

## FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

### THE CHILD

| SERVICE AREA  | RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY  | ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC<br>(acting as host of the RAA)  |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Case Responsibility</b></p> <p><b>Adoption and Children Act 2002</b></p> <p><b>Children Act 1989</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b></p> | <p>The local authority will retain case management responsibility for the child until the making of the Adoption Order</p> <p>The local authority will be responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Visits and Reviews</li> <li>• Management and supervision of contact between child and family members.</li> <li>• Administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers who care for children under Fostering for Adoption arrangements.</li> </ul> | <p>The RAA will provide specialist advice and support to assist LA staff to fully understand the adoption process, influencing and promoting best practice</p> <p>The RAA will provide the supervision to foster carer's caring for a child under Fostering for Adoption arrangements.</p>  |
| <p><b>Early identification of children requiring adoption</b></p> <p><b>Adoption and Children Act 2002</b></p> <p><b>AAR 2005 as amended</b></p>                      | <p>The local authority is responsible for identifying, at the earliest possible stage, the children who may require adoption and making them and their needs known to the RAA, providing relevant and timely information.</p> <p>Birth parents to be referred to the Birth Parent support service at an early stage.</p> <p>Future potential contact arrangements to be considered at an early stage</p>   | <p>The RAA will designate a Family Finder to each child identified as possibly requiring adoption to liaise with children's social workers</p> <p>The RAA aims to develop working practises with each LA to ensure involvement in care planning to assist with the earliest identification.</p> <p>Making sure siblings placed with other adopters are considered by the LA.</p> <p>Staff from the RAA will be involved in identifying children for early permanence placement.</p> |
| <p><b>Communication during the family finding process</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b></p>  | <p>It will be the responsibility of the LA to keep the Child Permanence Report updated and to inform the family finder of any changes in the child's development or circumstances (e.g. change of placement).</p>  | <p>The RAA will keep the LA regularly updated about progress on family finding.</p>   |

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| <b>Early Placement</b>   | <p>The LA will arrange the Administration and finance of fostering for adoption placements and communication with foster carers who care for children under Fostering for Adoption arrangements as necessary.</p> <p>The LA Social Worker will understand the statutory responsibilities i.e. visits / reviews to the child whilst the child is in Early Permanence Placement</p> <p>The LA will be responsible for financial allowances for Early Permanence Placement carers.</p>   | <p>Where appropriate, and in agreement with the local authority, the RAA will make available an Early Permanence Placement (EPP) e.g. a Fostering for Adoption Service for children who may benefit from the possibility of early placement with potential adopters.</p> <p>If there are no RAA Fostering for Adoption placements available, the RAA has a responsibility to search for a placement outside of the RAA.</p> <p>The RAA will support these carers whilst caring for these children in an Early Permanence Placement</p>  |
| <b>Multitracking of children requiring adoption</b>  | <p>The local authority will track the progress of children in care proceedings or looked after under section 20 (Children Act 1989) to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of their potential need for an adoption placement</p>   | <p>The RAA will also actively track all children for whom initial information indicates that adoption may be a likely plan</p>  |
| <p><b>Pre-placement Reports</b></p> <p><b>Children Act 1989</b></p> <p><b>Adoption and children Act 2002</b></p> | <p>The LA will be responsible for the completion and cost of all reports prior to an adoption placement being made including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Placement Reports</li> <li>• QA reports</li> <li>• Sibling Assessments</li> <li>• Support Plans</li> </ul> <p>LA responsible for completing the profiles of the child once an ADM decision is made</p> <p>The LA will liaise with the RAA before the final Care plan is completed and the Adoption Support plan to agree the plan specifically around birth family and sibling contact and ongoing support for the child/ren and Adopters.</p> <p>Final Care plans are to be completed by the LA but the RAA to be consulted on any support needs / contact arrangements post order.</p> | <p>The RAA can advise on and support the completion of the Child Placement Report and early profile of the child. The RAA will provide support and challenge to help ensure that the CPR's are of a consistent high quality across the partnership.</p> <p>The RAA will provide additional information and advice on the placement needs of the child and the likely need for post adoption support services, including financial support</p> <p>RAA to endorse Support plans and final care plans specifically around future contact and support needs to the LA on final care plans</p> |

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| <b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b>   | The local authority will be responsible for assessing the child's needs in respect of a future placement and in ensuring that any required financial support for a future adoptive placement is available prior to the Adoption Order  | It will be necessary for the RAA and LA to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the child can be met and that training support is sustainable. The training will be provided by the Panel Advisor to child Care Social workers to continuously improve practice.   |
| <b>Medical Information</b><br><br><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b>                               | The Local Authority will be responsible for obtaining all required medical information in respect of children who are being considered for adoption and will meet with prospective adopters to ensure they are fully aware of the child's future medical needs as appropriate.<br><br>The LA will be responsible for organising for the prospective adopters to have a consultation by phone / face to face prior to Adoption Panel to discuss the Childs current and future needs.                                  | The RAA adoption co-ordinator / social workers will support the Prospective Adopters to attend appointments to fully understand the Childs needs.  |
| <b>Decision that adoption should be the child's plan</b><br><br><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b> | The Agency Decision Maker in each LA will be responsible for the 'Should be placed for adoption' decision.<br><br>The LA will undertake a regular review of this decision and associated plans and keep the family finder in the RAA informed of any changes.<br><br>LA to refer children with a possible plan of being relinquished to the RAA at the earliest opportunity.<br><br>The LA with advice from the RAA will refer birth family members to independent birth family support at the earliest opportunity. | The RAA will support the decision-making process as requested, particularly in the provision of Professional Advice to the LA's ADM.<br><br>The RAA will provide an adoption panel for relinquished children's plans to be heard.<br><br>Panel Advisor to provide panel minutes to the LA ADM.<br><br>Independent birth family support is the responsibility of the RAA.                                     |
| <b>'Hard to Place'/Priority Children</b>  | The LA is responsible for identifying at the earliest opportunity where a child is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aged three or over</li> <li>• From a BME heritage</li> <li>• Part of a sibling group of two or more</li> <li>• Has uncertainty about their development</li> <li>• Has a disability or medical condition</li> </ul>  | RAA to track all children and all possible options explored, documented and shared with the LA.<br><br>The RAA will either provide a service for Priority children which may involve some or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased publicity – DVD, Photos etc.</li> <li>• Profile the child at specific events</li> <li>• Press and digital media advertising</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sibling matches for new-born</li> </ul> <p>The LA will gather the relevant information, assess and forward to the RAA as soon as possible.</p> <p>LA to contribute to the learning to explore how children can be placed in permanent placements.</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempt to recruit Adopters specifically for the child</li> <li>Provide additional training and preparation for potential Adopters</li> <li>Advise on or assist with additional preparation work with the child.</li> </ul> <p>RAA to contribute to the learning to explore how children can be placed in permanent placements.</p> |
| <p><b>Preparation of the child</b></p> <p><b>Adoption and Children Act 2002</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</b></p> | <p>The LA will be responsible for preparing the child for an adoptive placement.</p> <p>The LA will be responsible for the preparation of the child's Life story Book/ work. This often needs to start early in the child's looked after career and will contain information to which the LA has immediate access.</p> | <p>The RAA will provide advice and guidance &amp; potentially training to the LA in the preparation of the child, particularly in respect of the future placement.</p> <p>The RAA will provide advice regarding completing a life story work/ later life letter.</p>   |
|  | <p>The LA will be responsible for producing the Later life letter</p>  | <p>The RAA will provide advice and written guidance</p>  |
| <p><b>Linking and Matching</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b></p>  | <p>The LA, by agreement, will meet the costs of introductions between children and Adopters.</p>   | <p>The RAA will take lead responsibility for all aspects of the linking and matching process, but will always involve the LA in the decision-making process.</p> <p>The RAA will chair linking/ matching meetings as part of the process.</p>  |
|  | <p>The LA is responsible for updating of the Child Permanence Report, Delegation of Parental Responsibility report and the Adoption Placement Report, the section on the Child.</p>  | <p>The RAA will be responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Report, apart from the section on the child.</p> <p>The RAA will organise the Matching Panel</p>  |
|  |  | <p>The RAA will chair and organise life appreciation days for children over 3 years old.</p>   |
| <p><b>MATCHING DECISIONS</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR)</b></p>  | <p>The Agency Decision Maker in each LA will be responsible for the Matching decision for the child.</p>   | <p>The RAA will support the process with information as required, including Panel Minutes and administrative support including letters regarding the decision.</p>   |

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| <b>PLACEMENT</b>   | <p>The Local Authority is responsible for Placing the child/ren with prospective adopters.</p> <p>The LA will commission the Letterbox function from the RAA.</p> | <p>The RAA will offer support and advice to the LA</p> <p>The RAA will support the LA when a child is placed.</p> <p>The RAA to work closely with the LA pre-order and can offer independent support to birth family.</p> <p>The RAA will set up the Letterbox pre-adoption order and will be responsible for managing this day to day post order.</p> |
| <p><b>Adoption Support Fund</b></p> <p><b>The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005</b></p> <p><b>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</b></p> <p><b>Regulation 9A</b></p> | <p>LA to work closely with the RAA to provide the information to complete the ASF application for families/children who require therapeutic support.</p>          | <p>RAA to submit the ASF application for families/children who require therapeutic support..</p> <p>RAA will provide the administration and contracting support to implement the operation of ASF funding.</p>   |
| <p><b>ADOPTION ALLOWANCES</b></p> <p><b>The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005</b></p> <p><b>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</b></p>                               | <p>Allowances / One off payments will be paid by the LA - e.g. vehicles for larger sibling groups, Adoption</p>   | <p>The RAA will complete assessments and will review these every 2 years and forward the assessments to the LA to consider.</p>  |

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## ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

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| <b>RECRUITMENT OF ADOPTERS</b><br><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</b> | <p>The LA will signpost any enquiries from potential adopters to the RAA.</p> <p>The LA will ensure that information relevant to potential adopters is included in its own marketing materials and on its website, clearly signposting potential adopters to the website of the RAA.</p> | <p>The RAA will signpost fostering enquiries to the LA.</p> <p>The RAA will be responsible for recruiting adopters appropriate to the needs of children waiting in each LA.</p> <p>Marketing information will reflect the fact that the RAA is delivering the service on behalf of partnering LAs. This information will be provided on the website or prospective applicants can email or telephone and speak with a worker for further information.</p>   |
| <b>Enquiries</b>  |  | <p>The RAA will provide a centralised enquiry process for the region to meet all statutory requirements. Adopters can enquire via telephone / email / or by completing a Registration of Interest form.</p> <p>The RAA will provide written information to potential adopters and will hold information events.</p> <p>The RAA may at times signpost potential adopters to other agencies/ return to Fostering in LA's if they are unlikely to be able to meet the needs of the children needing placement.</p> |
| <b>Stage One</b>  | The LAs will provide all information required for statutory checks of potential adopters resident in the LA.   | The RAA will undertake all Stage one functions  |
| <b>Stage Two</b>  |  | The RAA will undertake all Stage Two functions  |
|   |  | The RAA will complete the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR)   |
| <b>Approvals</b>  |  | <p>The RAA will manage the Adoption Panel.</p> <p>The RAA Agency Decision Maker will be responsible for all approvals</p>   |

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| POST APPROVAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING |   | The RAA will provide post approval support and training to approved adopters |

## POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

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| <b>ADOPTION SUPPORT ASSESSMENTS/ PLANS &amp; SERVICES</b><br><br><b>Adoption and Children act 2002</b><br><br><b>Adoption Support Regs</b> | <p>Respite / Short term breaks – if this service is assessed by the LA as being required this will be provided by the LA.</p>   | <p>The RAA will undertake assessments of adoption support needs.</p> <p>The RAA's core offer will provide general adoption support services: newsletter, social events for children and young people; social/training events for adoptive parents; advice and signposting for adoptive families; independent support and advice to birth relatives; post box services etc</p> <p>The RAA will undertake applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children and commission services agreed by ASF for families/children</p> <p>.</p> |
| <b>Adoption Support Fund (ASF)</b>   | Match Funding – Pre 3 years of adoption order – LA responsible for match funding.   | Match funding – post 3 years of adoption order – RAA responsible for Match funding.   |
|  | The LA will signpost requests from adoptive families for adoption order support to the RAA. Alongside needs directly related to adoption, a family may have needs identified that meet threshold for LA intervention, such as child in need. The LA will be responsible for completing these assessments and providing any identified services. | The RAA will undertake the assessment of adoption support needs of the child and family and produce an adoption support plan. Where appropriate, the RAA will make a referral to the early help service or multi-agency safeguarding hub. The RAA will offer support to the adoptive family during any section 47 enquiry if the case is open to the RAA.   |

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|   | <p>Where a safeguarding referral is made to the LA the LA will conduct any appropriate section 47 enquiry and will allocate an LA social worker where thresholds are met, but will notify the RAA of any referral involving an adopted child.</p> <p>If adopted child/young person accommodated, LA will be responsible for social work support to child/family.</p> | <p>RAA will complete any specific work needed e.g. Life Story work or application to ASF for therapeutic support for families/children.</p>   |
| <b>Out-of-hours services</b>  | <p>All adopters will have access to the LA's Emergency Duty Team out of core hours.</p>  |   |
| <b>Indirect/ Letterbox contact</b><br><b>Adoption and Children Act 2002</b><br><b>AAR 2005</b>                          |  | <p>The RAA will provide a Letterbox service between adopted children and their birth families. This RAA can carry out ongoing assessments to consider whether contact is in the best interest of the child.</p> |
| <b>Supervised &amp; Sibling Direct Contact</b><br><b>Adoption and Children Act 2002</b><br><b>Adoption Support Regs</b> | <p>Cost of arrangements agreed in the pre- adoption support plan e.g. travel &amp; accommodation expenses will remain with the LA.</p>   | <p>Responsibility for arranging / supervising Direct Contact requirements will transfer to the RAA.</p>   |
| <b>ADOPTION ALLOWANCES</b><br><br><b>Adoption support Regs</b>  | <p>Adoption allowances will be paid for by the LA</p>  | <p>RAA to undertake appropriate assessment</p>  |
| <b>ADOPTION SUPPORT FUND</b><br><b>The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005</b>                                   |  | <p>The RAA will be responsible for undertaking all funding applications to the Adoption Support Fund and all contracting arrangements</p> <p>Existing contracting resources to transfer to the RAA</p>          |



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| <p><b>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</b></p>   |  |  |
| <p><b>ACCESS TO CHILDREN'S ADOPTION CASE RECORDS</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983</b></p> <p><b>Sections 56–65 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post-Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005 (AIR)</b></p>                | <p>LA to store historic children's adoption case records. For RAA adoptions the LA will have access to records if the case becomes open to them as a CIN / LAC / Safeguarding.</p> | <p>RAA to store and hold new files</p> <p>Existing record keeping resources to transfer to RAA</p> |
| <p><b>BIRTH RECORDS COUNSELLING</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</b></p>  | <p>Existing budget to transfer to the RAA</p>  | <p>RAA will be responsible for delivery of counselling.</p>  |
| <p><b>INDEPENDENT SUPPORT TO BIRTH PARENTS</b></p>  | <p>Existing budget to transfer to the RAA</p>  | <p>RAA will be responsible for delivery of support.</p>  |
| <p><b>ACCESS TO ADOPTERS RECORDS</b></p> <p><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</b></p> <p><b>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003</b></p> <p><b>The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003</b></p> | <p>LA to signpost Adoptees to the RAA where appropriate</p>  | <p>RAA to store and hold new files</p>   |

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| <p>Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post-Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005</p> <p>The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005</p> |   |   |
| <p><b>STEP PARENT ADOPTION ASSESSMENT</b></p>   | <p>LA to sign post adopters to the RAA</p>                  | <p>RAA to be responsible for assessments</p>                            |

## SERVICE USER ENGAGEMENT

| SERVICE AREA  | RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY  | ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC (acting as host of the RAA)  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Adopters</b></p>  |  | <p>The RAA / commissioned agency will engage with adopters, individually and in groups, with the aim of improving the services available</p>         |
| <p><b>Adoptees</b></p>  |  | <p>The RAA / commissioned agency will engage with adoptees, individually and in groups, with the aim of improving the services available</p>         |
| <p><b>Birth parents</b></p>   |  | <p>THE RAA / commissioned service will engage with and birth parents individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available</p> |
| <p><b>Special Guardians</b><br/><b>The Children Act 1989 as amended</b></p> | <p>Initial assessment, placement, the support plan and payments and allowances are the responsibility of the LA including contact arrangements and the cost of any supervised contact.</p> | <p>The RAA has no responsibilities in support of Special Guardians</p>   |

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & INSPECTION -

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| <b>Data provision</b>                      | Each LA will need to provide specified key data to the RAA on performance.<br><br>Each LA is responsible for the ALB Child return   | RAA is responsible for production of ALB Adopter return   |
| <b>Data analysis</b>                       |   | The RAA will produce a 3-monthly report to each LA on performance against an agreed set of indicators         |
| <b>OFSTED</b>                              | OFSTED will inspect through the LA lens: evaluating how the RAA is delivering the local authority's statutory responsibilities. Each LA is still responsible for demonstrating how the arrangements comply with their statutory responsibilities and meet the needs of local children. OFSTED have the right to access records relevant to the performance of a LA, wherever they may be held. It remains the LA's responsibility to demonstrate how the individual needs of children are met when the plan is adoption, even when delivered through an RAA.<br><br>The director of LA children's services should notify the RAA that an OFSTED inspection has started. | The RAA will make available to OFSTED any records required for the purposes of an inspection.                 |
| <b>Freedom of Information applications</b> | The LA / RAA will cooperate within the timescales to enable information to be made available to the applicant   | The LA / RAA will cooperate within the timescales to enable information to be made available to the applicant |

## MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

| SERVICE AREA                | RETAINED FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY | ADOPTION FUNCTIONS/ RESPONSIBILITIES TO DCC<br>(acting as host of the RAA)   |
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| <b>STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</b> |   | The RAA will provide take responsibility for updating this for the functions that have been delegated to the RAA.<br><br>The RAA will take responsibility for completing each LA statement of purpose regarding the functions left with the LA, in consultation with the LA. |
| <b>REGISTERED MANAGER</b>   |   | The RAA will provide a registered manager for their adoption functions.  |

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| <b>ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE ADVISOR</b><br><br>The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005<br><br>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 |   | The RAA will undertake the role of Adoption Services Advisor for each LA.   |
| <b>CHILDREN'S GUIDE FOR ADOPTION</b>   | Each LA has a responsibility for this                       | The RAA could provide advice and guidance   |
| <b>ANNUAL SERVICE REPORT</b>   |   | RAA to complete an annual public facing service report  |
| <b>CHILDREN'S GUIDE FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT</b>   |   | The RAA will update the Children's guide for adoption support   |
| <b>STEP PARENTS/RELATIVES WHO WISH TO ADOPT (NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS)</b>   |   | RAA to be responsible for providing this service – this service will be commissioned out.   |
| <b>INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION</b>  |   | RAA will provide this service; it will commission advice and information on inter-country adoption from a specialist agency. Service users will have to meet cost of assessment and approval process in the commissioned agency |

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| <b>Adoption with a Foreign Element Regulations 2005 Regulation 19</b>   |   |   |
| <b>ADOPTION PANELS</b><br><br><b>Adoption and Children Act 2002</b><br><br><b>Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005</b>  | <p>The three larger LA's to provide a social work representative to sit on panel twice a month and the smaller LA once a month.</p> | <p>The RAA will provide adoption panels across the region and will appoint Independent panel chairs and retain a central list and will provide training and support for panel members.</p> <p>The adoption panel will provide a quality assurance report for the partnership on a 6-monthly basis</p> |
| <b>TRAINING FOR LA staff</b><br><br><b>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 Regulation 12 Employment of staff</b><br><br><b>The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous</b> |   | <p>The RAA can provide training for social workers regarding the adoption process/ writing of CPR's/APR'S/Support plans and preparing for Adoption Panel</p>  |

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| Amendments) Regulations 2003   |   |  |
| ADOPTEE COUNSELLING  |   | The RAA will signpost applicants to independent services and will not provide an intermediary service.                                     |
| DISRUPTIONS AAR 2005   | LA to contribute to the disruption process  | RAA to undertake the disruption process.<br>Panel Chairs and other professionals will be invited to contribute to this process.            |
| ALLEGATIONS<br>The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003<br>Regulation 9 Arrangements for the protection of children | LA is responsible for initiating this process prior to the Adoption order being granted. The RAA will contribute to this process. | RAA is responsible for initiating this process post the Adoption order being granted. The LA will contribute to this process if necessary. |