

ADOPTION SUPPORT TRANSFER PROTOCOL

V.1

Version	Author /s	Date	Rationale
0.1	Louise Hathaway – Adoption Central England Anita Huggins - Adoption West Maggie Crabtree – Adoption Now Helen Hughes – Together for Adoption Melanie Johnson – Adopt South Eva Booth – Adoption National Team	02/09/22	Working group proposal
0.2	Eva Booth	24/11/22	RAA Leaders' Governance group changes
1.0	Eva Booth	15/11/22	RAA Leaders Group – approved for implementation

ADOPTION SUPPORT TRANSFER PROTOCOL

1. INTRODUCTIONS

This protocol applies to all Regional Adoption Agencies. It outlines the expected process, accountabilities and procedures that should be applied when the responsibility of the provision of adoption support transfers from agency to another.

2. LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Adoption Support Transfer Form

3. PURPOSE

- To ensure adoption support plans for children, young people and families are clearly understood by the receiving agency.
- To ensure children, young people and families are clear about who will support them in the future and what services are available for them.

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS

- The Adoption and Children Act 2002 and associated regulations.
- The Children and Adoption Act 2006 and associated regulations
- The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005
- Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This protocol is designed to be used in cases where an agency is actively providing adoption support for a child and when:

- The child lives within the RAA region and has been placed by another local authority/ agency, has been adopted and is post 3 years adoption order.
- The adopted family have moved into the geographical area and are currently in receipt of adoption support from another RAA.

When a three-year period following the making of the adoption order expires, the responsibility for assessing and providing adoption support services transfers from the placing authority to the local authority where the adoptive child lives.

6. THE ROLE OF ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES ADVISER (ASSA)

All local authorities must appoint an Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA), who will be a key contact for a local authority placing a child for adoption out-of-area, as their role is to give advice and information to people affected by adoption. When a child is placed with an adoptive parent living outside the placing local authority's area (whether as an interagency placement or not) or subsequently if the family moves out of the local authority's area, the

placing agency should contact the ASSA of the regional agency where the adoptive family lives to be able to provide the family with knowledge of local services.

7. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT

The placing authority remains responsible for the assessment of need and provision of support for three years from the date of the adoption order. The agencies involved can negotiate and agree that the RAA of the family's residence provides adoption support services and recover the costs from the placing authority / agency.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The three-year limitation does not apply, if the family is provided with financial support. The placing local authority is responsible for the continued payment, and of the review of a need for financial support agreed before the adoption order is made for as long as the family qualifies for payments.

9. CONTACT BETWEEN THE CHILD AND THE BIRTH FAMILY

The placing authority continues to be responsible for managing and supporting the contact arrangements between the child and the birth family, irrespective of where the adoptive family lives, as well as for any changes to those arrangements over time.

The new RAA and the placing authority should work in partnership should the adopted child and family wish to change the originally agreed contact arrangements. In particular, the contact arrangements between brothers and sisters may need to be varied as the children's relationships and need for contact change over time. The new RAA should take an active role in supporting the child / young person and adopted family. Whereas it probably is more appropriate for the placing authority to provide support for the birth family.

10. TRANSFER

When the three-year period from making the adoption order expires, the responsibility for the assessment of need and the provision of adoption support transfers to the agency where the adopted child lives. It is important that the transfer is planned and managed carefully to ensure the child and the family continue to be supported.

Where the family is supported by a Voluntary Adoption Agency, the placing authority should work together with the VAA in question to provide the receiving RAA a summary of the support, including interventions that has been provided for the family, and an adoption support plan. The VAA Social Worker who is currently supporting the family should attend the transfer meeting.

11. TRANSFER PROCESS

Three months prior to the date when the responsibility of support is due to transfer the agency currently supporting the family will contact the new agency and start preparing for the transfer. The agencies should agree when and how the transfer of responsibilities will take place taking into consideration the family's current needs and the ability of the receiving agency to provide the support the family needs.

The Social Worker currently supporting the family completes the Adoption Support Transfer Form in partnership with the family and ensure all documents listed on the form are available.

The Social Worker who is supporting the family sets up a handover meeting, which should take place one month before the identified handover date. The Social Worker currently supporting the family ensures the family is aware of the transfer, agrees with the transfer plans, and have given their written consent for the transfer. The meeting will only proceed if the documents are up to date and complete.

The following people will be invited:

- Existing RAA Social Worker
- Existing RAA Line manager – to chair the meeting (if appropriate).
- Existing LA children's Social Worker – if relevant
- New RAA Social Worker – if known
- New RAA Line manager – if appropriate
- VAA Social Worker – if applicable
- Parent/s
- Young person - if appropriate

The Transfer form will be the used to formulate the agenda.

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the family continues to receive the appropriate adoption related support, and that the family has a clear understanding of who their main contact at the new RAA will be and what services and support will be provided by the new RAA.

It is important that the availability of universal service in the new RAA area, including services provided by the RAA and universal education and health services are discussed, and the parent/s are advised how these services can be accessed.

Should the family be at crisis or should the support for the family, or any member of it, stretch beyond the transfer date, the agencies may want to agree to continue to work together for an agreed term.

At the beginning of the process the responsible manager in the transferring agency writes to the new agency requesting for the transfer process to commence. The completed Transfer form will be sent with the transfer request.

At the end of the transfer process the responsible manager at the new agency writes to the transferring agency confirming the transfer has been agreed and the date when the responsibility will transfer to the new agency.

12. SUPPORT FUNDED BY ADOPTION SUPPORT FUND

In the cases where adoption support is funded by Adoption Support Fund the timing of the transfer should be carefully considered. Where an application for ASF has been made before the responsibility for the provision of adoption support transfers to another local authority, it may not be in the family's best interest to transfer the money as it may lead to a disruption in therapy being provided.

According to the ASF's T&Cs the payment claim will stay the responsibility of the LA/RAA who submitted the application. It is not possible to transfer the responsibility to the new agency. Should the applying Local Authority decide to continue to process the payments, they will be able to do so past the transfer date. Should the applying LA decide not to continue to process the payments, they need to surrender the unclaimed funds and the new Local Authority needs to submit a new claim.

The agencies should consider working in partnership to ensure a seamless transition of responsibility of assessment of need and the provision of support. The applying agency could continue to administratively manage the provision of support until the end of existing funding period and the new agency should keep the applying agency informed of any changes to the terms of the funding or support plans.

13. MATCH FUNDING

In cases, where local authorities or RAAs have agreed to match-fund adoption support interventions, the responsibility for the provision of that support remains with the placing authority. In those cases, the receiving RAA can and should support the family by providing universal services. The agencies should work together to agree the practicalities of the service provision.

14. APPENDIX

Adoption Support Transfer form.



Adoption Support
Transfer Form

15. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This protocol and the accompanying form were approved by the RAA Leaders' Group on the 15th of December 2022. They recommended that the protocol would be implemented by the English Regional Adoption Agencies starting from 1st January 2023. A formal review of the protocol and the accompanying form will take place in May 2023.