

**South Yorkshire RAA Terms of Reference- Revised March 2023**  
**(One Adoption South Yorkshire)**

This governance structure provides a structure for the continuing development and delivery of the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency 'SYRAA'.

The SYRAA is an agreement between the following Local Authorities:

- i. City of Doncaster Council;
- ii. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council;
- iii. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council; and
- iv. Sheffield City Council

Together known as the "Partner Agencies".

This Schedule will be subject to revision through the operation and decision-making process of the Head of Service for the SYRAA ("Head of Service") and the SYRAA Governance Board ("Governance Board").

**Purpose and Objectives**

The following principles were agreed at the SYRAA's inception and SYRAA governance will ensure that there is:

- (i) strategic oversight and direction of the SYRAA;
- (ii) a clear definition of roles and responsibilities at organisation, group and individual level; and
- (iii) a clear structure for coherent, timely and efficient decision-making.

**Key features of the SYRAA governance arrangements are:**

**1). Head of Service**

The Head of Service, appointed by the City of Doncaster Council (the "Host Agency") shall provide overall strategic oversight and direction to SYRAA.

The Head of Service shall be line- managed by the Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families for the Host Agency in accordance with the terms as set out in the Business Case and the Agreement with its Schedules.

The Head of Service will report to and is accountable to the Governance Board.

The Head of Service will also report to:

- The 4 local corporate parenting boards; and
- The 4 local scrutiny panels.

The Head of Service will provide strategic management and will provide assurance to the SYRAA that key aims and objectives are being met and that the SYRAA is performing within the boundaries set by the Governance Board.

## **2).The Governance Board**

The Governance Board is constituted by the appointment of one representative from each Partner Agency at Senior Management level, either the Director of Children's Services or the Executive Director of Children's Services. Partner Agency representatives must have decision-making capabilities at the highest level. The Partner Agency members will have voting rights at the Governance Board.

Representatives will also be included from:

- Adoption UK
- Health
- Education
- Voluntary Alliance
- Adopters and other service users

These representatives will be non-voting members.

The Chief Finance Officer for the SYRAA ("CFO") and the Head of Service will also be members of the Governance Board as non-voting members.

The Voluntary Adoption Agency ("VAA") representatives will not be entitled to a vote.

### **Aims of the Governance Board**

The aims of the Governance Board include:

- To provide oversight, strategic direction and decision making for the SYRAA (to be known as OASY) on behalf of the members.
- To maintain links with interested parties in their own organisations
- To include decisions in regards of direction and constitution of the staff employed by the Host Agency to work on behalf of the SYRAA
- To ensure there is a coherent vision and strategy for the SYRAA and ensure the strategic vision is delivered
- To ensure regular and robust monitoring of performance and service delivery of SYRAA
- To represent the interests of all Partner Agencies in respect of governance and accountability
- Act as a consultative body, performing a check and challenge function to the Head of Service.
- Monitor the monthly initially then bi-monthly and eventually quarterly performance and financial targets.
- Assist in the completion of an annual review and approve the annual report
- Each representative will brief practitioners within their portfolio of responsibility, local council members and local scrutiny groups as appropriate.
- Each representative will report to their respective Council their own findings from the SYRAA annual report.

### **Financial Responsibilities of the Governance Board**

- To ensure the solvency of the SYRAA

- To ensure the SYRAA complies with legal and statutory responsibilities
- To safeguard SYRAA assets
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of SYRAA resources
- To ensure that financial control systems are in place and working effectively
- To approve the annual financial statements and the annual budget
- To appoint the SYRAA's internal and external auditors
- To approve contracts over £20,000 (excluding inter agency placements) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

### **Structure of the Governance Board/Voting Rights**

- The Board will be supported by the SYRAA Business Manager (appointed by the Host Agency) and in their absence the Host Agency will provide business support on behalf of the Partner Agencies.
- Each voting Partner Agency representative will have one vote and all proposals should be made by one partner (at least) and seconded by one partner.
- Decisions will be made on a majority vote of those partners present.
- The Host Agency will chair the Governance Board initially and after 12 months the Governance Board Chair could be rotated on a 12 monthly basis if agreed by the Governance Board. The Governance Board Chair cannot act as a Partner Agency representative at the Governance Board meetings.
- A Vice Chair will be chosen by the existing Governance Board.
- The Governance Board Chair shall have the casting vote.
- The Governance Board Chair shall have regard for the overall interests of the service not the Partner Agency they represent.
- The Vice Chair will be appointed annually
- A meeting of the Governance Board shall be quorate if 75% of its members who are entitled to vote are present.
- Each member will appoint a proxy member to attend in their absence. The proxy member must have delegated authority. If either the member or proxy cannot attend the Governance Board meeting, then a written submission will be considered.
- Governance Board membership is to be agreed annually in accordance with the terms of the Partnership Agreement.

Governance Board Members agree to:

- Commit to attend at least 5 Governance Board meetings per year or proxy in their absence.
- Commit to not using a proxy for two Governance Board meetings in a row.
- Communicate and promote the SYRAA within their organisations.

### **Structure of the meetings**

- Meeting dates will be agreed twelve-months in advance.

- Governance Board Meetings will be held monthly and then bi-monthly then quarterly. The point at which meetings become quarterly will be determined by the Governance Board.
- Agendas and papers will be circulated 5 working days before the meeting by the SYRAA Business Manager
- The agenda will be set by the Governance Board Chair in conjunction with the Head of Service
- Minutes will be taken of Governance Board meetings and decisions recorded for review.
- Completed minutes will be submitted for agreement at the following meeting.
- Once agreed minutes will be made available to Governance Board members and shared with SYRAA staff and adopters via the SYRAA web-site.

### **Delegated Decision-making**

#### Finance



Finance Schedule  
(Final) 18.12.20.pdf

#### Staffing



Staff (Final).pdf

### **Responsibilities of Governance Board Members to report back to their individual Boards**

Governance Board members will be responsible to their Local Corporate Parenting Boards and Scrutiny Boards for the activities of the SYRAA on behalf of local children and families.

Each representative will brief their portfolio members and scrutiny groups as appropriate regarding the activities and performance of the SYRAA.

Each representative will report to their own Council or Agency their own findings from the SYRAA Annual Report

### **Declarations of Interest and Registrations of Governance Board Member Interests**

These will be deemed to have been declared as part of Governance Board members employment with their respective authorities.

VAA Board members, adopter representatives, Health and Education representatives may be asked to withdraw from sections of the meeting where information may be sensitive. This will be at the discretion of the Governance Board Chair.

### **3). Adoption Support Sub-Board**

#### **Membership:**

- Head of Service
- Service Manager for Adoption Support
- Virtual Heads Representative
- Health Representative
- Adopter-Voice and Adopter Engagement Officer
- Adopter representative from each local authority area

The purpose and role of the meeting is to:

Provide a forum for a proactive dialogue between local partners, adopters and OASY to identify adopter support provision across South Yorkshire and ensure adopters are able to gain access, identify any gaps in provision and plan collectively to address those gaps.

#### **Accountability and Responsibility:**

Members commit to attending meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to make decisions as needed. All members of the meeting will be responsible for reporting to their own organisations, through their respective governance arrangements.

This meeting reports through to the SYRAA Governance Board which provides oversight of the SYRAA. Where there is an issue that cannot be resolved at this meeting and a decision cannot be reached the matter will be taken for further discussion and decision at the Governance Board.

#### **Meetings**

- Shall be quarterly initially but may be determined to be more frequent or less frequent but no less than bi annually.
- The Head of Service will act as Chairperson for ongoing meetings
- The Business Support Manager will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas with the Head of Service and approving minutes for circulation.
- Agendas and papers for the meeting will be sent out by the Business Support Manager at least two working days prior to the meeting in order to provide time for members to read them and identify actions for their own organisations.

### **4). Operational Leads Meeting**

#### **Membership:**

- Head of Service

- Senior representative from each local authority with a lead on adoption.
- Service Managers from OASY and Service Managers responsible for adoption within the Local Authorities
- Business Support Manager

**The purpose and role of the meeting is to:**

- To provide a forum for a proactive dialogue between the local authority and SYRAA to improve the outcomes for children, birth parents and adopters across South Yorkshire.
- To make decisions regarding streamlining to improve processes and systems at the interface between each Partner Agency and SYRAA to prevent delay for children and to improve performance and efficiency.
- To discuss and agree decisions regarding the Business Plan for clarity as the work progresses.
- To discuss interface and services provided by partners that impact both on the Partner Agency and SYRAA regarding adoption.

**Accountability and Responsibility:**

Members commit to attending meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to make decisions as needed. All members of the meeting will be responsible for reporting to their own organisations, through their respective governance arrangements.

This meeting reports through to the SYRAA Governance Board which provides oversight of the SYRAA. Where there is an issue that cannot be resolved at this meeting and a decision cannot be reached the matter will be taken for further discussion and decision at the Governance Board.

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**5). SYRAA Senior Leadership Team Meetings**

**Membership**

- Head of Service
- 3 SYRAA Service Managers
- SYRAA Business Manager

- Adopter Representatives from Adoption-UK and the local Adopter Engagement Officer

The purpose of this meeting is to make operational decisions regarding the direct activity of the SYRAA. Attendees will report on activity in their respective localities and in their respective areas of responsibility.

### **Accountability and Responsibility:**

Members commit to attending meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to make decisions as needed. All members of the meeting will be responsible for reporting to their own localities and their respective areas of responsibility and ensuring that decisions are implemented.

### **Meetings**

- Shall be monthly
- The Head of Service will act as Chairperson for ongoing meetings. In the absence of the Head of Service one of the Service Managers will be designated to chair.
- All members will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas with the Head of Service and notes and an action log will be provided.
- Agendas and papers for the meeting will be sent out by the Head of Service at least two working days prior to the meeting.