**SOUTH EAST REGION ADOPTION LEADERSHIP BOARD**

Proposed TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

The Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) has established a national Adoption Leadership Board which:

“makes a strong commitment to the adoption sector taking control of its destiny by establishing sustainable mechanisms that better meet the needs of more children and improve services for adopters”

In seeking to achieve this aim, Regional Adoption Leadership Boards have been established to take forward this work at a regional level. The South-East Region Board comprises 19 authorities (see Annex A) and arrangements for the Board are being co-ordinated through the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP).

1. Membership of the Board

Guidance is very clear that all 19 authorities in the South East should participate equally in the work of the Board. In practice, attendance at Board meetings will be delegated by the South East Directors to the following representatives:

Judith Ramsden Director Children’s Services, Wokingham Borough Council (Chair)

Annie McIver Head of Children’s Social Care, West Sussex County Council

Lorna Hunt Assistant Director Children’s Services, Bracknell Forest Council

Theresa Leavy Interim Director Children’s Services, Southampton City Council

Lucy Butler Assistant Director Children’s Services, Oxfordshire County Council

Alastair Lee (Data lead) Data and Information Manager, East Sussex County Council

The Board will be co-ordinated and supported by [Rosemary.Perry1@btinternet.com](mailto:Rosemary.Perry1@btinternet.com) 07739 853434 who will be paid from SESLIP funds. Given the significant importance attached to this work, there is an expectation of attendance at the Board and participation in the work programme.

The Board will also seek nominations from Adoption Associations and Voluntary Organisations with their representatives being confirmed in due course

Each of the above Members of the Board will have links with nominated authorities in the South East for the purposes of cascading and gathering information and ensuring equal participation (see Annexe A). The data lead will maintain links with the South East region data benchmarking group as well as the national Adoption data group.

From time to time the Board may seek to co-opt members for a limited period of time or to carry out specific pieces of work.

(The regional Board will benefit from the sponsorship of one member of the National Adoption Board. The South East Sponsor is Kim Bromley-Derry, Chief Executive of Newham Council who will attend the Board from time to time)

1. Role of the SEADCS Group

As indicated above, given the national importance of this work, it is expected that the Regional Directors’ Group, through regular reports back from the Chair and through information provided through SESLIP regular updates, will agree the Terms of Reference and Objectives of the Regional Adoption Leadership Board, receive regular progress reports and feedback on the progress of the work programme, agree specific areas of work and commit resources (mostly people) as required.

1. Objectives of the Board

The objectives of the Board will be as follows:

* To use regional and national data, benchmarking and inspection information to understand trends, issues and progress in adoption across the 19 authorities in the South East;
* To identify and disseminate areas of good practice across the region;
* To identify and support those authorities who need to improve practice in adoption across the region;
* To make recommendations to the South region ADCS group to undertake projects or specific pieces of work to improve performance in adoption across the region;
* To understand the nature of the market structure for adoption across the region;
* To understand and (if necessary) improve the nature of the relationship between VAAs and the 19 local authorities in the south east region;
* To understand and implement opportunities for joint working across the region and with other regions;
* To ensure that regional and national issues, trends and information relating to adoption are cascaded to all authorities in the South East;
* To ensure that regional issues are collected, understood and fed upwards to the national board;
* To ensure that that there is a proper and inclusive dialogue across the region in all matters relating to adoption, involving local authorities, VAAs and national organisations.

1. Expected Impacts

Following the development of a Programme of work, the Board will define a number of expected impacts/outcomes for the work. These will be agreed with Directors before being cascaded and will include measurable/quantifiable impacts in the following areas:

* Expectations on the timeliness of adoption processes both for children waiting and adopters;
* Expectations on the quality of adoption processes;
* Improved understanding of middle managers;
* Improved/increased support to practitioners.

1. How the Board will Work

The Board will produce a programme of work, with tasks assigned to board members and with timescales attached. This programme of work will be updated and reported regularly to the Regional Group of ADCS and the Board before being cascaded

The Board will operate using a number of existing mechanisms through SESLIP, namely:

* The use of the established quarterly benchmarking data process to collect and report upon key adoption indicators across the region (to mirror and supplement the data produced and published quarterly by the DfE);
* The existing programme of Peer Review and Challenge to share experiences, learning and good practice across the region;
* The use of the weekly “Friday” report and the [SESLIP website](http://seslip.co.uk/adoption) to keep Directors informed of the progress of the Board, and to cascade national and regional issues to all authorities in the South East.
* The use of the regular regional ADCS meetings to receive updates, make decisions and commit resources to the Programme

In addition, the Programme will seek to set up a number of new forums for sharing practice and improving adoptions services across the region namely:

* Regular facilitated meetings for adoption practitioners to cascade national issues and share good practice (see [Adoption Leads contact list](http://seslip.co.uk/adoption-contact-page) - 18/19 contacts already collected) ;
* The setting up of a reference forum for VAAs (Voluntary Adoption Agencies);
* A (potential) reference group for adopters and/or young people who have been adopted;
* An annual conference on the theme of Adoption and Permanence.

A number of task groups and sub-groups will be established as required to undertake specific pieces of work to meet the above objectives.

1. Frequency of Meetings: The Board will meet at least quarterly or as the need arises.

Judith Ramsden (Chair)

On Behalf of the South East Association of Directors of Children’s Services

**Annexe A – List of Authorities in the South East Region by Member of the Board Assigned**

Judith Ramsden – Wokingham (Chair)

Milton Keynes

Surrey

Wokingham

Theresa Levy - Southampton

Hampshire

Isle of Wight

Portsmouth

Southampton

Annie McIver - West Sussex

Brighton and Hove

East Sussex

West Sussex

Lucy Butler - Oxfordshire

Buckinghamshire

Kent

Medway

Oxfordshire

Lorna Hunt – Bracknell Forest

Bracknell Forest

Reading

Slough

West Berkshire

Windsor and Maidenhead

Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) in South East:

* Cabrini
* Action for Children
* Coram
* PACT
* Families for Children
* SSAFA
* Barnados

List Incomplete - to be added to – all suggestions to [rosemary.perry1@btinternet.com](mailto:rosemary.perry1@btinternet.com) please