



Policy and Plan on the Recruitment of Prospective Adopters

(August 2021 / March 2024)

Adopt Thames Valley

Policy and Plan on the recruitment of Prospective Adopters

August 2021 – March 2024

1) Introduction

Adopt Thames Valley (the Agency) provides a dedicated adoption service for its seven contributing local authorities: Bracknell Forest Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Borough Council (Brighter Futures for Children), Swindon Borough Council, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (Achieving for Children), West Berkshire Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

Everything that Adopt Thames Valley does is child-centred and is governed by our values statement (Appendix A – Statement of Purpose), available to download from the Adopt Thames Valley website, <https://adoptthamesvalley.co.uk/>

This document sets out the policies governing the Agency's recruitment and assessment work, the overarching strategy for this three-year period, and the steps that will enable us to achieve our recruitment targets.

2) The aims and objectives of Adopt Thames Valley

Adopt Thames Valley actively contributes to ensuring that each of the contributing authorities perform well in terms of placing children for adoption within national timescales, by both recruiting adopters seeking to adopt an unrelated child(ren), and by assessing friends and family and existing foster carers who have applied to be considered as potential adopters for a specific named child(ren). The Agency also provides a full range of adoption and special guardianship support services and services aimed at enabling the contributing local authorities to meet the statutory requirements placed on all local authorities relating to the processing of notified adoptions and the provision of inbound inter-country adoption services.

The main functions of **the Agency** are to:

- a) Support the contributing authorities at an early stage to identify those Looked After Children who would benefit from adoption and to achieve the placement of these children with appropriate prospective adoptive families within timescales appropriate to the needs of each child.

The service works in line with Department for Education (DfE) standards and within national timescales except where this is not in the identified interests of the individual child concerned. The service seeks to keep to a minimum any delay in achieving placement for each child and carefully considers the option of Fostering for Adoption for every child referred.

- b) Recruit, prepare and assess prospective adoptive applicants who are seeking to adopt unrelated children and who are likely to be able to meet the placement needs of the children waiting for families both locally and nationally.

The service seeks to ensure that a diverse range of people who are interested in adopting are enabled to complete the preparation and assessment process. All those who express an interest in adoption are welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information about the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval processes, and about available post-adoption support services. We seek to work in partnership with all applicants and approved adopters who engage with Adopt Thames Valley and to respond to any concerns promptly and courteously.

All applicants are expected to be able to consider the placement of a child(ren) with complex backgrounds and a child(ren) for whom there is not complete background and/or health

information. Priority is given to potential applicants who are able to consider the placement of a child(ren) with a higher level of additional needs and those able to accept the potential uncertainties inherent in Fostering for Adoption placements.

Experienced adoptive parents are involved in supporting the Agency with the recruitment of new adopters and the training and support of prospective adopters going through the different stages of the adoption process.

- c) Undertake the preparation and assessment of relatives and friends and existing foster carers who have applied to be considered as potential adopters for a specific named child(ren).
- d) Support approved and waiting adopters in achieving the placement of appropriately matched children.
- e) Ensure that a high standard of post-placement support is available to the children placed for adoption by the contributing authorities and to their prospective adopters during the pre-adoption period and that robust adoption support packages are, where necessary, in place, in order to maximise the long-term success of each child's placement.
- f) Provide appropriate support to the prospective adopters recruited by the service following the placement of children and to work effectively with placing authorities so as to maximise the success of each child's placement.
- g) To ensure that adoptive parents, and children who have been legally adopted, are able to access support services appropriate to their individual needs and situations. Access will be determined by completion of an Assessment of Need for Adoption Support Services, and services may include:
 - access to counselling and/or therapeutic services;
 - advice around parenting strategies;
 - practical support;
 - financial support.
- h) Where any of the contributing local authorities are the 'responsible authority' in respect of the provision of special guardianship support services, to ensure that special guardians, and children who are subject to special guardianship orders, are able to access support services appropriate to their individual needs and situations. Access will be determined by completion of an Assessment of Need for Special Guardianship Support Services, and services may include:
 - access to counselling and/or therapeutic services;
 - advice around parenting strategies;
 - practical support;
 - financial support.

Where appropriate, funding for both adoption and special guardianship support services will be sought from other agencies. Decisions regarding the provision of services will always be dependent on the financial constraints under which the responsible local authority is operating at the time.

- i) Provide a range of support services to birth parents and families both before and after adoption.
- j) Coordinate and manage Letterbox exchanges for children placed for adoption by Adopt Thames Valley.
- k) Process all notified adoptions originating in the seven contributing local authorities' areas.
- l) Fulfil the contributing authorities' duties under The Adoption (Inter Country Aspects) Act 1999, to provide, or arrange to provide, an Inter Country Adoption Service.

Adopt Thames Valley, by arrangement with the Inter-country Adoption Centre (IAC), delegates to that agency the work of providing services to applicants wishing to adopt from abroad.

- m) Maintain effective systems for recording, managing and keeping safe, information about children placed for adoption and adopters and information received from people affected by adoption.
- n) Ensure that the Agency has sufficient staff with the right qualifications, knowledge and experience to deliver the full range of adoption services for which Adopt Thames Valley is responsible.

3) The recruitment priorities of the Agency

- a) To recruit a pool of prospective adopters who are able and suitable to provide placements for children with the range of placement needs most prevalent amongst the children in the care of the seven contributing authorities, for whom placement for adoption is the preferred placement option.¹

Recruitment will prioritise achieving applications from potential adopters who are able to appropriately offer placements to:

- Children with a plan for Early Permanence (Fostering for Adoption) placement;
- Single children aged four years and over;
- Sibling groups of two or more children;
- Children who have identified health or medical problems and who are likely to need a significant level of ongoing health/medical care;
- Children who are significantly developmentally delayed and who may always require a higher level of support than other children of similar age (including in some cases a level of special education provision);
- Children who have an identified physical or learning disability;
- Children who have additional emotional and/or behavioural support needs;
- Children whose background histories include having a parent(s) diagnosed as having significant mental health difficulties and/or a personality disorder or a parent who is diagnosed to be on the autistic spectrum;
- Children who are at a higher risk of having complex needs relating to their experiences in utero and in the birth family.

Note: A significant percentage of the children placed for adoption through the Agency are aged under four years; however, nearly all of these children have difficult or complex background

¹ This may include recruiting applicants who live outside of the seven local authority areas and who appear to have the potential to meet the placement needs of the children who the authorities need to place – see section 5 below

histories and in most cases the children's future intellectual and academic potential and/or emotional and behavioural issues cannot be clearly predicted.

The local and the national picture regarding adoption varies over time; however, at the current time approximately 64% of children being placed for adoption nationally are to be placed with one of more of their siblings. Both locally and nationally there is a shortage of prospective adopters who are able to consider the placement of siblings.

In recent years a significant majority of children placed for adoption by the contributing local authorities have been of White British heritage; however, all of the contributing authorities will from time to time need to place children for adoption who are of Non-White heritage. Both locally and nationally there is a significant shortage of prospective adopters able to consider placement of children who are of black African or Caribbean heritage.

The Agency aims to work in co-operation with other local authority and voluntary adoption agencies across the UK to achieve placements for children, and the recruitment priorities of the Agency will be directly influenced by the wider national picture regarding the children requiring placement and the existing availability of approved adopters able to provide placements for different cohorts of children.

- b) To fast-track the preparation and assessment of relatives and friends and existing foster carers who have applied to be considered as potential adopters for a child(ren) who are already known to them, where this is in line with the Care Plan for the child(ren) concerned.

4) Achieving placements for Children in the Care of the contributing local authorities

Adopt Thames Valley will seek to achieve the formal match of each child referred for family finding without delay, normally within four months of the granting of the Placement Order, or within three months if the child is under six months of age and the birth parent(s) is/are requesting that the child be placed. Although these timescales should generally be adhered to, the paramount consideration must always be the welfare of the child.

In seeking to identify prospective adopters for children requiring placement **Adopt Thames Valley** will firstly seek to identify appropriate prospective adopters from within the agency's own pool of approved and waiting adopters unless a child's specific circumstances and placement needs suggest this to be inappropriate. When this is not possible, consideration will be given to other potential adopters recruited by other agencies.

The Agency has established working relationships with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies that operate within its area, including PACT Adoption Agency (Reading)). These professional relationships result in these agencies being aware of the profile of children most frequently being placed for adoption through **Adopt Thames Valley** which in turn informs their recruitment strategies.

The Agency is mindful of the period of time that older children and those with significant additional needs can wait for placements and seeks to be proactive in achieving appropriate placements for all children referred to it for placement within the shortest possible timescales. To this end, when a child's placement needs are such that it is unlikely that a suitable 'match' will be identified for him/her within **Adopt Thames Valley**, early referral will be made to Link Maker so as to maximise the chances of an appropriate match being identified without undue delay. In addition a range of other recruitment initiatives may be pursued on a case-by-case basis in order to increase the pool of potential adopters available to be considered for the child, including sending the child's profile directly to other adoption agencies, presenting the child's profile at national adoption forums, children attending Adoption Activity Days or the Agency's own playdays, and the Agency hosting its own profiling events.

Agreement for the funding for all costs associated with Family Finding will be obtained at the point of referral, in order to ensure that all appropriate avenues can then be pursued in a timely manner.

5) Working with prospective adopters who are approved by another Agency

Adopt Thames Valley will not accept an application to be approved to adopt from any individual or couple who are already approved by or who are in the process of being assessed by another agency. Adopters cannot be approved by two agencies.

Where prospective adopters who are already approved by another Local Authority or Voluntary Adoption Agency enquire about a child(ren) who the Agency is seeking to place, the appropriateness of any potential match will be explored with their approving authority/agency and, should a match progress, this will be managed through the normal inter-agency placement process.

6) Applications in respect of a specific child

Where an enquiry is received from an individual or couple interested in adopting a specific child(ren) for whom **Adopt Thames Valley** is seeking placement and the enquirer is neither approved nor currently progressing an application to be approved as a prospective adopter(s) with another authority/agency, an application may be progressed if the applicant(s) are able to demonstrate a likely ability to meet the placement needs of the specific child(ren) in question and suitable, already approved, prospective adopters have not been identified, either within the Agency's pool of approved adopters or through other family finding efforts.

Generally such applicants will be assessed specifically in relation to the individual child or sibling pair/group about whom they enquired; however, an application may in some circumstances be converted to a general application if the applicant(s) appear to have the potential to meet the placement needs of the profile of children often requiring placement by the Agency, but a link to the child(ren) who they initially expressed an interest in does not prove to be appropriate. Such applicants will be required to undergo the same preparation and assessment process as all other applicants with whom the Agency engages (accepting that distance may necessitate some practical changes to the process). If the applicant(s) are already known to the child(ren) as a relative(s), friend(s) or current or previous carer(s), the application will usually be progressed at Stage Two.

7) General applications

Adopt Thames Valley has an inclusive approach to the recruitment of adopters and applications will be considered from applicants who appear to meet the Agency's minimum criteria, these are attached (see Appendix 1). If the specific characteristics of the potential applicant(s) suggest that they are unlikely to be successful in achieving a 'match' through **Adopt Thames Valley**, the Agency will direct the potential adopter(s) to [You Can Adopt website](https://www.youcanadopt.co.uk/) (https://www.youcanadopt.co.uk/) where they will be able to find further information and an agency finder that will route them to other agencies.

Adopt Thames Valley will consider general applications from individuals/couples seeking to be approved as prospective adopters who live outside of the geographical areas covered by the seven contributing authorities if:

- they appear to have the potential to meet the placement needs of the profile of children who the seven contributing authorities regularly need to place, but for whom it may be difficult to identify appropriate prospective adopters;

and

- they otherwise meet the Agency's normal criteria for prospective adopters

The Agency has a target for the number of applications that it will process each year; however, this is regularly reviewed and revised as the demand for placements changes. If the Agency is in a position of receiving more applications from individuals/couples who are wishing to be approved to adopt than it is able to accept, applications are prioritised according to the needs of children waiting for adoption both locally and nationally. The specific placement needs of the seven contributing authorities will directly impact on the decisions made.

8) Recruitment Strategy to include Multi-channel Marketing approach

Adopt Thames Valley will create and enact annual recruitment plans to enable the Agency to recruit 75 adoptive families within the period running April 2021 – March 2022 at least 25% of whom are able to provide placement for sibling pairs and 20% willing to consider Early Permanence (Fostering for Adoption). (See Appendix 2 for detailed Marketing Plan for 2021-2022).

The Agency will review its recruitment strategy on an annual basis and more frequently if the profile of children requiring placement changes markedly.

The Agency will aim to pursue a multi-channel marketing approach aimed at bringing the possibility of adoption to the attention of the widest possible audience.

Targeted recruitment will be aimed at increasing applications from:

- the black and minority ethnic communities, especially those of black African and black Caribbean heritage;
- the LGBTQ+ community;
- applicants who are able to consider the placement of siblings;
- applicants who are able to consider an Early Permanence placement;
- parents and carers of children with disabilities (who may be in a position to adopt a child with additional needs).

We will also support national campaigns initiated by the National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group, such as the Siblings or Black Adopters Campaigns.

Recruitment initiatives and events will be spread across the whole geographical area covered by the Agency; however, at different times they may focus on specific areas where particular recruitment initiatives have historically been most successful.

Key to successful marketing of the Agency is its website, <https://adoptthamesvalley.co.uk/> The Agency's website provides a range of general information about the adoption process, support available, and adoption stories alongside a dedicated area on Early Permanence. Users can download a range of leaflets and brochures and access a range of other documents such as the Privacy Policy and the Agency's Statement of Purpose. They will also find a link to OFSTED where they can access contributing Local Authorities' individual OFSTED Adoption Service Inspection Reports.

Adopt Thames Valley will maintain links with other local authority adoption agencies and Voluntary Adoption Agencies situated in the South-East, so as to, where appropriate, share information and awareness-raising, recruitment and linking activities.

9) Adopt Thames Valley branding

Consistency across all marketing platforms is seen as being important for the development of the **Adopt Thames Valley** brand. All **Adopt Thames Valley** marketing, including promotional material,

publications, social media, press, outdoor and radio advertising, will be within the **Adopt Thames Valley** branding in order to increase awareness and reinforce brand messages.

All publicity will retain the **Adopt Thames Valley** branding by featuring the agreed logo, colours, brand messages and key straplines of *A child's future starts with you* and *Adoption. It's a journey worth making*. However, publicity may be tailored where deemed necessary by the Marketing and Recruitment Manager for specific targeted campaigns to meet the needs of the children and to attract specific target audiences.

10) Measuring success

Adopt Thames Valley is committed to providing tangible outcomes through this strategy and plan. Annual delivery plans will ensure progress is monitored against goals. Quantitative measures will be augmented by qualitative assessment of outcomes such as culture change and increasing the active engagement of adopters, adopted people and birth families. Progress will be reported to the Adopt Thames Valley Partnership Board on a quarterly basis.

11) Conclusion

Adopt Thames Valley is committed to providing a high-quality recruitment and assessment experience for prospective adopters and to finding the best families for its children. The Agency's recruitment strategy and marketing plan complements the National Adoption Recruitment Strategy, published in 2021 by the National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group (<https://www.youcanadopt.co.uk/the-national-adoption-recruitment-steering-group/>).

Teresa Rogers

Head of Service Adopt Thames Valley

Saskia Merry

Marketing & Recruitment Manager

Adopt Thames Valley

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APPENDIX 1

Adopt Thames Valley – Criteria for Applicants Seeking to Adopt

Under current Adoption Regulations all potential adopters **must** meet the three basic criteria detailed below if they are to be considered to adopt:

- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age;
- At least one applicant if a couple or the sole applicant must be domiciled in the British Isles or both of the couple or the single applicant must have been habitually resident in the British Isles for at least one year
- No applicant, nor any member of their household, can have been convicted or cautioned in respect of a specified offence.

Adopt Thames Valley is keen to attract a wide range of prospective adopters and we will welcome expressions of interest from all interested parties.

While the Agency is not always able to accept applications, we will give careful consideration to the qualities and experiences being offered by all of the potential adoptive applicants who contacts us. We welcome applications from:

- Single applicants and couples of all ages
- Childless applicants and those who already have a child or children
- Applicants from different cultural and religious backgrounds
- Applicants who are heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or questioning.

APPENDIX 2

Adopt Thames Valley Marketing Plan – August 2021 – March 2024

1) The Core objective of the Marketing Plan

The **Adopt Thames Valley** Marketing Plan takes a multi-channel approach and fits within the Agency's Policy and Plan on the Recruitment of Prospective Adopters August 2021 – March 2024 (the 'Recruitment Strategy').

- The overall aim is to improve placement choice for children in need of adoption, by recruiting a pool of prospective adopters who will be able and suitable to provide placements for children with the range of placement needs most prevalent among the children in the care of the seven contributing local authorities, for whom placement for adoption is the preferred placement option, and to avoid preventable delay for those waiting for placements.

Planned target for the years 2021-2024

A recruitment target has been set of at least 225 new adoptive households over the next 3 years, as follows:

2021/2022	75
2022/2023	75 TBC
2023/2024	75 TBC

The plan will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis and targets revised on an annual basis in the light of the current year's achievements.

In order to achieve its recruitment aims, the Agency will:

- Provide a clear message that Adoption is potentially open to anyone regardless of age, gender, marital status, religion, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation or disability.
- Target specific sections of the community in order to highlight the need for adopters for priority groups of children to specific audiences: i.e. those that may be most able to consider the placement of: older children, siblings, children being placed under Early Permanence, children with a learning or physical disability and children of black African or Caribbean heritage.
- If and when the Agency's needs are met, seek to increase the number of high-quality adopters who can be sold to other agencies.

2) Marketing channels

The key objective of the marketing plan is to raise the public's awareness of **Adopt Thames Valley (ATV)** and make it the agency of choice across the geographical area covered by the seven contributing local authorities, in order to enable the Agency to achieve its aim of recruiting a higher number of adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of the children referred to the Agency for placement and so improve placement choice.

To this end Adopt Thames Valley will adopt a multichannel approach to marketing and communications aimed at promoting the service, including, but not limited to, the following:

Website: The ATV website will be the go-to place for all public information relating to the service. Content will be reviewed annually routinely or sooner if needed.

Social and digital: Adopt Thames Valley will use social media sites and networking forums to disseminate information and engage with the general public who have an interest in adoption. Currently the Agency uses Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube but new sites, services and apps will be added as appropriate if felt to have value.

Radio: ATV will use radio as an effective means to promote its brand across the region to a broad audience.

Press and PR: Adopt Thames Valley will continually seek to recruit adopters to be the 'voice of ATV' by becoming case studies and so promote the service in national, regional and local media.

Advertising: outdoor advertising

Events programme: create and staff varied events programme to engage with target groups

Community outreach: foster relations with key community leaders; raise awareness in key localities and among specific target groups by networking and creating mobile covid-secure platform for such outreach

Branding: Consistency across all marketing platforms is still seen as key for reinforcement of the Adopt Thames Valley brand. All Adopt Thames Valley marketing, including publicity, social media, press, outdoor and radio advertising, will be within the Adopt Thames Valley branding in order to raise awareness of our brand messages and key straplines of *A child's future starts with you* and *Adoption. It's a journey worth making.*

ATV will direct prospective adopters to a dedicated number or to our Agency website online form, both of which will be responded to by the dedicated Enquiry Officer, thus providing an effective and efficient frontline service to all.

3) Overview of channels to be used and ongoing activities

Adopt Thames Valley will aim to achieve wide coverage and a balanced approach through a mix of long term and short term advertising and marketing initiatives, increasing levels at key times in the calendar to maximise effect. The Agency will work within the local communities within the seven contributing local authority areas in order to become increasingly accessible and increase partnership working.

Planned channels and activities will include but may not be limited to:

- Ongoing review and development of the ATV website including maintaining and updating content, website SEO optimisation;
- Radio advertising – enhanced at key times, to work with Heart Global, Jack FM, and explore other stations;
- Social media – including organic posts on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc.;
- Paid digital advertising – e.g., Instagram and Facebook & Google advertising as part of focused campaigns;
- Print advertising – adverts in local, regional and specialist papers/magazines placed at key times and to link to key events, such as in *Fyne Times*;
- Outdoor advertising once footfall picks up post-pandemic;

- Press and PR – seeking proactively to garner press interest by use of case studies as well as reacting promptly to any press requests; making use of opportunities and venues for free publicity such as libraries and surgeries;
- Campaigns – linked to key awareness days; National Adoption Week; and initiatives from the National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group (NARSG);
- Outreach events programme – attending key local, regional and national events that enable us to raise awareness among particular target groups;
- Community outreach – seeking opportunities to engage with local communities and fostering relationships with key community leaders;
- Launch of Adoption Books from Adopt Thames Valley to the public and development of further titles;
- Encouraging adopter participation in recruitment through working groups and further development of the role of Adoption Ambassadors in recruitment work and outreach settings;
- Seek to find ways to involve birth family and adopted adults in informing recruitment work and, where appropriate, featuring their voices in public-facing activity.

4) Specific Recruitment activity planned 2021/22

In addition to the ongoing activities and channels to be used as outlined above, the Agency will engage in the following specific tasks in this financial year to further its recruitment aims and objectives.

Digital, advertising, press and PR

- Investment in website – continue to update and refresh look and feel; structural changes including creation of password-protected professionals' area and an events booking facility for adopters if can be made GDPR compliant
- Long-term advertising campaigns
- Radio advertising on 12- month contracts with Jack FM, Heart Oxfordshire, Heart Berkshire, Heart Swindon and Wiltshire
- Outdoor advertising (digital display/ buses/roundabouts/poster sites) but only if footfall picks up post pandemic
- Social media advertising, paid and organic

Creative

Range of videos to be produced and promoted on social media; revised publicity materials for ATV including leaflets, brochures and banner; adverts as needed

Campaigns

Adopt Thames Valley will run a minimum of four campaigns per year, either independently to meet our own recruitment needs through targeted campaigns eg siblings, Fostering for Adoption, black adopters, to back up national initiatives from the NARSG, or to link with key dates and awareness days in the calendar.

Campaign dates so far confirmed:

- LGBTQ+ (New Family Social Adoption and Fostering Week) 7-13 March 2022
- National Adoption Week 17-23 October 2022

Recruitment Outreach Events

Adopt Thames Valley will target specific sectors through a variety of local, regional and national events either with purpose of awareness raising or direct recruiting. The events sector has suffered greatly through Covid, but with the advent of the government insurance scheme it is expected that events will now go ahead except in the event of local, regional or national restrictions or lockdowns.

Where possible, Adopt Thames Valley will offer speakers for event programme or bring adopters along to create a value-added experience and to produce collateral that can be used to reinforce messaging in different ways on different platforms and has a life beyond the event itself.

- Fertility Show Live and Online Summit (7-8 May 22) – Marketing Manager will work alongside ATV adopter and influencer @_7fertilityyears to devise digital and press campaign and will also seek to secure 'J' spot in speaker programme
- Pride events, including Oxford, Newbury, Banbury, Reading and Swindon
- The Modern Family Show (10 Sept 22)
- The TES SEN Show (7-8 Oct 22)– launch of further titles in our series of Adoption Books from Adopt Thames Valley; getting author/s into speaker programme

Community Outreach and campaigns

Community outreach activities stalled due to Covid, but it is hoped to be able to resume in the coming months. These campaigns may be targeted at a specific area, or to target a particular group. Locations including faith centres, cafes, libraries, shopping centres and sports centres are under consideration. There is also a toolkit linked with the NARSG Black Adopters Campaign in September 2021, which ATV would look to use as and when circumstances allow in areas of high BAME density such as east Oxford and Reading.

In preparation, there will be a combination of initiatives aimed at a target audience: creating an online presence via community websites/Facebook etc. coupled with leaflet drops advertising events to find out more about adoption with an invitation to come to a local venue and meet with the recruitment team. Contacts to be sourced via adopters who live in the relevant local area.

Timetable, areas and dates to be confirmed.

Diversity and Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the discrimination felt by black and ethnic minority communities in many areas of life, including adoption. We will therefore seek to learn from our BAME adopters and encourage them to contribute to strategy through working groups; as speakers; and ideally as case studies on the website and in press and PR (while recognising the particular challenges of being identified as an adopter within their communities).

Launch of Adoption Books from Adopt Thames Valley

ATV launched the first two titles in our new series of Adoption Books from Adopt Thames Valley in October 2021. The next title to be produced will be on early permanence, followed by siblings. We expect these books to create a virtuous circle, where a product produced primarily for use within ATV and to meet the Agency's needs creates its own income stream that can be ploughed back into the creation of more books in the series. We will be looking to share resources and good practice with other RAAs and have just been awarded funding to develop the set of books for Early Permanence by the DfE.

5) Funding

The marketing budget is used to fund all the above streams of work. In addition, it funds other costs such as printing, event venue and room booking.

6) Measuring success

Adopt Thames Valley is committed to providing tangible outcomes through this plan. Annual delivery plans will ensure progress is monitored against goals. Quantitative measures will be augmented by qualitative assessment of outcomes such as culture change and increasing the active engagement of adopters, adopted people and birth families. Progress will be reported to the Adopt Thames Valley Partnership Board on a quarterly basis.

Quantitative recruitment data

The Marketing Manager monitors the numbers of initial contacts, enquiries and further discussions with enquiry hub social worker, and the conversion rate to applications (Registration of Interest – ROI) plus online information event attendance on a monthly basis and provides details to the **Adopt Thames Valley** Partnership Board on a quarterly basis.

The Agency monitors the numbers of applicants throughout all stages of the adoption preparation and approval process and the number of approved applicants subsequently withdrawing from the adoption process prior to achieving the legal adoption of a child(ren).

Source of enquiry

The success of different recruitment initiatives will be monitored by ascertaining where potential applicants learnt of **Adopt Thames Valley**, while recognising that people will, for example, often say the website when in fact they first heard the website address on the radio. With the appointment of the new ATV Data Manager in 2021, the long-term ambition is to be able to create a tracking and monitoring system completely independent from enquiry and application whereby we can more accurately track the route of enquirers from different backgrounds through the process, work out where key drop-out points are, and decide how we can best address these issues.

Qualitative feedback

All applicants who engage with the Service will be asked to feed back on their experiences at different stages of the preparation, assessment, approval and matching process and after legal adoption has been achieved for their child(ren). The feedback received will be evaluated in order to inform future service provision. We adopted MS Forms for Information Events to encourage more feedback as the move to virtual meetings in pandemic saw big decrease in feedback.

GOAL	KEY METRICS	SOURCE OF DATA
Recruit 75 adoptive households each year	75 approved households each year ROIs Conversion rate	ATV annual report
Increase number of enquiries year on year	Increase in number of enquiries Initial contacts	Enquiry spreadsheet
Increase attendance at information sessions year on year	Increase in number of households attending each month	Enquiry spreadsheet
Increase numbers of adopters willing to consider adopting siblings to 25%	Increase in adopters willing to consider siblings	ATV Quarterly Reports
Increase numbers of adopters willing to consider Fostering for Adoption to 20%	Increase in FFA adopters recruited Increase in FFA placements made	ATV Quarterly Reports
Increase the number of black and minority ethnic adopters	Increase in adopters by ethnicity How better to monitor demographics?	ATV Quarterly Reports
Increase the numbers of LGBTQ+ adopters	Increase in LGBTQ+ adopters enquiring Increase in LGBTQ+ adopters approved	ATV quarterly reports
Engagement of adopters, adopted people and birth families	Involvement in prep groups, info sessions and outreach events Case studies for website, press and PR Short films, podcasts	
Increase awareness of ATV among general public	Press and PR	Press monitoring
National Adoption Week	Raised profile of all aspects of adoption	Regional and local media coverage, social media following and activity

Saskia Merry

Marketing & Recruitment Manager

Adopt Thames Valley

January 2022