Adopt
Thames Valley



Adopt and be the someone in a child's life

love the difference you can make

Statement of Purpose
2026-2027

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1. Introduction

Adopt Thames Valley (ATV) is a Regional Adoption Agency, established in December 2017, with delegated responsibility for discharging certain adoption functions of Bracknell Forest Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Council (Brighter Futures for Children), Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (Achieving for Children), Swindon Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Council. Adopt Thames Valley also works in partnership with PACT (Voluntary Adoption Agency).

This statement of purpose has been written in accordance with the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and associated Regulations, and the Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013. It fulfils the requirements of Regulations 2 and 4 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; Regulations 3 and 24B and Regulations 4 and 24 C of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003; and of Regulations 5 and 6 of the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005. It also fulfils the requirements of Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014.

The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf

The 2013 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-statutory-guidance-2013

2. Principles and Values Statement

The principles of the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and accompanying Regulations and Statutory Guidance, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Education and Adoption Act 2016, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014, all underpin the work of Adopt Thames Valley.

The **Vision and Values Statement in Appendix A** is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards and the National Adoption Strategy Achieving Excellence Everywhere (July 2021) and sums up the important principles which underpin all adoption work within Adopt Thames Valley and within the 7 partner local authorities in their permanency planning for children for whom adoption is the care plan. These values are equally applicable to children and adults affected by special guardianship.

Adopt Thames Valley is committed to promoting diversity and non-discriminatory practice.

3. Aims and objectives

In accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, all local authorities have a duty to establish and maintain an adoption service in their area, to meet the needs in relation to adoption, of children who have or may be adopted, of adults who have been adopted, parents and guardians of such children and persons who have or may adopt a child. Bracknell Forest Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Reading Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Swindon Council, West Berkshire, and Wokingham Council have delegated most of those functions to Adopt Thames Valley. Further information can be found about this in **Appendix B - Schedule of Responsibilities**. It explains in more detail which functions remain the responsibility of the local authority, and which have been delegated to Adopt Thames Valley.

Adopt Thames Valley is committed to achieving the earliest possible permanence to maximise a child's potential and attachment capacity and aims to ensure that all children where the plan is likely to be adoption are considered for an Early Permanence placement. Adopt Thames Valley aims to ensure that children who are unable to live with their birth family, and for whom adoption has been agreed as the plan, can move without delay to a permanent, stable, and loving family in which their needs will be fully met throughout their lives. This can only be achieved if the needs of all of those touched by adoption or special guardianship are also supported, including adoptive parents, special guardians, adopted adults and birth relatives.

Adopt Thames Valley's vision is to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults affected by adoption and special guardianship by:

- Working closely with our partner local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs.
- Targeted recruitment and the establishment of a wide and diverse pool of prospective adopters
- Matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families.
- Providing creative and outstanding adoption and special guardianship support services
- Investing in our workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.
- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working.
- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults, and staff with whom we work to develop and improve the services provided.

4. Registered Manager/Responsible Officers

The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for Swindon Borough Council (URN 1023252), under regulation 5 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003, is Sean Maguire Corporate Parenting Manager. The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for Wokingham Council (URN 1022959) is Estelle Kelleway (Assistant Director Children's Services Quality Assurance). The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (URN 1023271) is Sarah Moran, Deputy Director of Children's Social Care. The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for Oxfordshire (URN 1023230) is Rebekah Pearson, Assistant Director of Countywide Services. The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for West Berkshire (URN 1023265) is Rebecca Wilshire, Service Director Children's Social Care, The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for Bracknell Forest (URN 1023376) is Peter Hodges, Head of Service and the Registered Manager/Responsible Officer for Reading (URN 2509643) is Karis Williams, Head of Service: How We Care. Fostering, Kinship, Permanence and Residential Homes services.

Each of the partner local authorities nominates senior officers with experience of adoption as Agency Decision Maker(s) (ADM) who are responsible for Should Be Placed for Adoption (SHOBPA) Decisions, and adoption matches made within Adopt Thames Valley for all children for whom they hold corporate responsibility, and for approvals of adopters living within their area.

The ADMs for Oxfordshire children are Rebekah Pearson, Interim Assistant Director of Countywide Services; Sophie Black Interim Assistant Director Early Help, Schools & Communities, Carol Douch Deputy Director Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships, and Improvement, Delia Mann, Deputy Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help and Judith Bennett, Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting. The ADMs

for Swindon children are Sean Maguire Director Corporate Parenting and Steven Orchard, Interim Head of Service Corporate Parenting. The ADMs for Bracknell Forest children are Sonia Johnson, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Peter Hodges Head of Service. The ADMs for West Berkshire Children's Social Care are Rebecca Wilshire, Service Director for Children's Social Care and Karl Davis Service Manager Children in Care. The ADMs for Wokingham children are Adam Davis, Assistant Director, Children's Services (Social Care and Early Help) and Estelle Kelleway Assistant Director Childrens Services Quality Assurance). The ADMs for Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead children are Lin Ferguson, Director of Children's Social Care and Sarah Moran, Deputy Director Children's Social Care. The ADM for Reading is Karis Williams, Interim Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Gail Hancock, Head of Family Help and Sarah Gladish, Head of Best Practice and PSW.

Justine Manning, Joint Interim Head of Service Adopt Thames Valley, and Claire Corcoran Joint Interim Head of Service Adopt Thames Valley fulfil the role of ADM for all ATV adopter approvals except in the following circumstances:

- where the adopters are being both approved for, and linked with a specific child, at the same Panel, in which case the ADM for the child will make both decisions.
- Where the Head of Service Adopt Thames Valley is unable to act as ADM.

5. Organisational Structure of Adopt Thames Valley

The service is led and managed by the Interim Heads of Service Adopt Thames Valley, Claire Corcoran and Justine Manning. Claire Corcoran's qualifications include the following: BSC hons in Sociology and CQSW from University of Bath 1992). Justine Manning's qualifications include the following: BA Honours in History from the University of Warwick (1993); and Masters in Applied Social Studies and Diploma in Social Work from the University of Oxford (1996)

The Adoption Team (Oxfordshire and Swindon) is managed by 1 fte (full time equivalent) Adoption Service Manager, 2 fte Adoption Team Managers (TMs) I fte Assistant Team Manager (ATM) post, 6 fte social workers and 6 fte senior practitioners and 1 fte family support worker.

There is a pool of sessional workers to be used for home studies and non-agency adoptions.

The Adoption Team (Woodley) is comprised of 1 fte Adoption Team Manager (TM)and 1 fte Assistant Team Manager (ATM), 5.2 fte senior practitioners, 2.3fte social workers and 1 fte family support worker.

The three full-time Adoption Panel and Agency Advisors provide advice on approvals and matching to the Adopt Thames Valley Adoption Panels, and to the ADMs in the 7 local authorities in relation to decisions as to whether a child should be placed for adoption.

The Permanence Support Team is comprised of 2 fte Team Managers (TM), 1.2 fte Assistant Team Managers (ATM), 17.8 fte social workers, 1 fte Permanence Support Coordinator and 1 fte Clinical Psychologist.

The Anchor Team (Multi-disciplinary team) is comprised of 0.5fte Service Manager; 2.2 fte Clinical Psychologists; 1fte Education Psychologist; 1fte Occupational Therapist; 1.5fte Senior Practitioner; 0.6fte Business Support.

The service also employs a full-time marketing & recruitment manager.

All social workers, senior practitioners and managers are registered with Social Work England.

The service is supported by 10.42 fte business support staff including a full-time business support team leader, panel administrators, and enquiry officer.

Organisational charts with details of staffing structure and administrative support structure are attached at Appendices C and D.

All ATV Staff are based at one of three offices - in Oxford City, Swindon, and Woodley. Social workers have laptops and smartphones and can work from any of the three offices, from home or from other hot-desking points across the region.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The successful delivery of the services provided by Adopt Thames Valley is dependent on a high level of joint working between Adopt Thames Valley and the seven partner local authorities. The table below sets out how Adopt Thames Valley and the seven local authorities will ensure effective working together in relation to the main functions in the best interests of children and families affected by or created through adoption

or special guardianship. More detail is provided in **Appendix B - Schedule of Responsibilities** which forms part of the Inter Authority Agreement between the seven local authorities.

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage 1 and Stage 2 functions including training	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report (PAR)	✓	
Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for approval of adopters	✓	✓
Post-approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
PERMANENCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to childcare social work teams on the adoption process	✓	✓
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement		✓
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report (CPR)		✓
Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for “Should be placed for Adoption” (SBPFA) decisions		✓
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	

Children we care for reviews		✓
Ensuring the child's permanency medical report and Child Permanence Report are kept up to date		✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	✓
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement		✓
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency Advisor role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for Matching prospective adopters and child		✓
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	✓
Reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs for prospective adopters		
Visiting the child and adopters post placement	✓ (where the child is placed with ATV adopters)	✓
Convening adoption reviews starting 3 months after the Placement order is made whether the child is placed for adoption or not.		✓
Support to family post-placement, and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓ (where the child is placed with ATV)	✓
Decisions and delivery of financial support such as adoption allowances or settling-in grants where applicable		✓
Funding of specialist therapeutic support packages pre-adoption order, including applications to the Adoption Support Fund		✓

Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order –	✓	
Completing the Annex, A court report	✓ (where the child is placed with ATV adopters)	✓
Preparation of life story book and later life letter		✓
ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT		
Assessment for adoption or special guardianship support	✓	✓
Developing and delivering adoption and special guardianship support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre- and post- Adoption Order	✓	✓
Adoption and special guardianship support delivery including: • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption/special guardianship training • Independent Birth Relative Support service • Support with ongoing birth relative contact including letterbox • Specialist Life Story Work practitioners • Birth records counselling and services for adults affected by adoption	✓	
Financial support to adopters and special guardians including adoption and special guardianship allowances		✓
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		

Annexe A Reports where foster carers adopt a child on a Care Order in a long-term foster placement. (ATV shares the responsibility for writing these Annex A reports with the Local Authority).	√	√
Stepparent/partner adoption assessments	✓	
In-family adoption assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments, post approval support and matching done by ICA and once the child arrives in the UK, welfare visits, Annex A and support with Court application done by ATV	✓	

7. Adopt Thames Valley Adoption Panel

Adopt Thames Valley operates two Adoption Panels within its Region, constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations, and guidance. The Panels have one Central List from which Panel members are drawn. Each panel has an independent chairperson, and there is no legal maximum number of Panel members at each Panel but in practice, usually a maximum of 6 or 7 attends each Panel, including the Panel Chair. Medical advice to Panels is provided on a rota basis. Each Panel is serviced by a full-time Panel Administrator and has access to legal advice if needed. The professional advice to the Panel is provided by the three Agency Advisors, one of whom will attend each Panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.

Current membership includes individuals with personal experience of adoption (adopters, adopted adults, birth relatives of adopted people), and other independent members based in education settings. It also includes social workers both with direct experience of adoption work and those based in various settings, care experienced and fostering. Panels are balanced as far as possible in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and experience.

The functions of the Panel in relation to adoption matters are:

- to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child.

- to recommend whether a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters is a suitable one.
- in circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no placement order is applied for, to recommend whether the child should be placed for adoption.

The Panel can also give advice about the suitability of applicants to fulfil the fostering role in early permanence placements; numbers and ages of children in relation to prospective adopters; about post-adoption contact; delegated parental responsibility and adoption support plans. The Panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the timescales as set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.

The Adopt Thames Valley Adoption Panels make recommendations based on written reports prepared in advance by the child's social worker and adoption social worker, and on the social worker and/or team manager's attendance at Panel to discuss and clarify any issues relevant to the application. When considering the approval of prospective adopters, or a match between prospective adopters and a child, adoptive applicants have the option of attending Panel in person. Applicants who decide not to attend in person are not disadvantaged in any way and no judgement is made from their decision not to do so, although every effort will be made to assist their attendance.

The recommendations and advice of the Panel are referred, along with the final minutes of the meeting, to the relevant Agency Decision Maker (ADM), for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the timescales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

8. Systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of services

Adopt Thames Valley will undergo regular internal and external scrutiny to ensure that services are robust and of good quality. This will be achieved by:

- Collection and scrutiny of quarterly data, recording outcomes for children and adopters.
- Submission of quarterly Adoption & Special Guardianship data
- Tracking systems to measure the timescales involved for providing services.
- Adopt Thames Valley's Operational Management Board quarterly meetings to review outcomes against key performance indicators and national standards, and to review budgets and the financial state of the agency.

- Panel Advisors and ATV Panel Independent Chairs providing quality assurance feedback on the quality of reports being presented to the Panels and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent, and fair approach across the region in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement.
- Panel Advisors providing individual and/or group support/training to social workers/managers on the quality of Child Permanence Reports, including whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and monitoring adopter approvals and matches for timeliness and compliance with regulations.
- Annual reports by the ATV Head of Service to the ATV Oversight Board and to the executive officers of each Council. These reports address the management, outcomes, and financial state of the agency, and monitor the management and outcomes of the service, to satisfy the local authorities delegating adoption functions to ATV that the agency is effective, achieving good outcomes for children and other service users.
- Regular team meetings in each team and regular whole-service meetings to consider and analyse performance across the service and for staff to take part in practice development sessions.
- Service user feedback sought at various stages of the adoption process – for example, after Preparation Group, after approval and linking Panels and from those accessing adoption and special guardianship support.
- Regular evaluation of Preparation Group and training courses for adopters/special guardian to improve service-user experience and inform the development of the service.
- Second-opinion visits to prospective adopters where issues arise during the assessment.
- Statutory reviews, chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), and planning meetings providing a structure for the agency to record progress in individual cases.
- Routine monitoring of staff performance during regular supervision sessions with line managers.
- Induction programme for new Adoption Panel members and annual appraisals for all members, including the Independent Chairs, to monitor performance.
- Auditing of case files.
- ATV Annual Report and update of the Statement of Purpose.
- Quality assurance of PARs & APRs by ADMs & Panel Advisors.
- Feedback following involvement in partner Ofsted inspections.

9. Complaints and compliments

All of those receiving a service in relation to adoption or special guardianship by Adopt Thames Valley will be advised of their right to make representations or complaints.

Some adoption and Special Guardianship services are provided by both the Regional Adoption Agency, and the Placing Local Authority. Therefore, those wishing to make a representation of complaint about the service they have received which is the responsibility of the placing agency, will be directed to the relevant local authority complaints procedure.

The Complaints team for Oxfordshire County Council manages all complaints and compliments according to Local Authority procedures and legislation. The Adopt Thames Valley Service Manager monitors the progress of all complaints and compliments specifically relating to the service. There is a protocol in place which defines how complaints are managed which are received by or about the services provided by staff in Adopt Thames Valley.

Contact details:

Comments and Complaints team
Law and Governance
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall (4th Floor)
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Tel: 01865 323589
commentsandcomplaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk

A Children's Guide to Adoption is given to all children where the decision has been made that they should be placed for adoption. This contains local information about adoption, a summary of what happens at each stage of the adoption process, including at court, how long each stage

should take, how a child can find out about their rights, how to contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, how to secure access to an independent advocate, how to make a complaint and how to contact the Children's Rights Officer and Ofsted.

Contact details for Ofsted:

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD
Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
General enquiries 0300 123 1231
The helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

Appendices

Appendix A – ATV Vision & Values

The vision and values statement below is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards for Adoption and reflects the values of Adopt Thames Valley.

Vision

Our Vision

- Adopt Thames Valley finds permanent, loving families for all adoptive children, ensuring their safety and security.
- Children are matched and move in with their permanent family in a timely way.
- Children and families receive timely support when needed.

ATV is committed to:

Strengthening roots.



Supporting children and adults to grow and thrive.



Standing together no matter the weather.



Adopt Thames Valley

Our Values

Keeping Children at the Centre.



- Ensuring the child's welfare, safety, and needs are prioritised throughout the adoption process.
- Valuing and promoting a child's ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and sexuality.
- Implementing a trauma-informed approach.
- Encouraging and establishing connections between children and their birth families.
- Moving children to their adoptive family without delay.

Including Everyone.



- Respecting and embracing difference and diversity.
- Using inclusive imagery and language that is welcoming and non-judgmental.
- Making services accessible and responsive to individual needs.
- Recruiting adopters from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTQ+, single individuals, older adults, Black, Asian, and other underrepresented groups.
- Aiming for a diverse and experienced workforce and Adoption panel.

Supporting and Connecting.



- Offering holistic support for children and families at the point of need.
- Empowering and enabling children and families.
- Connecting people through social activities and events.
- Walking alongside children and families who are in difficulty.
- Helping those encountering challenges.
- Delivering a comprehensive training programme.

Embedding Voice and Influence.



- Engaging with and valuing feedback from individuals with lived experience of adoption.
- Prioritising the voices of children and being responsive to their needs and wishes.
- Recognising and appreciating everyone's unique perspective and contribution.
- Committing to transparency, honesty, and openness in all aspects of our work.
- Integrating the insights of adopters, adopted individuals, and birth families in shaping policy, training, and practice development.

Working in Partnership.



- Providing a friendly and respectful reception to all.
- Working alongside and in partnership.
- Demonstrating efficiency and professionalism.
- Delivering and contributing to training to improve adoption practices.
- Supporting and advising colleagues on adoption related matters.
- Building and maintaining close working relationships with partners.

Growing & Learning.



- Providing staff with regular training, support, and recognition.
- Utilising evidence-based practice.
- Implementing innovative practice to improve services.
- Enhancing service delivery.
- Sharing expertise and best practice with colleagues.
- Maintaining a safe and open culture to support growth and change.

My Adoptosaurus



My social worker said to me one day,
“I have something very important that I want to say.

I need to find you an adoptive parent you see,
And I wondered who that special person could be”.

So, I thought long and hard about what I would need,
And realised it would have to be a very special person indeed!

They would need ears like an elephant to hear what I say,
And the face of a puppy always eager to play.

The arms of a monkey to catch me when I fall,
And the body of a bear to give the greatest hugs of them all.

The wise eyes of an owl to see who I really am,
Keeping me calm when I want to scream and slam.

The heart of a lion as courageous as can be,
Standing by my side when I’m scared to be me.

The feet of a penguin, stable and steady when I slip,
Walking alongside me and teaching me to skip.

The strength of a horse, willing to go the extra mile,

And friendly like a dolphin, encouraging me to smile.

The wings of an eagle, helping me to fly,
And busy like a beaver, making my home safe and dry.

But surely there is no one who can meet this list,
Surely my adoptosaurus does not really exist.

Then one day out of the blue, my social said,
"I've found someone especially for you"

And now we have a bright future ahead of us,
me and my very own adoptosaurus!

By Claire Corcoran. copyright Adopt Thames Valley (2022)

Appendix B - Schedule of Responsibilities

THE CHILD

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Case Responsibility	The local authority will retain and develop in-house expertise to support staff making permanence plans for children. The local authority is responsible for support and training its own staff who are engaged in adoption work. The local authority will retain case management responsibility for the child until the making of the Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order. The local authority will be responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to: ▪ Statutory visits ▪ Monitoring and overseeing the child's care plan.	ATV Adoption teams can provide specialist advice and support regarding family finding and where the adopters are approved by ATV, support of adoptive placements pre-order. ATV Permanence Support Teams can assist local authority staff to fully understand the potential lifelong support needs of adopted and special guardianship children, influencing and promoting best practice. ATV Panel Advisors and Family Finders can assist the local authority with advice around the process of approving a plan for adoption for relinquished babies.	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	▪ Management and supervision of contact between child and family members Supervision, administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers (including for early permanence placements) In the case of relinquished babies, the local authority will obtain early legal advice and retain case management responsibility until the Adoption Order has been made.		
Early identification of children requiring adoption	The local authority is responsible for identifying children who may require adoption and making the child and their needs known to ATV at the earliest possible opportunity, including pre-birth, and providing relevant and timely written family finding referrals.	ATV will allocate a Family Finder to each child identified where adoption is confirmed as the Care Plan (by the Agency Decision Maker) and, where possible, when adoption is identified as a likely Care Plan and, where appropriate, to begin to identify suitable adopters at an early stage. Where appropriate, staff from ATV will be involved in identifying children for early permanence placements. Representatives of ATV will provide consultations on individual cases in each local authority. Consultations can be provided through the ATV Duty Service, from the allocated family finder, or by attending Permanency Planning Meetings coordinated by the local authority for the child.	Detail for each local authority to be developed in conjunction with care planning leads. ATV aims to develop working practices in conjunction with each local authority to ensure close involvement in care planning, to assist with the earliest possible identification and to provide external challenge.

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
		ATV will be represented at Permanence Tracking Meetings to better understand the needs of the children who are likely to require adoption.	
Early Permanence	The local authority has a duty to consider whether an early permanence (Fostering for Adoption/concurrency) placement would be appropriate for any child for whom they are considering a plan for adoption, in line with Section 22c (9B) (c) of the Children Act 1989. This consideration will include the local authority notifying ATV at the earliest possible stage of any such child. If early permanence is not initially appropriate for a child, continuing communication, and case monitoring to ensure early permanence considerations are kept in consideration are the responsibility of the local authority. The local authority designated ADM is responsible for making the decision about whether the child should be placed in an early permanence placement under Regulation 25a of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.	ATV will provide consultation advice and training to the local authority about early permanence placements, so that the local authorities can make appropriate referrals for such placements. Where appropriate, and in agreement with the local authority, ATV will identify a suitable family to provide an early permanence placement for children who have been identified as requiring this form of placement (Placements will depend on the availability of appropriate carers within the Region or with local Voluntary Agencies.)	The fostering element of an early permanence placement, including support to the foster carers, will remain the responsibility of the local authority. It may be possible, in negotiation with ATV, for this role to be provided by the adoption social worker. In recruiting, assessing, and preparing prospective adopters, ATV will encourage all those applying to adopt to positively consider the benefits for the child of early permanence.
Agency decision for early	The local authority will prepare the relevant paperwork for the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in the local authority to agree to a placement under		

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
permanence placement	Regulation 25a of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010. It is a joint responsibility between ATV and the LA to provide the relevant paperwork to the ADM in the local authority for consideration, and the LA will be responsible for any formal notifications to the fostering service, the prospective foster carers/adopters, birth parents and court.		
	The local authority will be responsible for all payments to the prospective adopters/foster carers while the placement remains an early permanence placement.		
Tracking of children requiring adoption	The local authority will track the progress of all 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.	ATV will actively track all children notified to them by the local authority with a plan for adoption or for whom initial information indicates that adoption may become the plan.	ATV will agree with each local authority a process to regularly share this information between agencies.
Adoption Reports	The local authority will be responsible for the completion of all reports relating to the child prior to an Adoption Order being made. The local authority will implement a system to train staff and quality assure these reports. The local authority social worker will be responsible for the completion of the Child Permanence Report	ATV can provide advice and support in relation to the completion of the Child Permanence Report (CPR), keeping in touch arrangements and external challenge to help ensure that CPRs are of a consistent high quality across partnership local authorities.	It will be necessary for the local authority and ATV to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that all relevant Information is included in the CPR and that the report is of a high standard.

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	(CPR) for the child. The local authority social workers manager is responsible for ensuring the CPR meets the required standard and for countersigning this report. The local authority will be responsible for collating all the paperwork required for the ADM decision and for updating the CPR, following the making of Care and Placement Orders, for the matching process. This includes the completion of together or apart assessments and keeping in touch arrangements (post adoption contact) where relevant. The local authority line manager is responsible for quality assuring the content of the CPR and signing the CPR prior to submission to ATV Panels.	ATV will be responsible for the final quality assurance of all CPRs being presented to the ADM, and it is for ATV alone to decide whether the report is adequate for submission to the ADM.	Local authorities with a court progression worker will support social workers to understand the standard expected of CPRs and the timely submission of papers to ADM. The ATV Keeping in touch assessment tool can be provided to assist with assessing appropriate post adoption contact arrangements.
Assessment of child's needs prior to permanence	The local authority will be responsible for assessing the child's adoption support or special guardianship support needs in respect of a future placement. This includes the completion of together or apart assessments. Each local authority will be responsible for providing any financial support agreed in the adoption support or special guardianship support plan.	ATV will be responsible for the early, and any subsequent, needs profile of the child and in identifying early matching considerations. This will include considering information and advice from permanence support services on the potential needs of the child once placed, and potential sources of future support. ATV will also provide support and advice to workers undertaking specialist assessments e.g., sibling assessments.	It will be necessary for ATV and the local authority to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the child can be met, the risks addressed, and that planned support is sustainable.

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	The provision of any funding to support an adoption or special guardianship placement, whether a one-off payment or ongoing payments, remains the responsibility of the child's local authority.	ATV will provide information and advice to the local authority in relation to meeting the placement and support needs of the child and the need for post-order support services.	A consultation with the ATV Matching hub may be appropriate to consider for some children.
Permanence Medicals	The local authority will be responsible for obtaining all required medical information including completed CoramBAAF M and B reports (Obstetric and Neo Natal Reports), CoramBAAF PH reports (reports on the birth parents' current and family health history) in respect of children who are being considered for adoption. The local authority will be responsible for liaising with the Agency Medical Adviser to refer and arrange the Permanence Medical so that the report is available for the ADM making the 'Should be placed for Adoption' decision. The local authority social worker will arrange with the foster carer to take the child to the medical and should also attend in person. It is important that advice contained in the Permanency Medical reports is actioned.		

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
'Should be placed for Adoption' (SHOBPA) decision	The designated Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in each local authority will be responsible for the 'Should be placed for Adoption' decision for the child. The local authority will undertake a regular review of this decision and associated plans and keep ATV informed in a timely way of any changes/significant developments regarding care planning for the child. If the local authority proposes subsequently to change the plan away from adoption, the ADM will be provided with updating paperwork and will be asked to agree the change of plan before it is actioned. It is important that this happens in a timely manner, usually within one month after a Children We Care For (CWCF) review proposes a change of Care Plan. The local authority should also apply for the revocation of the Placement Order in a timely manner following a change of plan away from adoption, after a Placement Order has been made.	ATV will support the decision-making process and will have an advisory and quality assurance role in this process. ATV will provide professional advice to the local authority Agency Decision Maker (ADM). ATV will provide guidance on the process for changes of plans away from adoption and support the process, providing an advisory role where appropriate. ATV can provide professional advice to the local authority ADM if requested in considering a change of plan away from adoption.	
Formal notifications	The local authority will take responsibility for informing birth parents of 'Should be placed for	ATV will be responsible for informing prospective adopters of ADM decisions regarding their suitability as adopters.	There will be a need for the local authority to identify who in their agency will take

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
following ADM decisions	Adoption' decisions – within 2 days of the decision verbally and within 5 days in writing. The local authority will be responsible for informing birth parents of adoption links agreed by the ADM.	ATV will be responsible for informing prospective adopters of an adoption match agreed by the ADM.	responsibility for the formal notifications of 'Should be placed for Adoption' decisions.
Family Finding Process	The local authority will work in partnership with ATV in the family finding process and will ensure Family Finding Referrals are completed in a timely way. The local authority is responsible for tracking the progress of each case.	ATV will lead the family finding process in consultation with the local authority.	
Communication during the family finding process	It will be the responsibility of the local authority to keep the CPR updated and to inform the family finder of any changes in the child's development or circumstances (e.g., change of placement). Should a Family finding report be requested by the court, ATV should be notified promptly with clear directions as to content requested.	A Family Finder will be allocated at the point a 'Should be placed for Adoption' decision is made. ATV will continue to monitor children where adoption is likely to be the care plan via attendance at permanency planning meetings. ATV will keep the local authority regularly updated about progress on family finding.	
Priority Children	The local authority is responsible for identifying at the earliest opportunity a child with a likely plan for adoption where the child is: ▪ Aged 4 or over.	ATV may recommend a specific service is commissioned for Priority Children which may involve some or all the following: ▪ Increased publicity – DVD, photos etc ▪ Profile the child at specific events.	

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	▪ From a BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) heritage ▪ Part of a sibling group of 2 or more ▪ Has a disability or medical condition. The local authority will gather and assess the relevant information and forward a Family Finding Referral to ATV as soon as possible. Where targeted recruitment such as Press, Radio and Digital Media advertising is needed, the local authority will be responsible for obtaining the relevant consents to such advertising, and for the costs involved.	▪ Attempt to recruit adopters specifically for the child. ▪ Provide additional training and preparation for potential adopters. ▪ Advise on or assist with additional preparation work with the child. ▪ Liaise with social worker/foster carer and supervising social worker to gain information regarding the child. ▪ Co-ordinate with any specialist family finding services the local authority has commissioned. ▪ ATV Marketing Manager can advise about specialist media advertising	
Preparation of the child for permanence	The local authority social worker is responsible for all statutory duties and direct work with the child in relation to permanency planning and care proceedings. The local authority is responsible for preparing the child for an adoptive or special guardianship placement.	ATV will provide Childrens Guides to Adoption for all children with a confirmed plan for adoption (Pip and Zaz)	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	This direct work with children should be ongoing during permanency planning so that children understand the plans.		
Life Story Books	The local authority will be responsible for the preparation of the child's Life Story Book, for both adoptive and special guardianship placements. Collection of materials for the Life Story Book should start early in the child's looked after journey. For children with a plan for adoption, the first draft of the book will be handed to the prospective adopters at the latest by the second adoption review, with the completed book being handed over within 10 days of the Adoption Order Hearing. An electronic version will be made available to adopters as well as a paper copy. The local authority will keep a copy of the child's Life Story Book on the child's adoption file. It is good practice for children to have the first draft of their life story book prior to their move to an adoptive family. In the case of Special Guardianship Orders, good practice would also be for the Life Story Book to be handed to the Special Guardians within 10 days of	ATV will offer advice and consultation to the local authority on the production of Life Story Books.	

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	the Order being made, and an electronic version to be made available as well as a paper copy.		
Later Life Letter	The local authority will be responsible for completing the Later Life Letter and handing it to the adopters within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing. Good practice would be for the Later Life Letter to be handed to the Special Guardians within 10 days of the Order being made.	ATV will offer advice and consultation to the local authority on the formatting and production of Later Life Letters.	
Letterbox contact and keeping in touch plans	The local authority will be responsible for referring to the letterbox service for their area.	ATV will deliver a letterbox service	
Adoption Matching and Linking	The child's social worker and preferably the team manager will attend any linking and matching meetings and the adoption panel.	ATV will take lead responsibility for all aspects of the adoption linking and matching process, but the local authority will make the final decision regarding a match. Where these are held, ATV will chair adopter shortlisting, linking and formal matching meetings as part of the process. ATV is responsible for ensuring that the adopters who are matched to the child/children have a	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
		consultation with the medical advisor prior to panel, including where a child has been placed on an early permanence basis.	
	The local authority is responsible for: ▪ Updating the Child Permanence Report. This report should be updated at least every 3 months so that the description of the child, their interests, personality, and needs remain accurate, otherwise this compromises family finding. ▪ Ensuring the child's permanency medical report is no more than a year old for children over age 2 years, and no more than 6 months old for children under 2 years. ▪ Following the Somerset judgement, the local authority needs to ensure the full medical advisers summary is incorporated into the CPR to consider fully as part of the SBPFA decision. ▪ Ensuring the APR accurately reflects the needs of the child.	ATV is responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Report (APR) where the adopters are ATV adopters. To include a comprehensive post adoption support plan, completed in consultation with the LA. ATV will arrange, Chair, and facilitate the Matching/Linking Panel.	

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Matching decisions	The Agency Decision Maker in each local authority will be responsible for making the Matching decision.	ATV will support the ADM Matching decision to meet timescales and ensure all relevant information is available including Panel minutes.	Panel and ADM meetings and processes will need to be closely co-ordinated between ATV and the local authority to meet timescales and ensure all relevant information is available.
Formal notifications prior to the placement of a child	The local authority will take responsibility for sending out formal notifications of a child's placement to health, education and to the local authority where the child will be living post-placement, including where children are placed on an early permanence basis.		
Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances	The local authority will meet the costs of the introduction expenses for their own foster carers or IFA foster carers. Adoption and special guardianship allowance assessments are undertaken by the local authority prior to placement and where eligible. Adoption allowances are reviewed annually by the child's local authority.	ATV will refund agreed expenses for prospective adopters during linking and introductions, including adopters from external agencies.	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	Special guardianship allowances are reviewed by the child's local authority and within the timescale set at each review. Any discretionary settling in grants or exceptional allowances will be agreed by the local authority e.g., vehicles for larger sibling groups.		
Pre-order applications to the Adoption Support Fund	The local authority will be responsible for assessing the pre-order adoption or special guardianship therapeutic support needs of the child. The local authority will be responsible for timely completion of the reports needed for an application to the Adoption Support Fund and to provide this to ATV. The local authority will be responsible for sourcing an appropriate provider to meet the assessed therapeutic needs.	ATV will provide advice on the potential therapeutic support needs of adopted children, and on the sourcing of therapeutic providers. However, where the adopters are approved by an external agency and live outside the region, then advice will need to be sought from the adopter's own agency. ATV will submit the Adoption Support Fund application, using the assessment, costings and other commissioning information provided by the local authority.	
Application for an Adoption Order	The local authority will ensure the prospective adopters have a copy of the child's birth certificate and Placement Order, for them to lodge their application to adopt the child. The child's social worker is responsible for the completing the Annex A report with input for	Where the prospective adopters are ATV adopters, then ATV will support and advise them in completing their application to adopt to be submitted to the Court. Where the prospective adopters are ATV adopters, the link social worker will complete section C of the	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	Section C from the prospective adopters' link social worker. The local authority will be responsible for submitting the completed Annex A Report to the Court when requested. Where the local authority wishes to submit the Annex A report with the adoption application this will be their responsibility. In the event of a contested adoption, where a birth parent seeks and is granted leave to contest, then the local authority is responsible for funding any agreed legal representation for the prospective adopters.	Annex A report and provide this to the child's social worker. NB! Where a foster carer is adopting a child, the local authority may be best placed to write this section of the Annex A report. This will be agreed with the Local Authority) on a case-by-case basis. Where the prospective adopters are approved by another adoption agency it would normally be that agency who would support them in submitting their application to adopt. ATV will reimburse the Court fee where prospective adopters request this.	
Child's Adoption File	The local authority is responsible for creating and completing the child's adoption file. The regulations stipulate that the adoption file should be created as soon as the Care Plan becomes Adoption.	ATV will ensure the child's social worker receives copies of family finding and matching documents for the child's adoption file.	
Pre-order Disruptions	The local authority will have responsibility for placements that disrupt prior to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Order being made and will activate their own procedures in these circumstances.	ATV will support the disruption process and work closely with the local authority in such cases, including providing attendance at disruption meetings.	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	The local authority is responsible for presenting papers for recourse to Panel, where Adoption Disruption Meetings have taken place. The Adoption Advisor can support social workers with the papers required for Panel for children where this has occurred.		
Applications to the court and Annex A's	The local authority is responsible for writing the birth parent and child's sections of the Annex A. The local authority is responsible for collecting the application forms and documents from the prospective adopters. The local authority is responsible for collating the Annex A and checking the content with legal. The local authority is responsible for ensuring the application form, documents and Annex A are submitted to the court, either hand delivered or by recorded delivery. NB. where the application process is online, the Link worker to the prospective adopter will support the adopters with submitting the application online.	When the child is placed with an ATV adopter, the adopter's social worker will write the adopter's section of the Annex A report and send it to the child's social worker. NB! Where a foster carer is adopting a child, the local authority may be best placed to write this section of the Annex A report. This will be agreed with the LA on a case-by-case basis. When the child is placed with an ATV adopter, the adopter's social worker will assist the adopters with the application form and gathering their documents and arrange for the reimbursement of the fee. In inter agency placements, ATV will still reimburse the court fee if the child's social worker tells us they have, or are about to, submit the papers to the court.	

NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
The Local Authority receive an enquiry from someone interested in adopting a stepchild or other child they are raising (non-agency adoption)	The local authority must provide 'advice and counselling' about the process and about alternatives to adoption.	Enquiry comes to the Enquiry Officer who refers it to the manager or ATM dealing with enquiries for each area. Advice is given on a 1:1 basis via phone or video platform by the manager or ATM. Written information and an application form is sent to them via e mail.	
If the person wishes to proceed with an application, they need to formally notify the Local Authority of their "intention to proceed."		The completed application form acts as their notification of intention to adopt. Once the application, including signed consent to checks, is received, and accepted, the applicant(s) are notified.	
To apply for an Adoption Order, the prospective adopter lodges an application with the court, "no less than 3 months and no more than 2 years after giving the formal (written) notification" to the local authority.	The local authority is responsible for collating the Annex A and checking the content with the legal team who quality assures the report (this does not happen in Swindon). The Annex A should be submitted to the Court via the legal department or directly.	During the 3-month period from receiving the notification of intent to adopt and when the applicant(s) can make their application to the Court, the manager of non-agency adoptions will allocate a qualified social worker to work with the family to prepare the Annex A report which the Court will require.	

ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
RECRUITMENT OF ADOPTERS	The local authority 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 ATV website and not to any other agency.	ATV will be responsible for recruiting adopters appropriate to the needs of children waiting in each local authority. ATV are responsible for annual reviews of adopters if adopters are not matched within a year. Marketing information will reflect the fact that ATV is delivering the service on behalf of partnering local authorities.	
Enquiries	The local authority will signpost any enquiries from potential adopters to ATV and not to any other agency.	ATV will provide a centralised enquiry process to meet all statutory requirements. ATV will provide written information to potential adopters and hold a programme of information events.	
Foster carers wishing to adopt a child in their care	The local authority will advise the foster carers to make a formal enquiry to ATV. The local authority will share its considered opinion on the suitability of this match to ATV and will provide any relevant information. The local authority is responsible for paying any transitionary adoption allowance to former foster carers.	ATV will liaise closely with the local authority to consider enquires from a child's foster carer, and where appropriate to fully assess them as prospective adopters.	

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Stage 1	The local authority will provide all information required for statutory checks of potential adopters who are resident in the local authority.	ATV will undertake all Stage 1 functions.	
Stage 2		ATV will undertake all Stage 2 functions.	
Legal and Medical advice in respect of adopter assessments and approvals	Funding for legal advice for foster carers who wish to adopt is provided by the local authority	ATV will be responsible for obtaining legal and medical advice for adopters.	
Prospective Adopter Reports		ATV will complete the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR).	
Approvals		ATV will arrange, Chair, and facilitate the Adoption Approval Panel. ATV Agency Decision Makers will be responsible for all adopter approvals and de-registrations will be accepted by the Head of Service for ATV when requested by approved adopter/s.	

PREPARATION OF THE ADULTS FOR PERMANENCE

Post-approval support and training for adopters		ATV will provide post-approval support and training to approved adopters.	
Preparation of prospective adopters and special guardians for post-order direct and indirect contact	The local authority is responsible for preparing prospective special guardians for post-order direct and indirect contact and supervision of in person contact where required	ATV will provide post-approval support and training to approved adopters around direct and indirect contact. ATV will provide specialist consultation to local authority staff in relation to post-order special guardianship contact.	
Preparation of birth relatives for post-order direct and indirect contact	The local authority is responsible for referring birth relatives for support regarding post-order contact.	ATV has independent birth relative workers and can provide specialist consultation to local authority staff in relation to post-order contact for birth relatives.	

PERMANENCE SUPPORT SERVICES

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Scrutiny of adoption support plans and special guardianship support plans	The local authority is responsible for developing adoption and special guardianship support plans and ensuring they are agreed by adopter/special guardians and that all parties have signed copies.	ATV is responsible for providing adoption support and special guardianship support services only where the support plan has been agreed by ATV. ATV will provide consultation services to the local authority in relation to adoption and special guardianship support plans.	ATV to provide a template support plan to local authorities of support which can be guaranteed, but if other support is needed, this will need prior discussion/agreement with ATV.
Providing information about adoption and special guardianship support	The local authority will share information about ATV to all adoptive and special guardianship families, pre- and post-order, who may require support now or in the future	ATV will provide information about adoption support and special guardianship support services for the local authority.	
Adoption and special guardianship support **NB! ATV provides SG Support for Oxfordshire, RBWM &**	The local authority will signpost all referrals for post-order support from adoptive and special guardianship families to ATV The local authority will, in exceptional circumstances, consider funding requests for special guardianship and adoption support services which are not included in the ATV core offer.	ATV is responsible for assessing the support needs of those adoptive and special guardianship families, and relevant other parties, legally eligible for an assessment, and who request an assessment. ATV is responsible for providing or commissioning all adoption support and special guardianship support services.	A referral pathway to be agreed for referrals to ATV and for referrals to the local authority for requests for funding for additional services outside the ATV core offer.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Wokingham only)		Where an assessment of support needs identifies the need for support services outside the ATV core offer (from education, health, other social care services from the local authority) ATV will refer to the relevant agency. ATV is responsible for providing adoption support and special guardianship support services only where the support plan has been agreed by ATV. ATV will facilitate the transfer of cases between ATV and other local authority outside ATV, to allow the responsible local authority to meet the support needs where a family wishes to access support.	
Adopted and special guardianship young adults	The local authority will assess adopted and special guardianship young adults over the age of 18 years for adult services where appropriate. The local authority will signpost all adopted and special guardianship young adults eligible for the Adoption Support Fund (i.e., previously LAC), up to and including the age of 21 years or 25 years if they have an Education	ATV will refer adopted and special guardianship young adults over the age of 18 years to local authority adult services where appropriate. ATV will provide special guardianship and adoption support services to young people and their families until the young person reaches 18 years.	ATV does not provide intermediary services except in exceptional cases where the additional funding involved is agreed by the responsible local authority.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	Health and Care Plan (EHCP), to ATV for an assessment of needs. The local authority will signpost Adults Affected by Adoption to ATV for services or advice and signposting as appropriate.	For young adults eligible for the Adoption Support Fund (i.e., previously children we care for), ATV will provide assessments of need and make applications to the Adoption Support Fund where appropriate until the young person reaches up to and including 21 years, or 25 years if they have an EHCP. ATV will provide Access to Adoption Records services to adopted young people and adults over the age of 18 years.	
Safeguarding referrals involving an adopted or special guardianship child	Where a safeguarding referral is made to the local authority involving an adopted or special guardianship child, the local authority is responsible for conducting any appropriate section 47 investigation and allocation of a social worker where thresholds are met. The local authority will also immediately notify ATV of the referral. Where there is an allocated social worker from ATV for a child who becomes subject to a strategy meeting, the local authority will invite ATV to contribute to the strategy meeting. Where a Section 47 investigation and Child and Family assessment is undertaken by the local authority in relation to an adopted or special guardianship child, the	Where a safeguarding concern is identified by ATV in the course of their work, and is assessed to reach safeguarding thresholds, a referral will be made to the appropriate local authority safeguarding team. Where there is an allocated ATV social worker for a child subject to a strategy meeting, ATV will contribute to the strategy meeting. Where a Section 47 investigation and Child and Family assessment is undertaken by the local authority, ATV will have a secondary role specifically in relation to special guardianship	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	local authority holds primary case responsibility and will work in partnership with ATV. Where a case proceeds to a Child Protection Plan, and where ATV's role has ended, the local authority can continue to access ATV for consultation in relation to adoption and special guardianship support when required. Where a case proceeds to a Child Protection Plan, and special guardianship or adoption support services form ATV continue, the local authority holds primary case responsibility and will work in partnership with ATV.	support or adoption support needs and will work in partnership with the local authority. Where a case proceeds to a Child Protection Plan, and this becomes primary route for providing support to the family, ATV's role will end unless there is specific ongoing support being provided through ATV in relation to special guardianship or adoption support needs. Where support services from ATV continue, this will be a secondary role specifically in relation to special guardianship support or adoption support needs, and ATV will work in partnership with the local authority.	
Post-order disruptions (safeguarding)	Where a safeguarding referral is made to the local authority in relation to a potential or actual disruption of an adoptive or special guardianship placement, the local authority is responsible for conducting the appropriate assessment or investigation and allocation of a social worker where safeguarding thresholds are met. The local authority will also immediately notify ATV of the referral. The local authority will hold case responsibility and will work in partnership with ATV.	Where an actual or potential disruption (safeguarding concern) is identified by ATV in the course of their work, a referral will be made to the appropriate local authority safeguarding team. Where a section 47 investigation and Child and Family assessment is undertaken, ATV will have a secondary role specifically in relation to special guardianship or adoption support and will work in partnership with the local authority.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	Where a case then proceeds to children we care for, Child Protection (CP) or Children in Need (CIN), and ATV's role has ended, the local authority can continue to access ATV for consultation in relation to adoption and special guardianship support when required. The local authority will inform ATV of any disruptions involving an adopted or special guardianship child. The local authority will contribute relevant information and attend post-order adoption and special guardianship disruption meetings. The local authority will provide a chair for special guardianship and adoption disruption meetings who is independent of the services involved in the child and special guardians'/adopters' pre- and post-order assessment and support.	Where a case proceeds to children we care for (first review), Children in Need (CIN) plan or a Child Protection (CP) Plan, and this becomes the primary route for providing support to the child and family, ATV's role will end unless there is specific ongoing support being provided through ATV in relation to special guardianship or adoption support needs. Where support services form ATV continue, ATV will have a secondary role specifically in relation to special guardianship support or adoption support needs and will work in partnership with the local authority. ATV will provide consultation services to the local authority social workers in relation to adoption and special guardianship disruptions. ATV will gather information about disruptions in the region involving an adopted or special guardianship child post-order. ATV will call and organise disruption meetings for open cases, where appropriate, and will contribute relevant information and attend.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Out-of-hours services	All those service users affected by permanence will have access to their local authority's Emergency Duty Team out of core hours, or their local emergency services.		
Indirect/ Letterbox contact	The local authority will share information about ATV to all adoptive and special guardianship families, pre- and post-order, who may require support now or in the future. The child's social worker is responsible for referring to the letterbox service when the child is placed. The child's social worker is responsible for ensuring that letterbox agreements are signed and recorded on the child's adoption record before transfer to ATV, supported by ATV. It is the responsibility of the child's social worker to ensure birth family members and adopters have had information about the letterbox service, and have had it explained, supported by ATV. A risk assessment for the exclusion of photo sharing is completed by the child's social worker for every letterbox referral.	ATV will provide information about letterbox services for the local authority. ATV will facilitate letterbox contact between adoptive parents and birth families, to meet the child's needs up to the age of 18 years. Letterbox services will be provided for young, adopted adults up to the age of 21 years, where there is significant need and risk, and only with the operational manager's agreement. Electronic copies of letterbox correspondence will be stored by the RAA. Letterbox services will be provided by the RAA to families affected by special guardianship only in exceptional circumstances where there is significant need and risk, and only with the operational manager's agreement.	A referral pathway for letterbox contact needs to be agreed between ATV and the local authority partners.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	Physical copies of letterbox correspondence will be stored in the local authorities' archives when the letterbox case is closed.	ATV will provide consultation services to the local authority in relation to letterbox contact.	
Supervising post-order contact, including siblings contact, for adoptive and special guardianship families	The local authority is responsible for direct supervised contact arrangements, post adoption and special guardianship order, where there is an assessed need for a contact supervisor to safely manage the risk.	ATV will support families referred for a review of contact arrangements; provide advice and guidance; and provide support to step-down from supervised to unsupervised contact arrangements. A maximum of 3 direct contacts will be facilitated by ATV in the course of this work. ATV will refer special guardianship and adoption support contact arrangements to the local authority. ATV will review and honour those adoption contact agreements, previously supervised and supported by Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service (BAAS), where there is a continued assessed need/risk. ATV will provide consultation services to the local authority in relation to supporting therapeutic contact post-order.	A referral pathway to the local authority for supervised contact will be agreed between ATV and local authority partners.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Adoption and special guardianship allowances	Adoption and special guardianship allowances and grants remain the responsibility of the local authority which agreed the support at the point of placement. Adoption and special guardianship allowances and grants will be assessed by the local authority prior to placement and, where eligible, as part of the support plan. The local authority is responsible for reviewing adoption and special guardianship allowances and grants, in line with local authority policy.	Where a post-order adoption or special guardianship family requests an allowance/grant as part of a request for support, the request will be included within the assessment of support needs conducted by ATV. Where an ATV social worker assesses a need for a financial allowance/grant, the assessment and recommendations will be referred to the local authority for a decision.	A referral pathway to the local authority for allowances to be agreed between ATV and the partner local authorities.
Adoption Support Fund (ASF)	The local authority will undertake all assessments of need in relation to adoptive and special guardianship placements pre-order. If a therapeutic need is assessed which is eligible for the ASF, the local authority will source appropriate therapeutic support and will refer to ATV to make the funding application for this support. The local authority is responsible for financial audit processes in relation to compliance with ASF requirements.	ATV will be responsible for undertaking all support needs assessments and funding applications to the ASF in relation to post-order adoption and special guardianship. ATV will provide consultation services to the local authority in relation to the ASF.	
Match funding for the Adoption	The local authority is responsible for match-funding, where the local authority decision-maker decides the	Where ATV assesses the need for match funding, the assessment and	A referral pathway to the local authority for match

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Support Fund (ASF)	application meets the local authority thresholds for match-funding support. The local authority will provide written confirmation of match-funding decisions before the RAA are able to submit an ASF application.	recommendations will be referred to the local authority for a decision.	funding to be agreed between ATV and the local authority.
Subject Access Requests (SAR)	The local authority is responsible for facilitating SARs - requests for access to a child's local authority records and files, rather than for adoption files. The local authority will liaise with ATV on open cases, to gather information to inform decisions about information sharing.	ATV will work in partnership with the local authority to inform decisions about risk and information sharing.	
Requests for access to children's adoption files	For those adoption files held by the local authority, the local authority will liaise with ATV on open cases, to gather information to inform decisions about information sharing, and to facilitate access.	For those adoption files held by ATV, ATV will facilitate access.	A referral pathway needs to be agreed for the RAA to access LA children's adoption files **referral pathway will be required at the point RAA social workers can no longer access LA files.* There is also a need for a pathway to be developed for other professionals

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
			working with these families to access pre and post order records where this is needed to facilitate their work with the family (e.g., therapeutic life-story work conducted by an external therapist)
Birth Relative Support services	The local authority will share information about RAA birth relative support services to all birth relatives affected by adoption (pre- and post- order), who may require support now or in the future. The local authority child's social worker will provide information around birth relative support services, including written information, to birth parents and to relatives affected by adoption. The local authority child's social worker is responsible for making birth relative support referrals to the RAA when the child's plan for adoption is agreed, and at any later point. The local authority will share information about RAA birth relative support services to all birth relatives affected by special guardianship, who may require support now or in	The RAA will provide information about birth relative support services for the local authority. The RAA will provide or commission all birth relative support services for birth relatives affected by adoption. Birth relative support services will be provided by ATV to families affected by special guardianship only in exceptional circumstances where there is significant need and risk, and only with the operational manager's agreement. **This is only available to Oxfordshire families currently.**	A referral pathway to be agreed between ATV and local authority partners.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
	the future. **This is only available to Oxfordshire families currently.**		
Requests for Access to Adoption records (Birth records counselling)	The local authority will signpost all requests for access to adoption records to ATV.	ATV will provide information about Access to Adoption Records services for the local authority. ATV will provide statutory services to adults affected by adoption to access their adoption records, to adopted adults living within the ATV region. Adopted adults living outside the region, but where their adoption records are held within the region, will be signposted to their local authority, but will be provided a statutory service by ATV if they request it.	A referral pathway to be agreed between ATV and local authority partners.
Intermediary service for adopted adults.	Local authority to contract if required.	Intermediary services will be provided to adopted adults only in exceptional circumstances where there is significant need and risk, and only with the operational manager's agreement.	
Intermediary service to relatives of adopted person seeking information and contact with the adopted person.	Local authority to contract if required.	The local authority can make a request to ATV to commission this work.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
(BRIC)			

SERVICE USER ENGAGEMENT

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Adoption		ATV will engage with adopters, adoptees (children, young people, and adults) and birth relatives affected by adoption, individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available.	
Special guardianship		ATV will engage with special guardians, special guardianship children and young people, and birth relatives affected by special guardianship, individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available.	
Significant others		Where appropriate, ATV will engage with significant others identified in legislation (e.g., siblings of adopted or special guardianship children), individually and in groups with the aim of improving the services available.	

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & INSPECTION

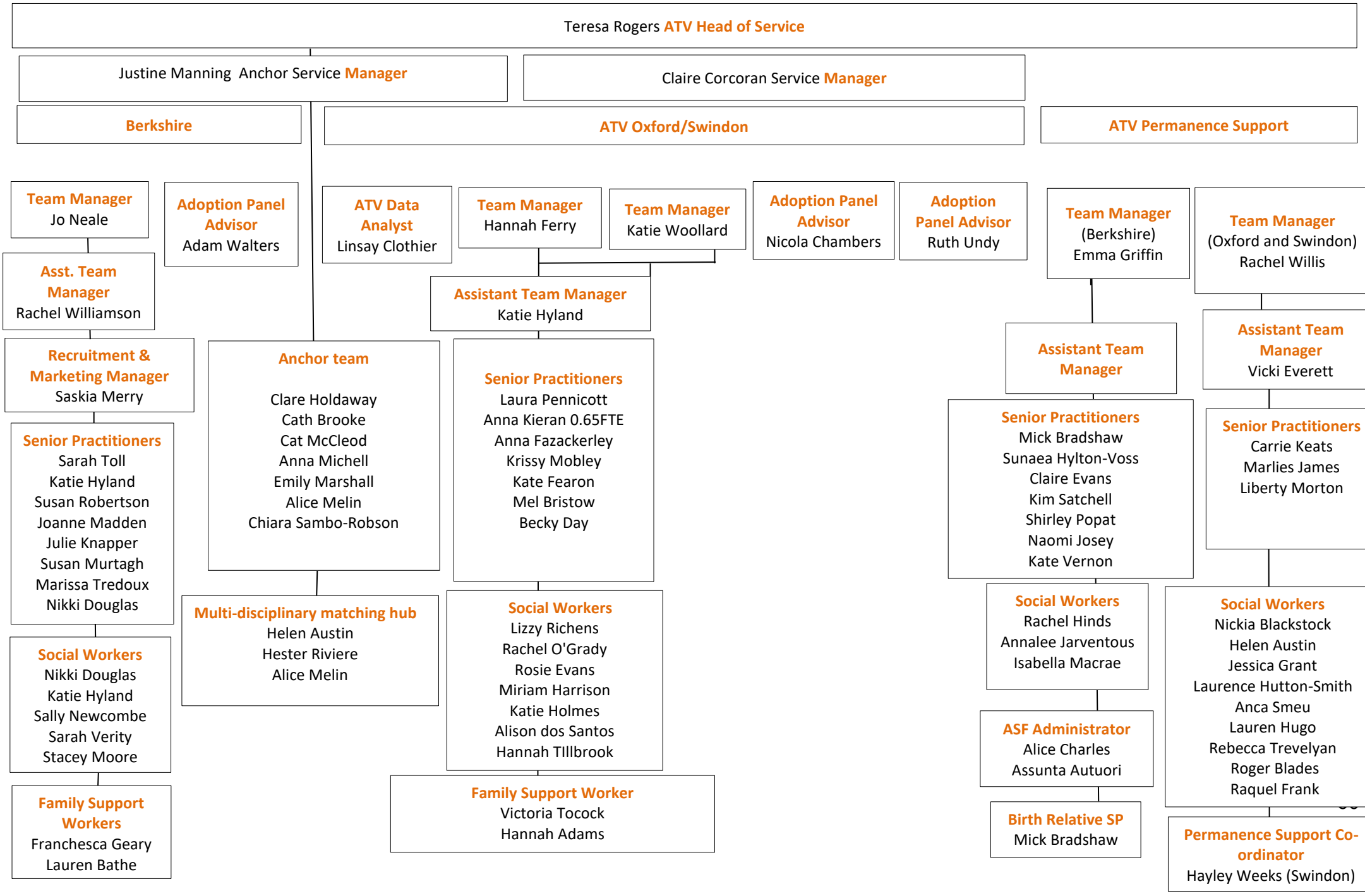
	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Data provision	The local authority will be responsible for providing key data to ATV on performance.		
Data analysis		ATV will produce standardised quarterly reports to the local authority on performance.	A reporting schedule has been agreed with the ATV Project Board.
OFSTED		ATV will comply with current and future Ofsted requirements**.**	

MISCELLANEOUS

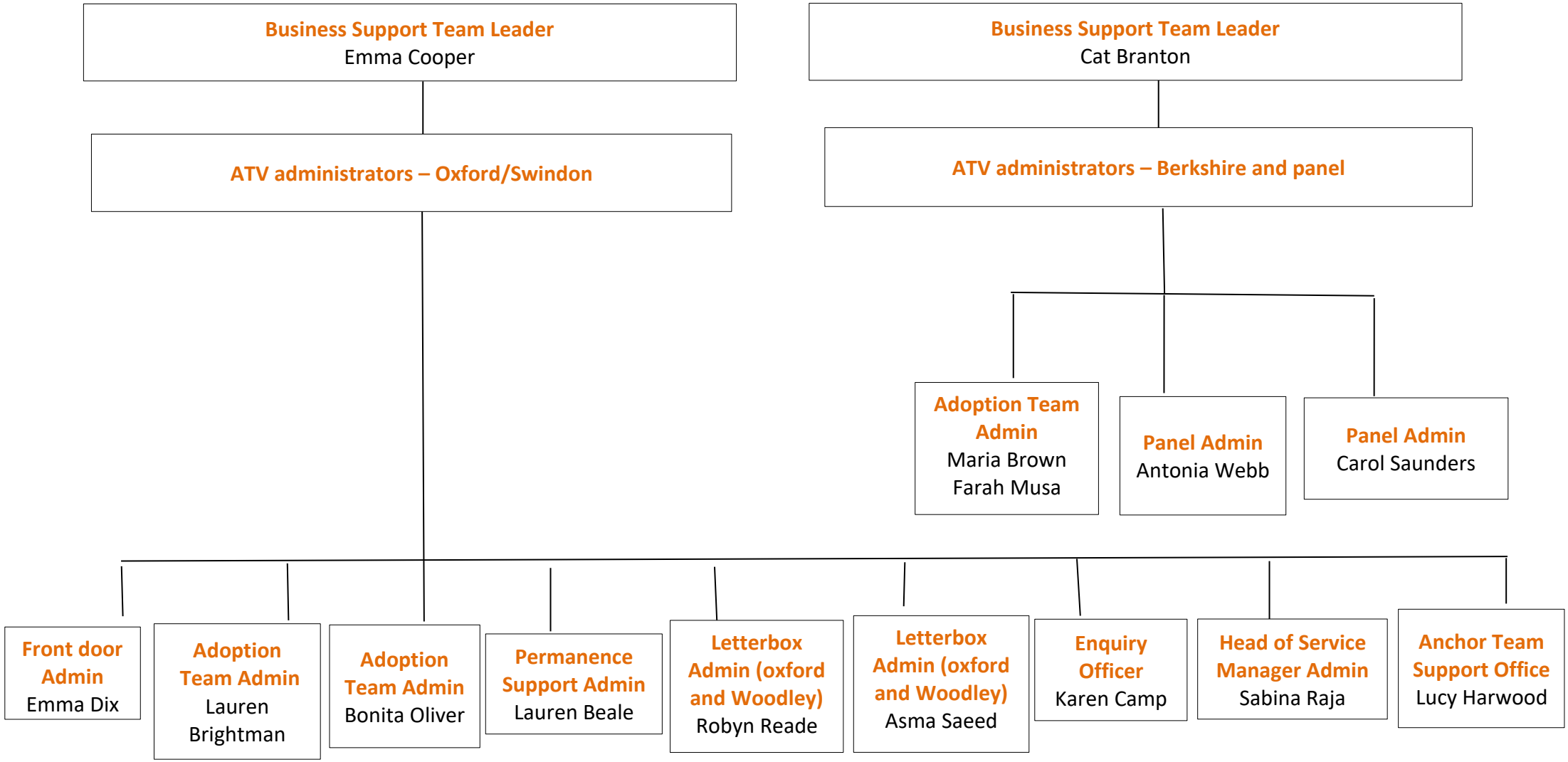
	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
Complaints	The local authority lead manager will immediately inform the ATV Head of Service if a service user makes a complaint in relation to ATV.	Oxfordshire's complaints process will be followed in the event of a complaint about ATV (as host authority) ATV will provide consultation services to the local authority regarding complaints in relation to adoption (pre- and post- order) and special guardianship (post order).	Agreement needs to be reached regarding complaint process where complaint relates to the local authority but where ATV are currently the case-holding agency. Local authority complaints teams and OCC complaints team need to liaise and agree procedure where both agencies are involved.
Freedom of Information requests (FOI)	The local authority link manager will immediately inform the ATV Head of Service if an FOI request is received that relates to ATV. The local authority process will be followed in relation to FOIs and will be led by the local authority.	ATV will work in partnership with the local authority to respond to FOIs.	
Intercountry adoptions		This work will be undertaken by Coram Intercountry Adoption Centre (CoramIAC) on behalf of ATV for inbound adoptions.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY	NOTES
		Post-order support will be provided to families formed by intercountry adoption as they would for domestic adoptions.	
Non-Agency adoptions		ATV will undertake non-agency adoption assessments (usually stepparent adoptions) on behalf of the local authorities	

Appendix C – Staffing Structure of Adopt Thames Valley



Appendix D – Administrative Structure of Adopt Thames Valley



A child's future starts with you

Adoption – it's a journey worth making

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Lisa Lyons
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Oxfordshire County Council

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