**Adoption Leadership Board.**

**The Role of Sponsor of Regional Adoption Boards.**

**Background**

There are no simple fixes for complex, multi-partner systems that operate at both national and local levels. The Family Justice Board developed the use of “sponsors” who are members of one of the national boards but are attached to one of the Local Family Justice Boards to both provide a communications channel and a challenge to performance or partnership working as necessary.

The arrangements for national and regional leadership in the adoption economy are unusual in that they do not create any fundamental changes in accountability – but they challenge collective capacity to work in partnership to a common agenda.

**What is the sponsor’s role?**

The overall purpose of the sponsor is to provide a link between the national and regional boards. This includes:

* offering support to the regional board and working with it when the national data indicates that system performance could or should be improved;
* taking back issues of concern to the ALB;
* sharing emerging effective practice;
* providing advice and guidance to resolve problems;
* disseminating key messages.

**How is the role carried out?**

*Addressing concerns.* All sponsors will be expected to ask regional boards how they can be of assistance, whether there are areas of local concern and whether they differ from national issues. The objective is to create a “learning system”, one which actively manages its own improvement.

*Sponsors should attend at least two regional board meetings a year.*  If this is not possible, sponsors should attend via telephone or video conference. It is essential that the sponsor establishes a personal relationship with local partners and has a good appreciation of the pressures and needs of the region.

*Regular communications between the sponsor and the regional chair*. Continuity of contact is an essential feature of any relationship!

*Attendance at local training events/conferences.* This should be seen as part of the ALB offer to local working and enables regional activity to be seen to be part of a national agenda.

*Representing the region at the national board meetings.* The ALB would become unwieldy if each region had direct representation in addition to the membership and representation currently proposed. Sponsors will need to arrange a briefing on key issues immediately prior to ALB meetings.

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