**South East Region Adoption Leadership Board**

**Terms of Reference – April 2023**

**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 (South East Region Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (RASGLB)). In April 2023 following the disbanding of the national ASGLB in December 2022 the board refocused once again on Adoption, with Kinship considerations (including Special Guardianship) being taken forward by a separate regional group.

The terms of reference for the ALB are as follows:

**Aim**

The RALB 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 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 nationally and to influence national adoption governance;
* 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 ensuring a strong link between DCSs and RAA;
* To ensure that national messages 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 South East DCS group and any new national adoption governance;
* The RALB 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 Board wishes to be as inclusive as possible. Membership of the RALB 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, 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 RALB 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 RALB will meet at least quarterly and will schedule its meetings to ensure that relevant and timely alignment with RAA leaders meetings;
* 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 feedback
  + RAA leaders’ feedback
  + RAA round-up (informal feedback from all the RAAs in the region)

**Review**

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

April 2023