**South East Region Adoption And Special Guardianship Leadership Board**

**Terms of Reference – November 2021**

**Background**

The South East Regional Adoption Leadership Board (RALB) was formed in 2014, following the creation of a National Adoption Leadership Board (ALB), with the aim of taking forward the Adoption agenda and associated issues across England.

The National ALB has, over the years undergone changes, with the appointment of a new Chair and revision of its original Terms of Reference to reflect the changing role of the Board in the light of the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs). In 2018, the remit of the Board was further extended to include Special Guardianship Orders and the title was amended to reflect this.

In 2018 in light of this the South East Board was renamed to the South East Region Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (RASGLB). The terms of reference are as follows:

**Aim**

The RASGLB is overseen by the South East Region Directors of Children’s Services and support is funded through the Sector Led Improvement Programme

“The overall aim is to provide sector-led leadership and support to the adoption and special guardianship system in the south east, understanding and supporting practice and bringing together issues of common concern and/or good practice to facilitate good permanency outcomes for children and young people”

**Objectives**

To achieve this aim, the Board will have the following specific objectives:

* To identify and feed in specific areas of good practice and key concerns to the national board, particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to nationally identified priorities;
* Through the analysis of data and other information, to understand key strengths and threats to permanency decision making and placement in the south east;
* Through the analysis of data, to identify key lines of enquiry for the region and commission specific, in-depth pieces of work as appropriate;
* To keep up to date with the development and implementation of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) in the south east; to facilitate discussions between authorities/VAAs who are developing RAAs and those who are not;
* To ensure that messages from the national board are cascaded throughout the region as appropriate.

**Ways of Working**

* The Chair will be a DCS in the South East region; currently this is Dr Mac Heath, DCS for Milton Keynes. Any change of Chair will be approved by the South East DCS Group;
* The Chair will undertake to report to the National Chair and/or national Board, as appropriate and also to the South East DCS group;
* The RASGLB will appoint from its membership one or more Vice Chairs who will support the chair in devising agendas, chair the meeting as required and take part in national events/conference calls if the chair is unable. The Vice Chair is Lorna Hunt;
* The RASGLB will send representatives to national ASGLB sub-groups as requested (e.g national data sub-group). These representatives will be expected to attend to represent the south east region and to report back to RASGLB meetings, as appropriate;
* The Board wishes to be as inclusive as possible. Membership of the RASGLB is open to all 19 local authorities/children’s trust, either independently or through nominations from RAA groupings in the region as well as active VAAs; other bodies such as CAFCASS and Cornerstone, Family Justice Boards will be invited to send nominations as appropriate. Members of the Board should be of sufficient seniority to represent their organisations at a strategic level;
* The RASGLB will develop an annual work programme which will reflect the national work programme set by the National Board, as well as regional priorities and issues;
* The RASGLB will meet at least quarterly and will schedule its meetings to ensure that relevant and timely feedback can be given to National Board meetings, via attendance or through the National Board tele-conference prior to each National Board meeting;
* Depending on the work programme of the Board, specific project groups or task and finish groups may be set up to complete identified pieces of work.

**Standing items**

* The following standing items will be considered at every meeting:
  + National board feedback
  + RAA leaders’ feedback
  + RAA round-up (informal feedback from all the RAAs in the region)

**Review**

* The RASGLB will review this Terms of Reference on an annual basis or as and when a new Terms of Reference for the National Board is agreed.

November 2021