

## PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
<b>Equality Analysis title: South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency</b>	
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019</b>	
<b>Directorate:</b> CYPS	<b>Service area:</b> Looked After Children
<b>Lead Manager:</b> Ian Walker	<b>Contact number:</b> 07554436548
<b>Is this a:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>	
<b>If other, please specify</b>  	

## 2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Ian Walker	CYPS	Head of Service
Catherine Boaler	CYPS	Service Manager - Adoption
Neil Hardwick	Finance Dept	Head of Finance

## 3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

### **Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)**

In June 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) reported that local authorities should be working towards Regional Adoption Agency model by 2020. There was an expectation that local authorities would begin planning, developing and working with partners to shape their RAA. The DfE's commitment to this approach was such that the Education and Adoption Act 2016 gave power to the government to direct a local authority to enter into a RAA (or a partnership with a VAA) if they deemed that there was insufficient evidence of engagement in the process.

The Government vision behind the regionalisation of Adoption Services was to accelerate the pace of change to ensure those children, for whom adoption is the right path, were given the best chance of finding a loving, permanent family as quickly as possible. The DfE provided start-up funding to support local authorities to take forward their proposals although negotiations within South Yorkshire have been so protracted that additional funding had to be sought from the DfE to secure further project management resources. As part of the development of the model existing adopters have been fully consulted and they have identified areas in which the existing process could be improved for them, especially in abbreviating the timescales for them to have a child placed in their care

### **What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)**

Within adoption processes certain children are deemed to be in the 'Hard to Place' category including children from a BME background, children with a disability, older children and children from large sibling groups and especial effort is given to identifying adoptive parents for these children as they are more likely to have to wait for longer periods to be adopted.

As at the 22<sup>nd</sup> November in Rotherham there were 26 children who had been matched and placed with their adoptive families and a further 28 children subject of a Placement Order but with not yet placed although 12 of these children had a match identified.

On average c50% of children waiting for an adoptive placement are in the 'Hard to Place' categories.

<p><b>Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?</b></p> <p>No</p>	
<p><b>What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?</b></p> <p>There are two key performance measures in respect of adoption timescales:-</p> <p>A1 – the time between a child becoming LAC and moving to their adoptive placement.</p> <p>A2 – the time between a child being made subject of a Placement Order and a match with adoptive parents being identified.</p> <p>For A1 Rotherham's current performance stands at an average of c. 450 days and for A2 it stands at an average of c.160 days but for one child with significant disabilities for example the A1 score was over 1600 days thus evidencing the disadvantages that these children can encounter in being adopted.</p> <p>By sharing adoptive family resources across the four South Yorkshire local authorities it is reasonable to assume that it will be easier to match the 'Hard to Place' children with adoptive families. This will especially be the case in respect of children from a BME background given that authorities such as Sheffield with a larger minority ethnic population are more likely to provide a larger source of adoptive parents thus reducing the timescales of adoption for these children.</p>	
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>Adoptive parents groups have been consulted throughout the 3 years that this model of adoption agency has been under development and have been instrumental in shaping the model. This has included some parents from a BME background who have faced particular challenges in appropriate matches being identified for them due to a more restricted pool of children available for adoption and therefore less likelihood of a cultural, religious or identity match being made. They are generally content with the model and are satisfied that it will better meet the needs of prospective adopters and shorten the timescales for children.</p>
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>The Adoption staff teams and the Unions have been informed, consulted and updated on a monthly basis via my attendance at their team meetings. Whilst they would all much rather that the delivery of the adoption service remained in its current format they</p>

	<p>accept that the move to a regional model has been driven by the DfE and is therefore unavoidable. However, they have all expressed some degree of satisfaction that this model will bring the least amount of change for them, that they will not have to undergo the TUPE process and will not have to change their work-site. In fact the only significant change for the team's working conditions will be for the two team managers who will be line managed by a RAA Service Manager.</p>
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#### 4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

##### **How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups?**

By sharing resources across Doncaster, Barnsley, Sheffield and Rotherham it is likely that children with protected characteristics including disability, race and religion are more likely to be matched with adoptive parents in a more timely manner and thus not remain a looked after children for protracted periods of time. This will be due to the fact that there will be more adoptive parents to 'choose from' and more of these parents may themselves be from a BME background given that some of the other local authorities involved have a higher percentage of their population with these particular characteristics.

##### **Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?**

None identified and a regional model of adoption should reduce barriers and facilitate access.

##### **Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?**

Given the potential for an increased number of potential adoptive parents available for the matching process there will be an anticipated positive impact on adoption timescales, and especially for those in the 'Hard to Place' categories.

##### **What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?** (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

The regionalisation of adoption should serve to improve community relations by ensuring that adoptive parents from a BME background will be more likely to be matched with a child in a more timely manner. This will serve to increase satisfaction for these parents in respect of the adoption processes.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your

service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

## **5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan**

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

<b>Title of analysis:</b> South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency
<b>Directorate and service area:</b> CYPS - Looked After Children
<b>Lead Manager:</b> Ian Walker
<b>Summary of findings:</b>

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
The SYRAA will develop performance targets in order to evidence the positive impact or otherwise arising from a regionalised model of adoption on the timescales for adoption for those children in the 'Hard to Place' categories.	D,S,RE,RoB,	April 2020
Performance measures also to be developed in respect of the increased recruitment of adoptive parents from a BME background.	RE, RoB	April 2020

\*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups

## 6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Cllr Gordon Watson	Lead member for Children and Families	
Sally Hodges	Interim Service Director	
Directorate Leadership Team		

## 7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date Equality Analysis completed	
Report title and date	
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	