

Adoption West Staff and Trade Union Briefing Note: June 2016

Adoption West is a collaboration of six local authorities, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and/or Adoption Support Agencies (VAA/ASA) who are working together to establish a shared 'single agency' adoption service. Through collaborative working, the regional agency will seek to improve adoption and permanence service delivery across Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire.

A number of delivery models have been considered. The preferred delivery model is to form the Adoption West Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) as an independent corporate joint venture between the participating authorities. This means that all of the local authorities involved will jointly own the RAA. This model is preferred because it affords us flexibility to pursue innovation in how we deliver services, which in turn should provide us with the opportunity to deliver better outcomes for children. It also allows us to fully involve VAAs and ASAs.

The new RAA will focus on excellent practice and improved outcomes for children. Staff from the six authorities will continue to contribute to the development and delivery of proposals alongside adopters, the voice of the child and voluntary sector partners.

As part of transition planning, the Service Managers Group are working together to develop process maps showing the child's journey to adoption, the adopter's journey, the matching process and adoption support services.

Each of these processes once agreed will set out the route through services provided by the RAA and how the RAA links back into Local Authorities and voluntary agencies. By formally setting out this process, it will enable managers, staff and service users to understand how the regional agency might be staffed and managed, including potential locations and provision of support functions. This work will be developed in collaboration with current employees and stakeholders. It is anticipated that current employees of the Local Authorities will transfer to the new agency under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, although the numbers of staff and specifics of roles are yet to be determined. Further details will be informed by current planning work.

Following consideration of initial proposals by decision makers in June and July 2016, there is a planned period of public, service user and staff engagement. This is expected to run for 10 weeks from Monday 25 July to Monday 3 October 2016.

A final decision will be made by Local Authorities by the end of 2016. This will be followed by a period of workforce change processes, infrastructure set up and other implementation activity. This is a significant undertaking and the new delivery model is not anticipated to be fully implemented until April 2018.

If you have any questions about the project, please contact Stuart Babbage, Adoption West Project Manager, on 01454 863853, stuart.babbage@southglos.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can speak to your line manager, Service Manager or Human Resources department.