children (BfFC)

The directors of Brighter Futures for Children’s Voluntary Adoption Agency are:

- Lara Patel – Executive Director of Children’s Services
- Maria Young – Director for Children’s Social Care.

The role of Responsible Individual is also held by the Director of Children’s Social Care.

The role of Adoption Manager is held by the BfFC Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption.

Within BfFC’s Adoption Agency the role of Agency Decision Maker is shared between the BfFC Director for Children’s Social Care, and the BfFC Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption. They are between them responsible for:

- ‘Should be placed for adoption’ decisions for all children for whom BfFC holds corporate responsibility
- Approval of adoption matches (recommended by Adopt Thames Valley) for all children for whom BfFC holds corporate responsibility⁶.

Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker

Name: Maria Young

Title: Director for Children’s Social Care:

⁶ Note: Responsibility for making ADM decisions regarding the approvals of prospective adopters on behalf of the RAA is generally held by the Service Manager of ATV. Where the ADM approval relates to prospective adopter(s) who are seeking approval to adopt with a view to being matched to a specific child(ren) and the recommended approval of the prospective adopter(s) and the proposed ‘match’ are considered by the same Panel, the ADM who holds responsibility for the child will also make the ADM decision regarding the approval of the prospective adopters at the same time as considering the proposed match.

Contact details: Maria.young@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Adoption Manager and Agency Decision Maker

Name: Hilary Loades-Bannon

Title: Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption

Contact details: Hilary.loades-bannon@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

The above Officers are based at:

Floor 1, Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2LU

Children's social workers

The social work role to children requiring adoption, and to those placed for adoption prior to legal order, is provided by named social workers employed within BFFC's social work teams, based at the Civic Offices in Reading. (Please see [Appendix B – The organisational structure of the agency](#) – for further details).

Qualifications and experience

The Agency Decision Maker and Responsible Individual

Maria Young holds a BA (hons) in social work (awarded in 1991) and a BA (hons) in psychology (awarded in 1994). She has over 30 years' experience as a qualified social work practitioner, including sixteen years' experience of frontline social work within a variety of children's social care settings. Her practitioner roles included her dealing with adoption work within various statutory services and sitting as a member of the adoption panel in a London borough. During the last ten years she has held senior management positions in four local authorities, including holding the role of Assistant Director for Children's Social Care in two local authorities; in both of these positions she also held the role of Agency Decision Maker for adoption within the councils.

Maria joined Brighter Futures for Children in February 2019, initially in the role of principal social worker, prior to achieving the role of Interim Deputy Director for Children's Social Care in July 2019. She was appointed to her current role in March 2020.

The Adoption Manager

Hilary Loades-Bannon holds a certificate of qualification in social work (awarded in 1984) and a post graduate certificate in health and social care management (awarded in 2006). She has over 30 years' experience of managing adoption and permanence services. She held the post of adoption team manager in Wokingham borough from 1992 to 2014. Between December 2014 and December 2017, she held the post of team manager and then service manager of Adopt Berkshire (a shared adoption service working on behalf of four of the Berkshire unitary authorities).

Hilary joined Reading Children's Services (now Brighter Futures for Children), in December 2017, initially in a quality assurance role, prior to assuming the role of Service Lead for Adoption & Permanence in January 2019. She took up her current role on 1st April 2022.

Children's social workers

All children's social workers are supported to acquire the required level of experience to undertake adoption work. Where they lack the requisite level of experience, they are supervised and supported by a manager who has sufficient experience to manage such cases appropriately and effectively. If a social worker's direct line-manager does not hold the requisite level of experience, they will receive

case-specific line management and oversight provided by an alternative BfC social work manager, in order to ensure both appropriate case supervision and compliance with regulatory requirements.

All social workers, senior practitioners, and managers are registered with Social Work England.

All BfC social work practitioners and managers are supported by named business support workers.

Adopt Thames Valley (ATV)

The staffing structure for ATV can be found in the ATV Statement of Purpose which can be accessed from the ATV website: www.adoptthamesvalley.co.uk

The role of Head of Service is held by Teresa Rogers who is based at the ATV Oxford office; she can be contacted at: Teresa.rogers@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The ATV Berkshire social work teams are responsible for the provision of adoption services for BfC, including both pre and post adoption services. They are based at the Berkshire office:

Adopt Thames Valley, Berkshire Office,
1st Floor Woodley Community Centre,
Hurricane Way, Woodley,
Reading RG5 4UX

The team manager of the Berkshire adoption team is Claire Corcoran; she can be contacted at: Claire.corcoran@oxfordshire.gov.uk

BfC has an identified lead for adoption support services within ATV – Emma Griffin, Joint Team Manager, Permanence Support. She can be contacted at: Emma.griffin@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The adoption consultant and adoption panel adviser responsible to the Berkshire panel is Adam Walters; he can be contacted at: Adam.walters@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The Berkshire letterbox administrator is Denise Bance; she can be contacted at: Denise.bance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The Berkshire birth parent project worker is Mick Bradshaw; he can be contacted at: Mick.bradshaw@oxfordshire.gov.uk

6. Adoption panels

ATV operates adoption panels on behalf of the RAA's seven contributing local authorities. The panel that generally hears the cases of BfC children and prospective adopters who are residents of Reading borough sits in Woodley; a second panel sits in Oxfordshire and can be accessed when timescales require it.

Both panels are constituted in accordance with current legislation, regulations, and guidance. They each have an independent chairperson, and there is a central list from which each panel is drawn. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, a maximum of 6 or 7 attend each panel, including the panel chair. Medical advice to the panels is provided on a rota basis. Both panels are serviced by a designated panel administrator, and both have access to legal advice if required. The professional advice to the panels is provided by the two agency advisors, one of whom will attend each panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.

Current membership includes individuals with personal experience of adoption (adopters and adopted adults) and other independent members from legal, educational and therapeutic

backgrounds. It also includes social workers with direct experience of adoption work and others based in various related settings, including children looked after and fostering teams. The panels are as far as possible balanced in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and experience.

The functions of the panels in relation to adoption matters are:

- to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child(ren)
- to recommend whether a proposed match between a child(ren) and prospective adopter(s) is a suitable one
- in circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no placement order is applied for, to recommend whether or not the child should be placed for adoption.

When considering the approval of prospective adopters, the panels can also give advice about the numbers and ages of children to be placed. When considering proposed 'matches' the panels can give advice about post adoption contact and adoption support plans. The panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the timescales as set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.

The panels make recommendations based on written reports prepared in advance by the child's social worker and family finder and the prospective adopter(s)' adoption social worker; and on the social worker(s)' and/or their manager(s)' contributions to panel discussion. Social workers, and where appropriate their managers, are expected to attend panel to discuss and clarify any issues relevant to the application under consideration. When the approval of prospective adopter(s), or a proposed 'match' between a child(ren) and their prospective adopter(s), is to be considered, the potential adopter(s) have the option of attending panel.

When the panel considers the case of any Reading child who is subject to an adoption plan; either in order to recommend whether a relinquished child should be placed for adoption, or in connection with a proposed 'match', the recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final minutes of the meeting, to the responsible BfFC Adoption Agency Decision Maker.

Responsibility for making the final agency decision then rests with the BfFC Agency Decision Maker. Agency decisions are made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

7. Notified adoptions

BfFC provides a service to Reading residents who are applying for a non-agency adoption⁷. This service is provided by ATV under the RAA contract. Initial meetings and subsequent assessments are undertaken by staff experienced in this area of work and reports are provided to the court within the timescales set. Applicants are made aware of their right to access adoption support services. Applicants are also made aware of the other alternatives to adoption that may be available to them, via the provision of written information and during meetings with a social worker.

8. Inter-country adoptions

BfFC provides an inter-country adoption service, providing counselling and services to Reading residents who wish to adopt from abroad. This service is also provided by ATV under the RAA

⁷ A non-agency adoption is an adoption that is not arranged through the adoption agency, e.g., the adoption of a child who is not in local authority care by the child's stepparent or a wider family member(s).

contract. ATV in turn contracts IAC The Centre for Adoption to provide this service on behalf of the RAA: <http://www.icacentre.org.uk/>

9. Children's guides to adoption

ATV has two RAA Children's Guides to Adoption which are available for use by all seven of its contributing local authorities, to be used with children of different ages to introduce them to the concept of adoption and to help them to understand what will happen to them if they have a care plan of adoption.

These guides to adoption are given to children who have an appropriate level of understanding; they contain an age-appropriate summary of what happens at each stage of the adoption process (including at court), and how long each stage should take. Both guides also contain the information laid down in the Adoption National Minimum Standards about how a child can find out about their rights and can contact their independent reviewing officer, and/or the children's commissioner for England and/or Ofsted, if they wish to raise a concern.

10. Systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of services

BfFC has systems in place to monitor:

- The services provided by BfFC staff to the children originating from Reading borough who have a care plan of adoption
- The services provided via the RAA contract with ATV.

BfFC's adoption services

The quality of services provided to children who are subject to an adoption plan is monitored and quality assured via a number of different systems, including:

- Social work supervision
- Child permanence reports being quality assured by both the social worker's responsible manager and the adoption adviser (based within ATV)

The role of Agency Decision Maker being invested in the Director for Children's Social Care, or the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption; both of whom scrutinise the available reports and where required speak directly to social workers and their managers in order to ensure that all appropriate enquiries have been made and actions taken prior to agreeing either the adoption plan for a child [the SHOBPA decision] or any proposed 'match'

- Audits.

The timeliness of services provided to children is monitored by the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption, through:

- Receiving early warning of the children who will be entering proceeding, including those for whom early permanency planning should be progressed
- Monitoring all individual cases from the point of permanency planning being started (prior to the 2nd CIC review) through to placement for adoption

- Chairing all permanency planning meetings for children looked after aged under 9 years – maintaining an approximately 4-6 weekly case review process
- Maintaining data regarding compliance with expected timescales for all children with a SHOBPA decision
- Meeting with the ATV team manager (Berkshire office) on an approximately six weekly basis, to monitor all family finding for Reading borough children looked after requiring adoption
- Managing a schedule of quarterly audits of children’s adoption case files.

An overview of the services provided to children who are subject to adoption plans is also maintained by:

- The BfFC Children’s Social Care Management Team
- The BfFC Adoption Committee which considers BfFC Voluntary Adoption Agency’s annual and half-year service reports and the annual review of the adoption agency’s statement of purpose.

ATV services

BfFC monitors the services provided to the agency by ATV under the RAA contract through:

- Involving ATV family finders in regular permanency planning and family finding review meetings chaired by the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption, in order to monitor the family finding process
- The Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption meeting with the team manager for ATV (Berkshire office) on an approximately 6 weekly basis, in order to review the cases of children on referral, monitor timescales and seek to resolve any difficulties that have arisen
- The Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption attending the ATV Leads Meeting which is held quarterly and addresses practice related issues arising within the RAA, including those relating to the recruitment of prospective adopters, matching, and placement support
- The Director for Children’s Social Care and the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption, both periodically meeting with the ATV Head of Service to discuss performance and to air and address any difficulties that arise between the two agencies
- The Director for Children’s Social Care sitting on the ATV Partnership Board, which meets quarterly and reviews outcomes against key performance indicators and national standards, budgets, and the financial state of the agency

The ATV adoption managers provide the ATV Partnership Board with six monthly reports which address the management, outcomes, and financial state of the agency, and this enables the BfFC to monitor the management and outcomes of the service and whether the agency is effective, achieving good outcomes for children and other service users, and complying with the conditions of registration

- The RAA contributing local authorities receiving quality assurance feedback on a six-monthly basis from the agency advisors; including feedback from the ATV adoption panels on the quality of reports being presented to the panels.

Note: ATV's internal systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of their services are detailed in their statement of purpose which can be accessed from the ATV website:

www.adoptthamesvalley.co.uk

The Independent Reviewing Mechanism (The IRM)

Access to the IRM is restricted to applications from potential and approved adopters where the agency has decided not to approve them, or to terminate or change the terms of their approval. All of BfFC's services relating to the approval of adopters are provided by ATV under the RAA contract, and ATV is responsible for managing any appeals to the IRM in respect of any aspect of this service.

11. Commendations and complaints

Responsibility for responding to and managing any commendations or complaints regarding BfFC's Adoption services rests with different officers depending on the services to which they refer.

Where a commendation or complaint relates to any aspect of the social work role to children requiring adoption or those placed for adoption (including any interaction with or service provided to a birth relative of such a child by BfFC or an individual BfFC staff member), responsibility for responding to and investigating the complaint rests with BfFC and the process followed will be in line with the BfFC Complaints Procedure: [Compliments and Complaints](#)

Any complaints regarding any adoption services provided by BfFC should be directed to:

Nayana George, Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager
Directorate of Resources
Freepost RTLS-CKGX-RKLL,
Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU

Telephone: 0118 937 2905

Email: <mailto:complaints@reading.gov.uk>

Text: Type SPKUP & your message to 81722

Any commendations regarding any adoption services provided by BfFC should be directed to:

Maria Young
Director for Children's Social Care,
Brighter Futures for Children,
Floor 1, Civic Offices,
Bridge Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2LU

Email: Maria.young@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Where a complaint relates to any aspect of BfFC's adoption services that are provided by ATV on behalf of BfFC under the Regional Adoption Agency Contract, Reading Borough Council's Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager will liaise with her counterpart in Oxfordshire County Council and a joint decision will be made regarding which Agency should take the lead in responding to and investigating the complaint.



Where it is agreed that Oxfordshire County Council will lead on investigating and managing the complaint, responsibility rests with:

Oxfordshire Comments and Complaints Officer,
Joint Commissioning,
Oxfordshire County Council,
County Hall (4th Floor),
New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

Email: commentsandcomplaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01865 810563

The office is open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm (4:30pm close on Fridays).

All of those receiving a service in relation to adoption from ATV are advised of their right to make representations or complaints and the ATV Head of Service monitors the progress of all complaints and compliments specifically relating to the service.

12. The registration authority

Contact details for Ofsted:

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills,
Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 1231 (General enquiries)

The helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

Ofsted (Southeast Region)
Rivergate
2 Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6EH

13. Feedback

BFFC welcomes feedback from its service users and other interested parties in relation to all aspects of its service provision and we are committed to learning from any feedback received. If you have any comments about our adoption services, these should in the first instance be directed to the BFFC Adoption Manager:

Hilary Loades-Bannon,

Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, Fostering, Special Guardianship & Adoption ,

Brighter Futures for Children,
Floor 1, Civic Offices,
Bridge St, Reading RG1 2LU

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14. Appendix A – Schedule of responsibilities

The child

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Case responsibility	<p>BfFC will retain case management responsibility for the child until the making of the adoption order.</p> <p>BfFC will be responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Visits • Monitoring and overseeing the child’s care plan • Management and supervision of contact between child and family members • Supervision, administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers (including for Fostering for Adoption placements) <p>In the case of relinquished babies, BfFC will retain case management responsibility until the adoption order has been made.</p>	<p>ATV will provide specialist advice and support to assist local authority staff to fully understand the adoption process and the potential life- long support needs of adopted children, influencing and promoting best practice.</p>	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Early identification of children requiring adoption	BfFC is responsible for identifying children who may require adoption and for making them and their needs known to ATV at the earliest possible opportunity, including pre-birth, and providing relevant and timely information.	<p>ATV will allocate a family finder to each child identified as possibly requiring adoption. Staff from ATV will be involved in identifying children for early permanence placements.</p> <p>Representatives of ATV will be available to attend meetings at BfFC (such as permanency planning meetings) to better understand the needs of the children who may require adoption and, where appropriate, to begin to identify suitable adopters at an early stage.</p>	ATV aims to develop working practices in conjunction with BfFC to ensure close involvement in care planning, in order to assist with the earliest possible identification and to provide external challenge.
Early permanence	<p>BfFC has a duty to consider whether an early permanence (fostering for adoption) placement would be appropriate for any child for whom they are considering adoption, in line with Section 22c (9B) (c) of the Children Act 1989.</p> <p>This consideration will include BfFC notifying ATV at the earliest possible stage of any such child.</p> <p>One of BfFC ADMs is responsible for making the decision that the child should be placed in an early permanence placement under Regulation 25a of the Care Planning, Placement, and Case Review Regulations 2010.</p>	<p>ATV will provide advice and support to BfFC in identifying which children are suitable to be considered for an early permanence placement.</p> <p>Where appropriate, and in agreement with BfFC, ATV will identify a suitable family to provide an early permanence placement for children who have been identified as requiring this form of placement.</p> <p>(Placements will depend on the availability of appropriate carers).</p>	<p>The fostering element of an early permanence placement, including support to the foster carers, will remain the responsibility of BfFC.</p> <p>In recruiting, assessing, and preparing prospective adopters, ATV will encourage all those applying to adopt to positively consider the benefits for the child of early permanence.</p>

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
<p>Agency decision for early permanence placement</p>	<p>BfFC will prepare the relevant paperwork for the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) to agree to a placement under Regulation 25a of the Care Planning, Placement, and Case Review Regulations 2010.</p> <p>BfFC will provide the relevant paperwork to the ADM for consideration and will be responsible for any formal notifications to the fostering service, the prospective foster carers/adopters, birth parents, and court.</p> <p>BfFC will be responsible for all payments to the prospective adopters/foster carers whilst the placement remains an early permanence placement.</p>		
<p>Tracking of children requiring adoption</p>	<p>BfFC will track the progress of all children in care proceedings or looked after under Section 20 (Children Act 1989) so as to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of their potential need for an adoption placement.</p>	<p>ATV will actively track all children notified to them by BfFC with a plan for adoption or for whom initial information indicates that adoption may become the plan.</p>	<p>ATV will agree with BfFCa process to regularly obtain this information.</p>
<p>Adoption reports</p>	<p>BfFC will be responsible for the completion all reports relating to the child prior to an adoption match being agreed.</p> <p>The BfFC social worker will be responsible for the completion of the Child Permanence Report (CPR) for the child.</p>	<p>ATV will provide advice and support in relation to the completion of the CPR and external challenge to help ensure that CPRs are of a consistent high quality across partnership local authorities.</p> <p>ATV will be responsible for the quality assurance of all CPRs being presented to</p>	<p>It will be necessary for BfFC and ATV to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that all relevant information is included in the CPR and that the report is of a high standard.</p>


Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	<p>BfFC will be responsible for collating all the paperwork required for the ADM decision and for updating the CPR, following the making of care and placement orders, for the matching process. This includes the completion of together or apart assessments where relevant.</p> <p>The BfFC line manager is responsible for reading and signing the CPR prior to submission to ATV.</p>	<p>the ADM, and it is for ATV alone to decide whether the report is adequate for submission to the ADM.</p>	
<p>Assessment of child’s needs prior to permanence</p>	<p>BfFC will be responsible for assessing the child’s adoption support needs in respect of a future placement. This includes the completion of sibling, or ‘Together or Apart’ assessments</p> <p>The ADM of BfFC will be responsible for providing any financial support agreed in the adoption support plan or will delegate responsibility for that decision to a budget holding senior manager within BfFC.</p> <p>The provision of any funding to support an adoption placement, whether a one-off payment or ongoing payments, remains the responsibility of BfFC.</p>	<p>ATV will be responsible for the early, and any subsequent, needs profile of the child (even before the CPR is compiled) and in identifying early matching considerations.</p> <p>This will include taking into account information and advice from permanence support services on the potential needs of the child once placed, and potential sources of future support. ATV will also provide support and advice to workers undertaking specialist assessments e.g. sibling assessments.</p> <p>ATV will provide information and advice to BfFC in relation to meeting the placement and support needs of the</p>	<p>It will be necessary for ATV and BfFC to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the child can be met, the risks addressed, and that planned support is sustainable.</p>

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
		child and the likely need for post order support services.	
Permanence medicals	<p>BfFC will be responsible for obtaining all required medical information including completed CoramBAAF M and B reports (Obstetric and Neo Natal Reports), CoramBAAF PH reports (reports on the birth parents' current and family health history) in respect of children who are being considered for adoption.</p> <p>BfFC will be responsible for liaising with the agency medical adviser to arrange the permanence medical.</p> <p>The BfFC social worker will arrange with the foster carer to take the child to the medical and should also attend in person.</p>		
'Should be placed for adoption' decision	<p>The agency decision maker in BfFC will be responsible for the 'Should be placed for adoption' decision for the child.</p> <p>BfFC will undertake a regular review of this decision and associated plans and keep ATV informed in a timely way of any changes/significant developments.</p>	<p>ATV will support the decision-making process and will have an advisory and quality assurance role in this process. ATV will provide professional advice to the BfFC agency decision maker.</p>	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Formal notifications following ADM decisions	<p>BfFC will take responsibility for informing birth parents of ‘Should be placed for adoption’ decisions – within 2 days of the decision verbally and within 5 days in writing.</p> <p>BfFC will be responsible for informing birth parents of adoption links agreed by the ADM.</p>	<p>ATV will be responsible for informing prospective adopters of ADM decisions regarding their suitability as adopters.</p> <p>ATV will be responsible for informing prospective adopters of adoption links agreed by the ADM.</p>	<p>There will be a need for BfFC to identify who in their agency will take responsibility for the formal notifications of ‘Should be placed for adoption’ decisions.</p>
Family finding process	<p>BfFC will collaborate with ATV in the family finding process.</p>	<p>ATV will lead the tracking/family finding process in consultation with BfFC.</p>	
Communication during the family finding process	<p>It will be the responsibility of BfFC to keep the CPR updated and to inform the family finder of any changes in the child’s development or circumstances (e.g., change of placement).</p>	<p>A family finder will be allocated during the early stages of profiling and will keep a watching brief until it is clear that a ‘Should be placed for adoption’ decision will be made.</p> <p>ATV will keep BfFC regularly updated about progress on family finding.</p>	
Priority children	<p>BfFC is responsible for identifying at the earliest opportunity a child with a likely plan for adoption where the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is aged four or over • Has BME heritage • Is part of a sibling group of 	<p>ATV will either provide or commission a service for priority children which may involve some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased publicity – DVD, photos etc. • Press and digital Media 	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	<p>two or more</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a disability or medical condition <p>BfFC will gather the relevant information, assess and forward to ATV as soon as possible.</p>	<p>advertising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiling the child at specific events • Attempting to recruit adopters specifically for the child • Providing additional training and preparation for potential adopters • Advising on and/or assisting with additional preparation work with the child. 	
<p>Preparation of the child for permanence</p>	<p>The BfFC social worker is responsible for all statutory duties and direct work with the child in relation to permanency planning and care proceedings.</p> <p>BfFC is responsible for preparing the child for an adoptive placement.</p>	<p>ATV will provide consultation to BfFC staff around the preparation of the child in respect of the future adoptive placement.</p>	
<p>Life books</p>	<p>BfFC will be responsible for the preparation of the child's life book. Collection of materials for the life book should start early in the child's looked after career.</p>	<p>ATV will offer advice and consultation to BfFC on the production of life books.</p>	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	<p>For children with a plan for adoption, the first draft of the book will be handed to the prospective adopters at the latest by the second review, with the final version being handed over within 10 days of the adoption hearing. An electronic version will be made available to adopters as well as a paper copy.</p>		
Later life letter	<p>BfFC will be responsible for completing the later life letter and handing it to the adopters within 10 days of the adoption hearing.</p>	<p>ATV will offer advice and consultation to BfFC on the formatting and production of later life letters.</p>	
Adoption matching and linking	<p>BfFC, by agreement, will meet the costs of introductions between children and prospective adopters.</p> <p>BfFC is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating the child permanence report • Delegation of parental responsibility agreement 	<p>ATV will take lead responsibility for all aspects of the adoption linking and matching process but will always involve BfFC in the decision-making process.</p> <p>ATV will chair adopter shortlisting, linking and formal matching meetings as part of the process.</p> <p>ATV is responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Report (APR) apart from the section on the child.</p> <p>ATV will arrange, chair, and facilitate the Linking Panel.</p>	



Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Linking decisions	One of the Agency Decision Makers for BfFC will be responsible for making the linking decision.	ATV will support the ADM linking decision to meet timescales and ensure all relevant information is available including Panel minutes.	Panel and ADM meetings and processes will need to be closely co-ordinated between ATV and BfFC to meet timescales and ensure all relevant information is available.
Formal notifications prior to the placement of a child	BfFC will take responsibility for sending out formal notifications of a child's placement in advance to health, education and to the local authority where the child will be living post-placement.		
Adoption allowances	<p>Adoption allowance assessments are undertaken by BfFC prior to placement and where eligible.</p> <p>Adoption allowances are reviewed annually by BfFC.</p> <p>Any exceptional allowances will be agreed by BfFC. For example, vehicles for larger sibling groups.</p>		
Pre-order applications	BfFC will be responsible for assessing the pre-order adoption therapeutic support needs of the child.	ATV will provide advice on the potential	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
to the adoption		therapeutic support needs of adopted children and on the sourcing of therapeutic providers.	
Support fund	BfFC will be responsible for sourcing an appropriate provider to meet the assessed therapeutic needs.	ATV will submit the adoption support fund application, using the assessment, costings and other commissioning information provided by BfFC.	
Pre-order disruptions	BfFC will have responsibility for placements that disrupt prior to the adoption order being made and will activate their own procedures in these circumstances.	ATV will support the disruption process and work closely with BfFC in such cases, including providing attendance at disruption meetings.	

Adopter recruitment

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Recruitment of adopters	BfFC will ensure that information relevant to potential adopters is included in its own marketing materials and on its website, clearly signposting potential adopters to the ATV website and not to any other agency.	ATV will be responsible for recruiting adopters appropriate to the needs of children waiting in BfFC. Marketing information will reflect the fact that ATV is delivering the service on behalf BfFC.	
Enquiries	BfFC will signpost any enquiries from potential adopters to ATV and not to any other agency.	ATV will provide a centralised enquiry process to meet all statutory requirements.	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
		ATV will provide written information to potential adopters and hold a programme of information events.	
Stage one	BfFC will provide all information required for statutory checks of potential adopters who are resident in the local authority.	ATV will undertake all stage one functions.	
Stage two		ATV will undertake all stage two functions.	
Legal & medical advice in respect of adopter assessments and approvals		ATV will be responsible for obtaining legal and medical advice for adopters.	
Prospective adopter reports		ATV will complete the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR).	
Approvals		ATV will arrange, chair, and facilitate the adoption approval panel. ATV agency decision makers will be responsible for all adopter approvals and de-registrations ⁸ .	

⁸ Note: the exception will be where the ADM approval relates to prospective adopter(s) who are seeking approval to adopt with a view to being matched to a specific child(ren) and the recommended approval of the prospective adopter(s) and the proposed 'match' are considered by the same Panel, the ADM who holds responsibility for the child will in this situation also make the ADM decision regarding the approval of the prospective adopters at the same time as considering the proposed match.

Preparation of the adult for permanence

Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Post approval support and training for adopters		ATV will provide post approval support and training to approved adopters.	
Preparation of prospective adopters for post-order direct and indirect contact		ATV will provide post approval support and training to approved adopters around direct and indirect contact.	
Preparation of birth relatives for post-order direct and indirect contact	BfC is responsible for preparing birth relatives for post- order contact.	ATV will provide specialist consultation to BfC staff in relation to post-order contact for birth relatives.	

Permanence support services

Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Scrutiny of adoption support plans		ATV is responsible for providing adoption support services only where the support plan has been agreed by ATV.	

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
		ATV will provide consultation services to BfFC in relation to adoption support plans.	
Providing information about adoption support	BfFC will share information about ATV to all adoptive families, pre- and post- order, who may require support now or in the future.	ATV will provide information about adoption support services for BfFC.	
Adoption support	<p>BfFC will signpost all referrals for post-order support from adoptive families to ATV.</p> <p>BfFC will, in exceptional circumstances, consider funding requests for adoption support services which are not included in ATV core offer.</p>	<p>ATV is responsible for assessing the support needs of those adoptive families, and relevant other parties, legally eligible for an assessment, and who request an assessment.</p> <p>ATV is responsible for providing or commissioning all adoption support services.</p> <p>Where an assessment of support needs identifies the need for support services outside the ATV core offer (from education, health, other social care services from BfFC) ATV will refer to the relevant agency.</p> <p>ATV is responsible for providing adoption support services only where the support plan has been agreed by ATV.</p> <p>ATV will facilitate the transfer of cases between ATV and other local authorities outside ATV, to allow the responsible local authority to meet the support needs where a family wishes to access support.</p>	A referral pathway to be agreed for referrals to ATV and for referrals to BfFC for requests for funding for additional services outside ATV core offer

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Adopted young adults	<p>BfFC will assess adopted young adults over the age of 18 years for adult services where appropriate.</p> <p>BfFC will signpost all adopted young adults eligible for the adoption support fund (i.e., previously CLA), up to and including the age of 21 years or 25 years if they have an EHCP, to ATV for an assessment of needs.</p>	<p>ATV will refer adopted young adults over the age of 18 years to local authority adult services where appropriate.</p> <p>ATV will provide adoption support services to young people and their families until the young person reaches 18 years.</p> <p>For young adults eligible for the adoption support fund (i.e., previously LAC), ATV will provide assessments of need and make applications to the adoption support fund where appropriate until the young person reaches up to and including 21 years, or 25 years if they have an EHCP.</p> <p>ATV will provide access to adoption records services to adopted young people and adults over the age of 18 years.</p>	
Safeguarding referrals involving an adopted child	<p>Where a safeguarding referral is made to BfFC involving an adopted child, BfFC is responsible for conducting any appropriate section 47 investigation and allocation of a social worker where thresholds are met. BfFC will also immediately notify ATV of the referral.</p> <p>Where there is an allocated social worker from ATV for a child who becomes subject to a strategy meeting, BfFC will invite ATV to contribute to the strategy meeting. Where a Section 47 investigation and Child and Family</p>	<p>Where a safeguarding concern is identified by ATV in the course of their work, and is assessed to reach safeguarding thresholds, a referral will be made to the appropriate BfFC safeguarding team.</p> <p>Where there is an allocated ATV social worker for a child subject to a strategy meeting, ATV will contribute to the strategy meeting.</p> <p>Where a Section 47 investigation and child and family assessment is undertaken by BfFC, ATV</p>	

Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	<p>assessment is undertaken by BfC in relation to an adopted child, BfC holds primary case responsibility and will work in partnership with ATV.</p> <p>Where a case proceeds to a child protection plan, and where ATV's role has come to an end, BfC can continue to access ATV for consultation in relation to adoption support when required.</p> <p>Where a case proceeds to a child protection plan, and adoption support services from ATV continue, BfC holds primary case responsibility and will work in partnership with ATV.</p>	<p>will have a secondary role specifically in relation to adoption support needs and will work in partnership with BfC.</p> <p>Where a case proceeds to a Child Protection Plan, and this becomes primary route for providing support to the family, ATV's role will come to an end unless there is specific ongoing support being provided through ATV in relation to adoption support needs. Where support services from ATV continue, this will be a secondary role specifically in relation to adoption support needs, and ATV will work in partnership with BfC.</p>	
<p>Post-order disruptions (safeguarding)</p>	<p>Where a safeguarding referral is made to BfC in relation to a potential or actual disruption of an adoptive placement, BfC is responsible for conducting the appropriate assessment or investigation and allocation of a social worker where safeguarding thresholds are met. BfC will also immediately notify ATV of the referral.</p> <p>BfC will hold case responsibility and will work in partnership with ATV.</p> <p>Where a case then proceeds to CLA, CP or CIN, and ATV's role has come to an end, BfC can continue to access ATV for consultation in relation to adoption support when required.</p>	<p>Where an actual or potential disruption (safeguarding concern) is identified by ATV in the course of their work, a referral will be made to the appropriate BfC safeguarding team.</p> <p>Where a section 47 investigation and child and family assessment is undertaken, ATV will have a secondary role specifically in relation to adoption support and will work in partnership with BfC.</p> <p>Where a case proceeds to CLA (first review), CIN plan or a child protection plan, and this becomes the primary route for providing support to the child and family, ATV's role will come to an end unless there is specific ongoing</p>	<p>A protocol for permanence disruption will be agreed between ATV and BfC.</p>

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	<p>BfFC will inform ATV of any disruptions involving an adopted child.</p> <p>BfFC will contribute relevant information and attend post-order adoption disruption meetings.</p> <p>BfFC will provide a chair for adoption disruption meetings who is independent of the services involved in the child and adopters' pre- and post-order assessment and support.</p>	<p>support being provided through ATV in relation to adoption support needs. Where support services from ATV continue, ATV will have a secondary role specifically in relation to adoption support needs and will work in partnership with BfFC.</p> <p>ATV will provide consultation services to BfFC social workers in relation to adoption disruptions.</p> <p>ATV will gather information about disruptions in the region involving an adopted child post-order.</p> <p>ATV will call and organise disruption meetings for open cases, where appropriate, and will contribute relevant information and attend.</p>	
Out-of-hours services	<p>All those service users affected by permanence will have access to BfFC emergency duty team out of core hours, or their local emergency services.</p>		
Indirect/ letterbox contact	<p>BfFC will share information about ATV with all adoptive families, pre- and post-order, who may require support now or in the future.</p> <p>The child's social worker is responsible for referring to the letterbox service when the child is placed.</p>	<p>ATV will provide information about letterbox services for BfFC.</p> <p>ATV will facilitate letterbox contact between adoptive parents and birth families, to meet the child's needs up to the age of 18 years.</p>	<p>A referral pathway for letterbox contact will be agreed between ATV and BfFC.</p>

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	<p>The child’s social worker is responsible for ensuring that letterbox agreements are signed and recorded on the child’s adoption record before transfer to ATV.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the child’s social worker to ensure birth family members and adopters have had information about the letterbox service, and have had it explained, supported by BfFC.</p> <p>A risk assessment for the exclusion of photo sharing is completed by the child’s social worker for every letterbox referral.</p> <p>Physical copies of letterbox correspondence will be stored in BfFC archives when the letterbox case is closed.</p>	<p>Letterbox services will be provided for young, adopted adults up to the age of 21 years, where there is significant need and risk, and only with the operational manager’s agreement.</p> <p>Electronic copies of letterbox correspondence will be stored by ATV.</p> <p>ATV will provide consultation services to BfFC in relation to letterbox contact.</p>	
<p>Supervising post-order contact, including siblings contact, for adoptive families</p>	<p>BfFC is responsible for direct supervised contact arrangements, post adoption, where there is an assessed need for a contact supervisor to safely manage the risk.</p>	<p>ATV will support families referred for a review of contact arrangements; provide advice and guidance; and provide support to step-down from supervised to unsupervised contact arrangements. A maximum of three direct contacts will be facilitated by ATV in the course of this work.</p> <p>ATV will refer adoption support contact arrangements to BfFC.</p> <p>ATV will review and honour those adoption contact agreements, previously supervised and</p>	<p>A referral pathway to BfFC for supervised contact will be agreed between ATV and BfFC.</p>

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
		<p>supported by BAAS, where there is a continued assessed need/risk.</p> <p>ATV will provide consultation services to BfFC in relation to supporting therapeutic contact post-order.</p>	
Adoption allowances	<p>Adoption allowances and grants remain the responsibility of BfFC as at the point of placement.</p> <p>Adoption allowances and grants will be assessed by BfFC prior to placement and, where eligible, as part of the support plan.</p> <p>BfFC is responsible for reviewing adoption allowances and grants, in line with BfFC policy.</p>	<p>Where a post-order adoption family requests an allowance/grant as part of a request for support, the request will be included within the assessment of support needs conducted by ATV.</p> <p>Where an ATV social worker assesses a need for a financial allowance/grant, the assessment and recommendations will be referred back to BfFC for a decision.</p>	A referral pathway to BfFC for allowances to be agreed between ATV and BfFC.
Adoption Support Fund (ASF)	BfFC remains responsible for ASF funded therapeutic packages commissioned prior to 1st December 2017.	<p>ATV will be responsible for undertaking all support needs assessments and funding applications to the ASF in relation to post- order adoption.</p> <p>ATV will provide consultation services to BfFC in relation to the ASF.</p>	
Match funding for the Adoption Support Fund (ASF)	BfFC is responsible for match-funding, where the BfFC ADM decides the application meets BfFC thresholds for match-funding support.	Where ATV assesses the need for match funding, the assessment and recommendations will be referred to BfFC for a decision.	A referral pathway to be agreed between ATV and BfFC.

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	BfFC will provide written confirmation of match-funding decisions before ATV is able to submit an ASF application.		
Subject Access Requests (SAR)	<p>BfFC is responsible for facilitating SARs - requests for access to a child's records and files, rather than for adoption files.</p> <p>BfFC will liaise with ATV on open cases, to gather information in order to inform decisions about information sharing.</p>	ATV will work in partnership with BfFC in order to inform decisions about risk and information sharing.	
Requests for access to children's adoption files	For those adoption files held by BfFC, professionals will liaise with ATV on open cases, to gather information in order to inform decisions about information sharing, and to facilitate access.	For those adoption files held by ATV, ATV will facilitate access.	A referral pathway needs to be agreed for ATV to access BfFC children's adoption files.
Birth relative support services	<p>BfFC will make information about ATV's Birth Relative Support Services available to all birth relatives affected by adoption (pre- and post-order), who may require support now or in the future.</p> <p>Children's social workers will provide information around birth relative support services, including written information, to birth parents and to relatives affected by adoption.</p>	<p>ATV will provide information about birth relative support services for BfFC.</p> <p>ATV will provide or commission all birth relative support services.</p>	A referral pathway to be agreed between ATV and BfFC.

Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
	Children’s social workers are responsible for making birth relative support referrals to ATV when the child’s plan for adoption is agreed, and at any later point.		
Requests for access to adoption records (birth records counselling)	BfC will signpost all requests for access to adoption records to ATV.	ATV will provide information about access to adoption records services for BfC. ATV will provide statutory services to adults affected by adoption to access their adoption records, to adopted adults living within the ATV region. Adopted adults living outside the region, but where their adoption records are held within the region, will be sign- posted to their local authority, but will be provided a statutory service by ATV if they request it.	A referral pathway to be agreed between ATV and BfC.
Intermediary service for adopted adults	BfC to contract if required.	Intermediary services will be provided to adopted adults only in exceptional circumstances where there is significant need and risk, and only with the operational manager’s agreement.	
Intermediary service to relatives of adopted person seeking information and contact with the	BfC to contract if required.	BfC can make a request to ATV to commission this work.	

Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
adopted person (BRIC)			

Service user engagement

Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Adoption		ATV will engage with adopters, adoptees (children, young people, and adults) and birth relatives affected by adoption, individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available.	
Significant others		Where appropriate, ATV will engage with significant others identified in legislation (e.g., siblings of adopted children), individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available.	

Performance management and inspection

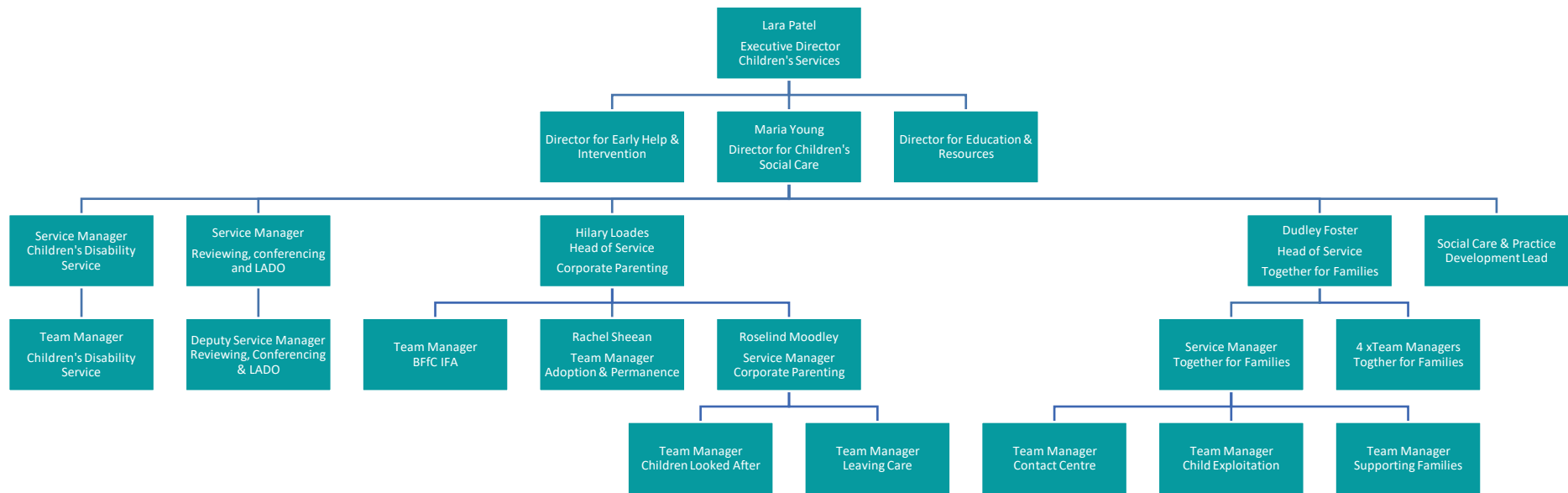
Service area	BfC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Data provision	BfC will be responsible for providing key data to ATV on performance.		

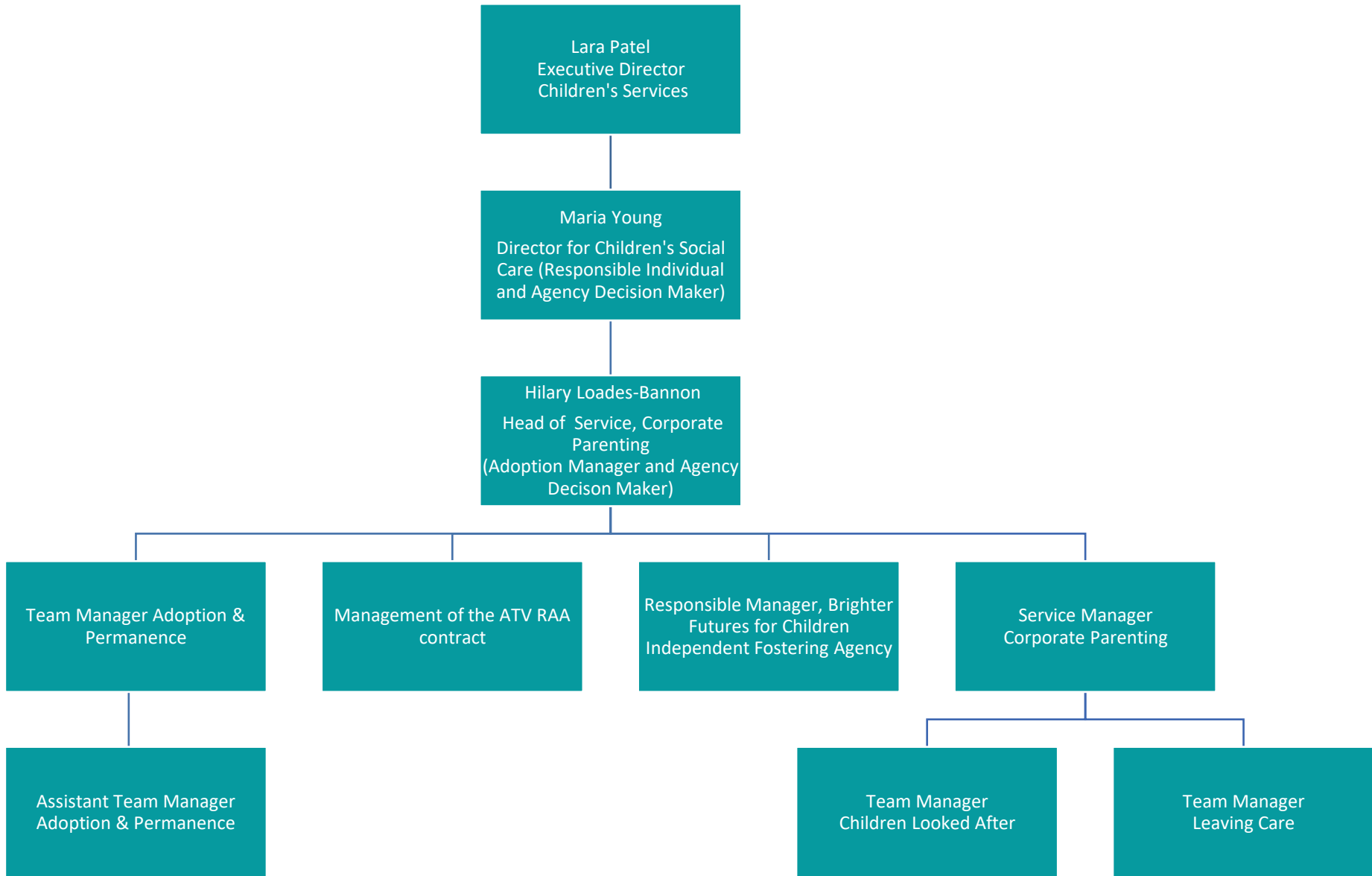
Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Data analysis		ATV will produce standardised quarterly reports to BfFC on performance.	
Ofsted		ATV will comply with current and future Ofsted requirements.	

Miscellaneous

Service area	BfFC responsibilities	ATV responsibilities	Notes
Complaints	The BfFC complaints manager will immediately inform the ATV service manager if a service user makes a complaint in relation to ATV.	ATV will provide consultation services to BfFC complaints in relation to adoption (pre- and post- order).	
Freedom of Information requests (FOI)	The BfFC link manager will immediately inform the ATV service manager if a FOI request is received that relates to ATV. The BfFC process will be followed in relation to FOIs and will be led by BfFC.	ATV will work in partnership with The BfFC to respond to FOIs.	
Intercountry adoptions		This work will be undertaken by Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC) on behalf of ATV.	

15. Appendix B – The organisational structure of the agency







Comment(s) obtained before submitting this policy/procedure

(Put N/A if any are not applicable but please note these MUST be filled in)

DEPT	NAME	COMMENT
Finance		
HR		
Communications		