Glossary – Adoption West Joint Scrutiny Panel

Coram – adoption terms explained
[Adoption terms explained | Coram Adoption](#)

ADM	**Agency Decision Maker** The decision-maker makes a considered decision that takes account of all the information available to them, including the recommendation of the adoption panel and, where applicable, the independent review panel, within seven working days of receipt of the recommendation and final set of panel minutes. [ADOPTION STANDARD 17 - Adoption panels and agency's decision-maker (minimumstandards.org)](#)
AO	**Adoption Order** This is an order giving full parental responsibility for a child to the approved adopters, made on their application to the court. An adoption order severs the legal ties between a birth parent and the child, so that the adoptive parent(s) become the child's legal parent(s) throughout life. An adoption order does not end when a child turns 18 – the child/adult remains a legal member of his/her new family permanently. [Child adoption: Applying for an adoption court order - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)
ASF	**Adoption Support Fund** The adoption support fund (ASF) provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive and special guardianship order (SGO) families. As at October 2022, the ASF will continue to offer support to adoptive and eligible special guardianship families up to March 2025. The ASF model is based on the existing statutory framework for the assessment of adoption support or SGO support needs and the provision of support services. [Adoption support fund (ASF) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)
AW	**Adoption West** Adoption West is a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) commissioned to deliver adoption services, by 6 local

	authorities – Bath& North East Somerset (B&NES), Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. It is a company limited by guarantee and is registered with Ofsted as a Voluntary Adoption Agency. Service delivery is defined by a contract that sets out specific performance measures and the reporting requirements of the RAA. The local authorities make up the controlling committee of company members with ultimate responsibility for organisational performance and appointment / dismissal of directors. Policies and Procedures - Adoption West
CPR	Child Permanency (or Permanence) Report This is the report which the child's social worker has to present to the Adoption Panel where the Panel's recommendation is sought that the child should be placed for adoption. The author of the report must be suitably qualified and experienced and/or supervised by a suitably qualified and experienced social worker.
DDP	Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy has been developed by Dan Hughes over the past twenty years. It is based on a theoretical understanding of attachment and intersubjective relationships; and the impact of developmental trauma. Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy - DDP Network
EP	early permanence - an umbrella term including both Fostering for Adoption (FfA) and Concurrent Planning placements (CPP). Both approaches aim to place children where the courts are considering whether they can safely return to the care of their family or whether they might need to be adopted. The children will need to be fostered while the court decides on the future plan. Most will go on to be adopted but a small proportion will return to the care of their birth family. Read more on: FAQs | earlypermanence.org.uk
LA or LAS	Local Authority / Local Authorities

Letterbox contact / arrangements	Letterbox contact is a formal arrangement for birth parents, relatives and the adoptive parents to share information about the child(ren) when and if appropriate. This is a confidential and agreed process made through the court process and manage through Adoption Services. What is Letterbox Contact? | Letterbox Contact Information | Birmingham Children's Trust (birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk) (really detailed information, including benefits of letterbox contact) Contact in adoption: making sense of the past - First4Adoption
PO	Placement Order This is the legal ruling made by the courts which authorises a Local Authority to place a child with approved prospective adoptive parents. At this stage in the adoption process, the LA and the prospective adoptive parents share parental responsibility for the child. Adoption and Children Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk)
RAA	Regional Adoption Agency In 2015, the Government set out its commitment to markedly improve outcomes for children through the delivery of a regional adoption system via Regional Adoption Agencies. The functional scope of each Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) varies. RAAs are formed from several LAs from a region who have joined forces in a government-led initiative to pool resources and increase efficiency in the adoption process.
SGO	Special Guardianship Orders Special Guardianship is a formal court order which places a child or young person with someone permanently and gives this person parental responsibility for the child. This could be a grandparent, close relative or a family friend. Special Guardianship means that the child lives with carers who have parental responsibility for them until they are grown up. If the child was looked after before the Special Guardianship Order was granted, they will no longer be the responsibility of the local authority. The order usually lasts until the child is 18 years old.

	[Become a special guardian: What is a special guardian - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)
TESSA	Therapeutic, Education and Support Services in Adoption

TESSA is an Adoption UK project to create the conditions for healthy development and family wellbeing in adoptive families. It is based on the understanding that a child's relationship with his or her parents or carers is one of the main keys to their development, and is founded on the principle of helping families, not fixing children.

[Therapeutic Education Support Services in Adoption](#) |
| TUPE regulations | Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations |
| Virtual schools | The Virtual School is a core statutory function of every local authority. The Virtual School does not exist in real terms as a building, and children and young people do not attend. However, all children in care, and previously looked after children, from nursery up to the end of Post 16 or full-time education, are tracked as though they were in a single school (although they remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled).

The Virtual School works in partnership with the child or young person's school/educational setting to ensure that they are supported to fulfil their potential at all stages of their education, and to give them the best opportunity to be successful in their adult lives. The Virtual School monitors their attendance, attainment and achievement, and makes sure that their educational success is a top priority in their care planning. |
| VCS | Voluntary and Community Sector organisations

The voluntary sector is independent from local and national government, and distinct from the private sector. Charities are the largest single category within the voluntary sector. Others include community benefit societies and co-operatives, not-for-profit community businesses or community interest companies (CICs), credit unions and small informal community groups. |

The table below sets out the roles and responsibilities of Adoption West and which remain in the local authorities. It is important to note that all Adoption West staff are directly employed by Adoption West as a separate employer from the local authorities and as such the staff aren't officers of the LA.

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters		✓
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
PERMANANCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to childcare social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments		✓
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for "Should be placed for Adoption" decisions		✓
Case management for the child		✓
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child information meeting	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement		✓
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser 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 of Life story book		✓
Statutory visits pre adoption order and Early Permanence		✓
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child's care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter		✓
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		
Partner adoption (Step Parent) assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	
ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES		
Assessment for adoption or special support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption and support plans	✓	
Management and administration of all aspects of the Adoption Support Fund	✓	
Adoption support delivery including: • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption training • Independent Birth Relative services • Management and support of ongoing birth relative contact (letterbox and direct) • Specialist Life Story practitioners • Adoption counselling and training	✓	