

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY, 18 MARCH 2019 AT 2.00PM**

Agenda Item
No.

4

**THE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE DELIVERY OF LUTON BOROUGH
COUNCIL ADOPTION SERVICE FUNCTIONS BY HERTFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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Executive Member: Teresa Heritage, Children, Young People and
Families

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The report sets out the business rationale for the delivery of Luton Borough Council adoption service functions. The report is in response to the request from Cabinet on [24 September 2018](#), for a detailed business case as to the opportunities and cost implications for Hertfordshire County Council (the County Council) in delivering the adoption service functions on behalf of Luton Borough Council.
- 1.2. This report also sets out the updating detail on the Transfer of Functions and Service Level Agreement needed for Cabinet to accept the transfer of the adoption service functions from Luton Borough Council to the County Council, subject to Luton Borough Council's formal decision to delegate (expected on 28 March 2019).

2. Summary

- 2.1. During the development of the regional adoption agency delivery model Adopt East, the Directors of Children's Services for the County Council and Luton Borough Council, agreed to explore far closer collaboration. This has been to accommodate Luton Borough Council's ambitions for the delivery of their adoption service to be undertaken by the County Council and benefit from being part of a much larger service, within a regionalised model.
- 2.2. As set out in the business rationale below the transfer of Luton Borough Council's adoption functions will provide the following benefits for the County Council:

- recruitment and assessment of a wider and more diverse pool of adopters, achieving timely matches for children with a court approved plan for adoption within the combined area;
- pooling combined resources to facilitate inter-agency placements for children whose characteristics require a wider matching pool of adopters;
- economies of scale of operating a shared adoption panel for both councils;
- increased availability of pooled resources for more cost-effective adoption support commissioning for families, children and adults;
- strengthened resilience and improved forward planning for the County Council's adoption service, and strengthened viability of the service within the context of the local, and national, reduction in the number of children being placed in adopted families following care proceedings.

3. Recommendation/s

- 3.1 The Children, Young People & Families Cabinet Panel will consider a report on this item of business at its meeting on 14 March 2018. The Panel will be invited to recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet:
- (i) notes the Business Rationale set out in the report, that Luton Borough Council will be delegating the function with a fully costed budget, and the delivery of this service will be of no additional cost to the County Council;
 - (ii) notes the extent of the adoption functions (and associated operational requirements) to be delegated by Luton Borough Council as set out in the extract from the Transfer of Functions Agreement (the Transfer of Functions Agreement incorporates the required service level agreement), set out at Annex C;
 - (iii) delegates authority to settle the final terms of the Transfer of Functions Agreement and Service Level Agreement for the delivery of Luton Borough Council's Adoption Service by the County Council to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families; and
 - (iv) subject to (iii) above, accepts the transfer of Luton Borough Council's adoption functions, as set out in the Transfer of Functions Agreement, once delegated by Luton Borough Council to provide adoption services to Luton Borough Council from Monday 1 April 2019.

3.2 The Cabinet Panel's recommendations to Cabinet will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.

4. Background

- 4.1. In Further Action on Adoption: Finding More Loving Homes, the previous Government outlined a vision of a new adoption system, particularly focusing on the adopter recruitment challenge. It set out that a system was needed where there were fewer organisations recruiting and assessing adopters – with most of them operating at a much greater scale. This position has been reiterated in 'A vision for change' March 2016.
- 4.2. The Education and Adoption Act 2016, provides the Secretary of State with the power to order local authority adoption services to combine services, into regional agencies, if they do not voluntarily do so. Government's current expectation is for all local authority adoption agencies to join a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by September 2020.
- 4.3. The County Council and Luton Borough Council are responding to the regionalisation agenda by seeking to combine adoption service functions. On 29 September 2017, Luton Borough Council's Corporate Parenting Board confirmed its support for the potential delegation of some of its adoption functions to the County Council.
- 4.4. This proposed delegation has been agreed in principle by both the Luton Borough Council Executive (4 June 2018) and Cabinet on 24 September 2018.
- 4.5. The "in principle" decision of Cabinet was subject to the preparation of a detailed Transfer of Functions Agreement, a Service Level Agreement and a Business Case. Officers have set out a Business Rationale in this report as work is still ongoing to develop the business case for future years. Officers are confident, however, that accepting the delegated functions from Luton Borough Council will be fully funded throughout the period of any delegation and are confident that further efficiencies will be derived once the combined service is in operation.
- 4.6. The features of delegated arrangements will be as follows:
- 4.6.1. Luton Borough Council will delegate the following functions:
- all adopter recruitment, assessment and preparation
 - adoption panel
 - family finding
 - matching activity and adoption support.

- 4.6.2. Luton Borough Council will retain the function of Adoption Agency Decision Maker who will retain responsibility for deciding whether children subject to care proceedings by Luton Borough Council will be placed for adoption (this will ensure integrity of the care proceedings process for Luton Borough Council). The Luton Borough Council Adoption Agency Decision Maker will also retain responsibility for the approval of matches of Luton children presented at the combined Adoption Panel.
- 4.6.3. The arrangements for a combined Adoption Service will reflect the ambitions of both local authorities, their staff, adopters, children and young people.
- 4.6.4. In line with current Ofsted requirements, once the County Council is providing adoption functions for Luton Borough Council, the combined adoption service will be included in any inspection of Luton Borough Council's Children's Services Department in relation to the services provided within the combined service and on behalf of Luton Borough Council.
- 4.6.5. Luton Borough Council staff wishing to transfer will join the County Council on 1 April 2019. The transfer will be in accordance with TUPE arrangements, a period of consultation having been concluded early in 2019. The proposed arrangement will be for the Luton Borough Council's Adoption Team to be located with the County Council's adoption staff at Rainbow House, St Albans. This will allow for early integration into the wider County Council adoption service and improve operational effectiveness, by making best use of management resources for the single line of operational oversight.
- 4.6.6. The proposed arrangements will be supported by all adoption staff in the County Council having access to the Luton Borough Council's electronic recording systems through agreed protocols. This will be an essential requirement for close and effective working relationship between LBC and the County Council in the delivery of delegated adoption functions.

5. Business Rationale

- 5.1. The [National Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board](#) have highlighted the following trends in national adoption performance in 2017/18:
- the numbers of children being adopted is falling;
 - the number of Placement Orders (the final court order required before a child can be placed for adoption) are falling;
 - the number of adoption plans made by Agency Decision Makers is falling;
 - there is a decline in the number of approved adopters

- 5.2. From a peak of 5360 Children Looked After being adopted in 2014/15, there has been a decline in adoptions at a national rate reducing by 28% to 3820 in 2017/18. Within the East of England region there has been a 23% decline over the same period.
- 5.3. In 2016/17, 99 children looked after by the County Council were adopted, this reduced to 56 in 2017/18.
- 5.4. The trend towards a reducing cohort of children with a plan for adoption continues. For the rolling year performance January to December 2018, 10% of children looked after by the County Council were adopted (compared to 12.7% for January to December 2017). As at the end of quarter 3 2018/19, 31 children looked after by the County Council were leaving care on an adoption order. For the County Council, this trend is due to reducing numbers of children under 5 becoming looked after (subject to care proceedings), and a “shift” in care planning and court decision making favouring special guardianship orders – which allow children to continue to be cared for within birth families (following full and rigorous assessment processes).
- 5.5. In Luton Borough Council, 12 looked after children were adopted in 2017/18 compared to 26 in 2016/17, see Appendix A.
- 5.6. In addition to the overarching benefits identified at Section 2 above, the receipt of additional financial resourcing from Luton Borough Council, and in response to the reducing cohort of children leaving care with a plan for adoption, this proposal ensures that the County Council will be better placed to manage the fluctuations and variations in the volumes of children with a plan for adoption. By providing a combined adoption service the County Council will have an opportunity to deliver future efficiencies for the County Council and sustain the delivery of a good and efficient operational combined adoption service.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The resourcing of Luton Borough Council adoption functions is sufficient for the current volumes of activity of children requiring an adoption placement (Appendix B).
- 6.2. The Service Level Agreement (SLA), sets out the specific arrangements for the delivery of the adoption functions and the financial arrangements. The SLA will be for an initial term of 3 years with the possibility of an extension for a further 2 years.
- 6.3. The SLA allows for an adjustment in the financial resourcing should the number of children requiring an adoption placement increase. An early review of resourcing will take place to mitigate any sustained demand for provision above costed activity. This would also apply to any variation in demand for adoption support. Similarly, should there be a sustained decrease in demand for the delivery of the adoption

functions by Luton Borough Council; the budget allocation may be subject to further adjustment, but these would not impact on any planned County Council efficiencies. The data used to inform any such adjustment will be based on nationally reported data to the Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) to ensure that there is an accurate and consistent measure of adoption activity. Any financial adjustment will only take place when changes meet the agreed level set out in the SLA requiring additional staffing resources and will be agreed between both parties before the relevant contract year.

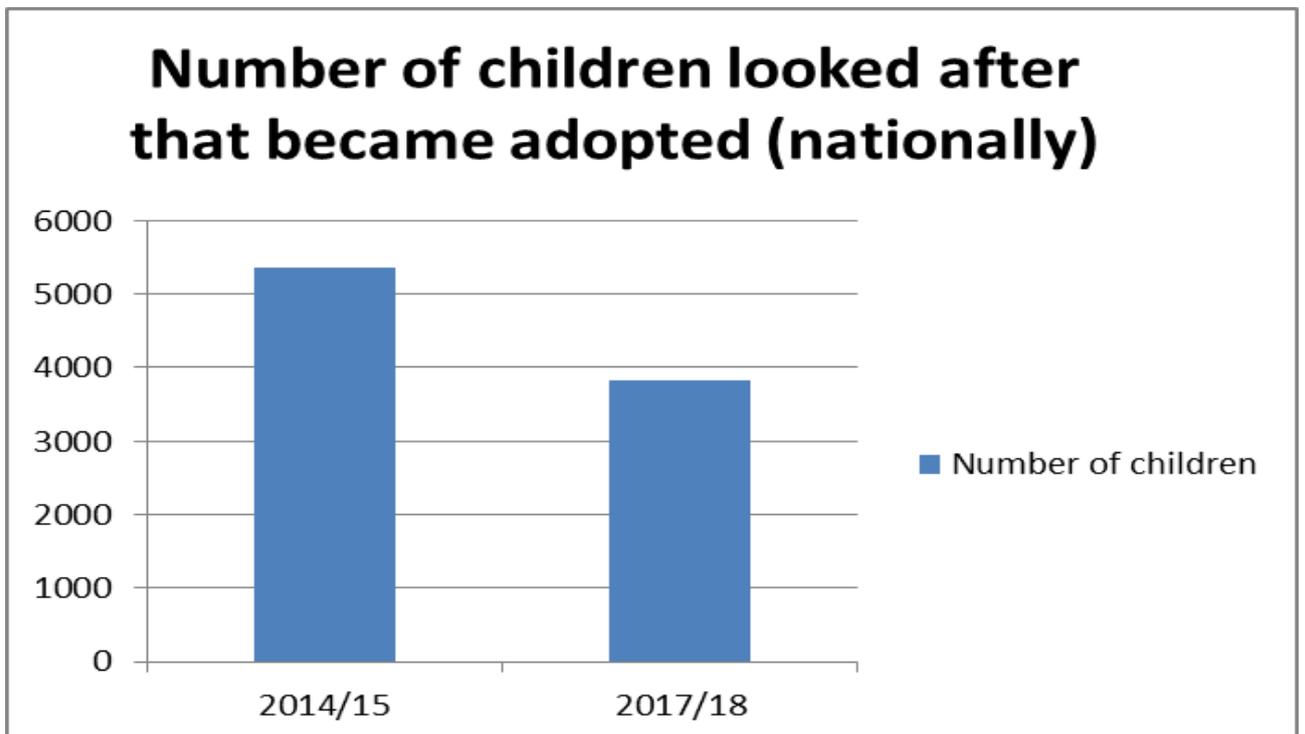
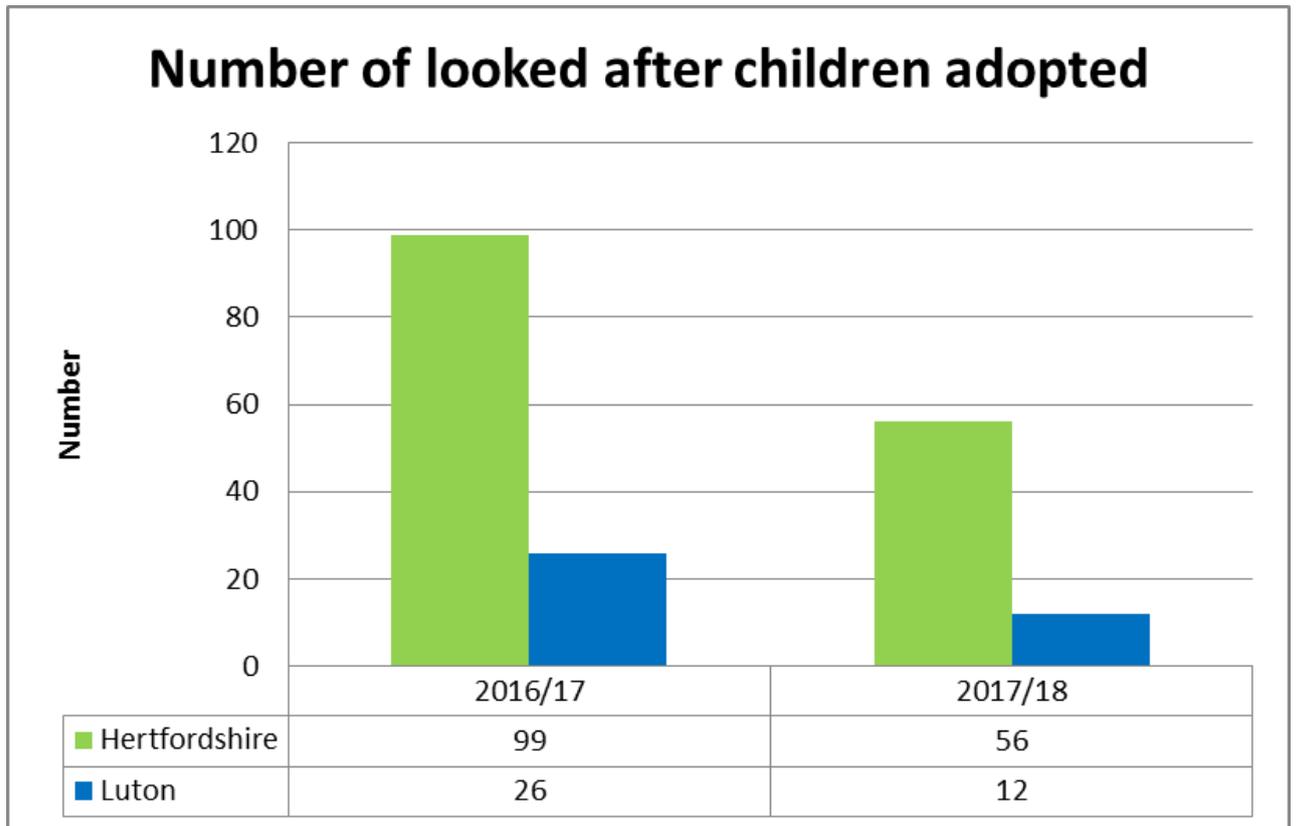
- 6.4. The total level of funding identified in Appendix B will be indexed at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the February (published in March) preceding the contract year.
- 6.5. The proposed budget transfer from Luton Borough Council is inclusive of all staff overheads, salary, NI, pension and market forces. The County Council will implement a charge within the SLA to ensure all management and corporate overheads associated with the establishment of Luton Borough Council staff in the County Council are fully met. The sum of £49,675 of the transferring staffing budget has been identified as required to meet these costs on an annual basis. This is shown in Appendix B.
- 6.6. During the first year of operation in 2019/2020, the County Council will implement a business review to ensure that the benefits for the County Council identified at Section 2 (above) are fully realised. This review will also seek to identify where future efficiencies from the delivery of Luton Borough Council adoptions functions can be realised, during the second and third year of operational activity. Efficiencies may include savings as well as providing more effective support within the current cost budget. The SLA sets out how these efficiencies will be managed.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 7.2. Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.3. The Equality Act 2010 requires the County Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant

protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 7.4. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken, attached at Appendix D and will inform the transfer of functions agreement and service level agreement. The activity undertaken regarding the EQIA has not identified any negative equality impacts, from the proposed transfer of adoption functions from Luton Borough Council to the County Council.
- 7.5. The EQIA process has highlighted the likelihood of either a neutral or positive impact for the County Council's Adoption Service as a result of a combined service, with a wider demographic base which will have a positive and sustained benefit for children, families and the wider communities in both Hertfordshire and Luton. The Luton Borough Council Integrated Impact Assessment has noted a positive or neutral impact as a result of the proposed transfer of adoption functions to the County Council.
- 7.6. Whilst there are differences in the demographic profile of Luton's children looked after population, including those with a plan for adoption. The County Council's Adoption Service is fully aware of the need to provide a high-quality adoption service for all children with an adoption plan and it is already established practise to match children with families that best meet their cultural needs and ethnic background.
- 7.7. This approach will be further strengthened by the delivery of an effective shared adoption service, by utilising a more diverse pool of adopters across Hertfordshire and Luton and within the wider region, to match children with a plan for adoption in a timely way.



Appendix B

Luton Borough Council Service Budget

Budget line	Budget for 2018/19 (£)
Staffing	£271,359
HCC Management Charge	£49,675
Printing/Photocopying	£2,352
Post Adoption Support (external)	£27,300
Adoption Fees	£125,212
Text Books	£187
Telephones (Landlines)	£243
Subscriptions	£4,500
Annual publicity & marketing spend	£8,500
Annual panel costs (including venue hire & on costs)	£7,115
Adopters Event	£4,000
Total	£500,443

Luton Borough Council Staff in Scope

Position	WTE
Number of TMs	1.00
Panel Adviser	0.25
Number of SW / Senior Practitioners	1.00
Number of SW / Senior Practitioners	1.00
Number of SW / Senior Practitioners	1.00
Number of SW / Senior Practitioners	1.00
Post Adoption Support Officer	0.50
Business Support	1.00
Total	6.75

ACRONYMS GLOSSARY FOR ANNEX C

Coram BAAF	Coram is a charitable independent Adoption and Fostering Agency, BAAF stands for British Agency for Adoption and Fostering. It is an independent membership organisation for professionals, adopters and foster carers and any party concerned with children in the care system.
PAR	Prospective Adopters Report, this is report largely produced by the social worker to be presented to panel for the approval and match of adopters.
SHOBPFA	'Should Be Placed For Adoption,' this refers to the official decision made by a Senior Manager within the Local Authority (Agency Decision Maker) that a child's plan should be adoption as there is no birth family alternative.
PPM's	Permanency Planning Meetings, these are meetings that need to take place when the Local Authority is Looking After a child and needs to plan for that child's future.
QA of reports	Quality Assurance of Reports, ensuring that report meet statutory guidelines and are fit for purpose in relation to adoption.
IAC	Intercountry Adoption Centre is an adoption agency which deals with the approval, matching and support of families who adopt from countries outside of the UK.

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Annex C - Extract from the Transfer of Functions Agreement

Delegated functions

Maintenance of the combined agency in accordance with the relevant provisions of:

1. Adoption Children Act 2002 (as amended)
2. Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005/2720
3. Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005/389

Operational functions

Statutory provision	Function transferred
Adoption and Children Act 2002 Chapter 2	Adoption Panel Panel advisor Quality Assurance
Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Part 2	Panel Advisor Panel process organisation and overview Core list recruitment and management Advice to ADM
Statutory Guidance	Quality Assurance Advice to report writers Advice to panel members
	Medical advisor
	Legal advisor

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	<p>Panel administrator Panel bookings and agenda Report collation and distribution Panel minutes Admin for panel member maintenance</p> <p>Panel consideration of whether to recommend approval to adopt</p> <p>Annual Review of adopters where required</p> <p>Panel recommendation on whether child should be placed for adoption (child ‘relinquished’ for adoption) - Agency Decision Maker retained by Luton</p> <p>Panel recommendation of a match of a Luton child to approved adopters - Agency Decision Maker retained by Luton</p> <p>Termination of approval</p> <p>Other advice to Adoption Agency where required</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Part 3</p> <p>Statutory Guidance – Adoption: national minimum standards</p>	<p>Recruitment and Assessment of prospective adopters</p> <p>Timescales</p> <p>Monitor and track key dates</p> <p>Checks and references</p> <p>Health summaries / liaison with Health authorities</p> <p>Adopter Preparation Training</p>

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	<p>Training sessions</p> <p>Adopter assessment report completion</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002 Chapter 3</p> <p>Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Parts 3 and 4</p> <p>Statutory Guidance – Adoption: national minimum standards</p>	<p>Support of approved and waiting adopters</p> <p>Family finding activity, support and advice</p> <p>Liaison with child’s social worker and family finding social worker and associated others</p> <p>Own agency children</p> <p>Transition planning, implementation and monitoring Post placement / Pre-Order support and advice</p> <p>Post placement support role</p> <p>Advice and support for Luton Borough Council’s Children’s Team</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002 Chapter 3</p> <p>Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Part 3</p> <p>Statutory Guidance – Adoption: national minimum standards</p>	<p>Permanency Planning</p> <p>Permanency Planning Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption as plan; Parallel planning; Contingency planning; Liaison with Special Guardianship and Fostering colleagues; Tracking / monitoring permanency progress; Advice and support for Luton Borough Council’s Children’s Team; <p>Co-ordination of report sets for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance;

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	<p>Panel Advisor advice summary; Panel preparation; Medical summary; Legal summary; Agency Decision Maker preparation; Matching process; Transition planning; Court reports as appropriate;</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002 Chapter 3</p> <p>Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Parts 3 & 4</p> <p>Statutory Guidance – Adoption: national minimum standards</p>	<p>Family finding activity, support and advice</p> <p>Advertising in adoption media / other media Constructing profiles: Standard reports including Coram BAAF pro-forma and derivatives Exchange events, featuring children and adopter profiles Court reports re home finding activity / prospects Transition planning, implementation and monitoring Post placement / Pre-Order support and advice Adoption application support and advice Court liaison Annex A report Legal liaison where required Court attendances</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002 Chapters 3 and 6</p>	<p>Non-agency (Notified) Adoption</p> <p>Inter-country adoption (At present contracted out to IAC) Inter-country adoption advice and guidance Inter-country adoption assessment Matching confirmation (If reverts to LA) Liaison with other professionals, UK Government</p>

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	<p>Sending Country Relative adoption Step-parent adoption Other non-agency applications to adopt (eg: foster carer)</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Part 2 – regulation 8</p> <p>Statutory Guidance – Adoption: national minimum standards</p>	<p>Agency Decision Maker [ADM] Adopter approval (outcome of panel process – adopters) Luton Borough Council retain ADM functions in relation to Luton child</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act 2002</p> <p>Adoption Agency Regulations 2005</p> <p>Statutory Guidance – Adoption: national minimum standards</p>	<p>Post Order support Support Plans Adoption Support Fund Applications Monitoring and reporting</p>
	<p>Assessment of Need Liaison with other stakeholders Referral to other services Updated Support Plan</p>
<p>Adoption and Children Act Chapter 3</p>	<p>Access to records Birth records counselling</p>

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	Other relatives support Archives liaison
	Adoption statistics Adoption Leadership Board (national) return Adoption annual return (DfE) Luton local reporting requirements

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Operational responsibilities

The Child

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF LUTON LOCAL AUTHORITY (LLA)	RESPONSIBILITIES OF HERTFORDSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE
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<p>Case Responsibilities</p>	<p>LLA will retain case management responsibilities for the child until the making of the Adoption Order.</p> <p>The local authority will be responsible for all statutory functions including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory visits • Management and supervision of contact between child and family members. • Supervision, administration and finance of foster placements and communication with foster carers (including Foster to Adopt placements). 	<p>Hertfordshire will support Luton with the care planning in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire’s Matching Co-Ordinator to be informed of all Legal Planning Meetings that are convened for all unborn babies and children under age 5 years old. • If a Child’s Social Worker is considering whether Early Permanence may be appropriate, Hertfordshire’s Matching Co-Ordinator or Team Manager to attend the Legal Planning in this instance. • In relation to Permanency Planning Meetings these will be initially convened and chaired by Luton Children’s Team Manager. If Adoption is the likely plan for the child, then a Social Worker from Hertfordshire Adoption Service will attend. Subsequent Permanency Planning Meetings will be chaired by Hertfordshire’s Adoption Service (HAS) up until the Agency Decision Maker has made a decision that the plan for the child is Adoption, following this a 6 weekly Family Planning Meeting will be held thereafter until an Adoptive placement is identified. • The Matching Co-Ordinator will attend Luton’s Permanency Tracking Meetings which are held on a 6 weekly basis.
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<p>Early Permanence</p>	<p>Early permanence consideration for all Luton LAC and including some CIN / and pre-birth, where indicated.</p> <p>Luton Social Workers to identify as early as possible children who may benefit from Early Permanence and refer to HAS.</p> <p>LLA will be responsible for the payment of Fostering Allowances for EP placements.</p>	<p>Where appropriate, and in agreement, HAS will make available an Early Permanence Service (EP) and a Fostering for Adoption Service for children who may benefit from the possibility of early placement with potential adopters. (Placements will depend on the availability of appropriate carers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire will support Luton to identify potential children by Hertfordshire’s Matching Co-Ordinator being informed of all Legal Planning Meetings for unborn babies and children under age of 5 years. • Specialist training to be provided to Adopters wishing to become EP carers. • E P Carers to have a Dually Approved recommendation and decision endorsed by Hertfordshire’s ADM. When a potential link is identified the following needs to happen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adoption Social Worker to share family’s PAR with the child’s Social Worker – Joint Visit between the child’s Social Worker – Adopters to have the opportunity to speak to the child’s Medical Advisor – Matching Meeting – Reg 22c to be signed by Luton’s ADM to confirm the match. The child’s Social Worker in Luton would be responsible for statutory visits, the Adoption Social Worker for the supervision of the placement.
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<p>Pre-placement Reports</p>	<p>LLA will be responsible for the completion and cost of all reports from children’s services, prior to an adoption placement being made including Child Placement Reports (CPR) and all other reports required in court preparation and panel presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CPR – sibling assessment to be completed with assistance from HAS’ Adoption Social Worker – LLA responsible to organisation all medical information in respect of children 	<p>HAS to assist, advise and guide LLA children’s teams in completing adoption reports and documents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Social Worker to provide support to Luton’s Children’s Social Workers in relation to siblings assessment where a sibling group are likely to be subject to an adoption plan. • Herts will support in preparation of Adoption documents including CPR.
<p>Assessment of needs</p>	<p>LLA will be responsible for assessing the child’s needs in respect of a future placement and in ensuring that any agreed financial support for a future adoptive placement is available; future anticipated needs; contact arrangements etc. LLA joint responsibility with HAS to compose Adoption Support Plan.</p>	<p>HAS will provide additional information and advice on the placement needs of the child and the likely need for post adoption support services.</p> <p>HAS joint responsibility with LLA to compose Adoption Support Plan.</p>
<p>Medical Information</p>	<p>LLA will be responsible for obtaining all required medical information in respect of children who are being considered for adoption and ensuring all health assessments are completed within agreed timeframes.</p>	<p>HAS will support and advise Luton children’s teams re adoption process and timescales</p>
<p>Children’s ADM, i.e. a child should be placed for adoption Decision</p>	<p>The Agency Decision Maker in Luton will be responsible for the ‘Should be placed for adoption’ decision.</p> <p>LLA will undertake a regular review of this decision and associated plans and keep HAS informed of changes.</p> <p>Luton will retain responsibility for making of the decision regarding a child being placed for adoption.</p>	<p>HAS will support the SHOBPFA decision making process as requested, particularly in the provision of the above information.</p> <p>HAS will need to give specific consideration to medical information in the identification of a possible match.</p> <p>Luton Agency Decision Maker will be assisted by Hertfordshire by way of ‘professional advice’.</p> <p>Hertfordshire panel Office will offer admin support by way of booking a case for consideration, sending out the paperwork and completing the minutes.</p>

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<p>Family Finding Process</p>	<p>LLA will need to ensure smooth and timely liaison with HAS regarding permanency tracking, with special note to parallel planning where active alternative permanency options</p>	<p>HAS will lead the tracking/family finding process in consultation with Luton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire MC will have an overview of all children where adoption may be the plan; The Matching Co-Ordinator will also attend Luton Tracking Meetings. • Herts Rep at all PPM's • Luton children will be renew weekly as part of Hertfordshire's Tracking meeting. • All children will be allocated and family finding social worker; the decision of when to be allocated will be made on a case by case basis, i.e. normally prior to an ADM decision being made. • Luton Social Worker to ensure Family Finding Social Worker is kept updated regarding any change in the child's circumstances and general progress. • Herts will hold a Family Finding Planning Meeting every 6 weeks to include the Luton Social Worker and Foster Carer where appropriate. • When a link for a child is identified; Family Finding Social Worker will read PAR and prepare and identify strengths and vulnerabilities and send Children's Social Worker; Both Family Finding Social Worker and Children's Social Worker to visit prospective Adopters when link is identified. • All children without a link will be placed on Linkmaker <p>Where it is not possible to identify Adopters from the pool; then Interagency Placements will be explored.</p> <p>Interagency activity will be monitored throughout the first year.</p>
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Transitions Planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire will be responsible for planning a transition to an adoptive family, an Introduction Planning Meeting will be chaired by Team Manager or Consultant • Social Introductions Planning Meeting will be chaired by Team Manager or Consultant Social Worker attended by CSW, Foster Carer, Link Worker and Adopters to plan transitions. • Family Finding Social Worker will co-ordinate support to the process. All transitions plans will be reviewed.
'Hard to Place'/Priority Children	<p>LLA is responsible for identifying hard to place children at the earliest opportunity, especially where a child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged four or over • From a BME heritage • Part of a sibling group of two or more • Has a disability or medical condition • Luton will gather the relevant information, assess and forward to HAS as soon as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAS is responsible for all publicity of children including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profiles • photographs, • video footage • attendance at all matching events, regional wide
<p>Note: Where possible potential adoptive matches for a child will be identified prior to the conclusion of Care Proceedings</p>		
Preparation of the child	<p>LLA will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing the child for an adoptive placement. • Preparing the child's Life Story Book 1 & 2 • Producing the Later Life Letter. 	<p>HAS support and advice to all three items Support will be given to preparation of the Life Story Book 1 & 2 by the HAS Adoption Social Worker.</p>
CPR, APR, Matching panel	<p>LLA is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPR • Delegation of Parental Responsibilities report • Child section of APR • QA of reports before finalising 	<p>HAS will be responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Report, apart from the section on the child. Also</p> <p>HAS has to ensure the finalised copy is collated and sent to the Panel Office</p> <p>HAS will organise the Matching Panel.</p>

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<p>Matching Decisions</p>	<p>The Agency Decision Maker in Luton will be responsible for Matching decisions.</p>	<p>Cases will be heard at the HAS panel and the recommendation will be sent to Luton’s ADM in order for the final decision to be made. HAS will support the process and ADM with information as required, including Panel Minutes.</p>
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THE ADOPTER

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF LUTON LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF HERTFORDSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE
<p>Advice and Guidance for adoption enquiries</p>	<p>LLA to signpost enquiries to HAS for adoption responses. Note: LLA responsible for transitional arrangements such as adoption duty phone number transfer; mailbox forwarding; web and social media messages.</p>	<p>HAS to offer information, support and guidance on all aspects of adoption.</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

<p>Recruitment of adopters</p>	<p>LLA to refer enquiries to HAS</p>	<p>HAS to provide active programme of recruitment, advertising and promotion, as appropriate to evolving needs of LLA children.</p> <p>HAS to target recruitment with regard to projected needs profile; to include Early Permanence carers.</p> <p>Hertfordshire Adoption Service will be responsible for all aspects of recruitment & approval process. Decision making regarding eligibility will be made by Hertfordshire. Three stages of adoption process, i.e. Pre Stage, Stage 1 and Stage 2.</p> <p>Pre-stage focuses upon ensuring applicants have enough information to make informed decisions supported by the Recruitment Team as to whether it is the right time to progress.</p> <p>Stage 1 – Adopter led; Social Work Guide is undertaken by Recruitment Team, applicants will be allocated a Worker and offered a variety of Training and Workshops and supported in completing the Workbook.</p> <p>Nearing the end of Stage 1 a ‘Stage 1 Review Meeting’ will be held to discuss applicant’s transfer into Stage 2 where appropriate.</p> <p>Stage 2 ‘Social Work led, adopter guided’. Allocated a Social Worker to complete the ‘Home Study’, applicants should be presented to the Adoption Panel within 4 months of starting Stage 2 unless there is a valid reason recorded on file. Following panel, the approval decision will be made by Hertfordshire Agency Decision Maker.</p>
<p>Dispute / Complaint resolution</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>HAS to apply standard procedures regarding complaints, disputes, appeals and IRM processes.</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

<p>Adoption application and court report</p>	<p>LLA child’s social worker to assist and advise adopters in timing and lodging application. LLA child’s social worker to complete Annex A in conjunction with HAS adoption colleague.</p>	<p>HAS liaise with LLA re joint Annex A court report. Enable court application; advise and assist adopters. HAS to send final copy of Annex A to court The child’s Social Worker and/or Adoption Social Worker will attend Direction Final and Celebration Hearings.</p>
<p>Non-agency adoptions</p>	<p>LLA to signpost enquiries to HAS for action and follow-up</p>	<p>HAS to provide service response for relative, step-parent or intercountry adoption. HAS to provide directly or through external provider, in keeping with statutory obligations, regulations and guidance. Step parents will be offered an initial interview and in first instance and are signposted to appropriate alternative options; if they still wish to be considered they will be placed on a waiting list and allocated for assessment as soon as possible. Adoption Social Worker to prepare Annex A to submit to Court and attend hearings as appropriate. Intercountry applicants will be signposted to IAC where there is a contract to prepare, assess & approve Intercountry Applicants.</p>
<p>Support adopters post-approval</p>	<p>LLA children’s social worker continues statutory role in relation to child in adoptive placement, through to Adoption Order.</p>	<p>HAS social worker for adopter to maintain support and advice to adopter; liaise with LLA social worker as necessary. Adoption worker share statutory visits with child’s social worker.</p>
<p>Track and maintain agreed data</p>	<p>LLA performance team to liaise with HAS re key data to be gathered and shared.</p>	<p>HAS to maintain data as agreed, to facilitate data returns and benchmarking. Key dates and process steps for adopters as part of this requirement.</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF LUTON LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF HERTFORDSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE
<p>Assessment of Need</p>	<p>LLA to ensure, during transition period, post adoption enquiries forwarded without delay to HAS for action.</p> <p>Luton will retain the overall care planning for children including legal, proceedings & preparation of CPR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hertfordshire responsible to provide all support post order to adoptive families. This includes completing the Assessment of Need and any application to Adoption Support Fund as appropriate. • Adopters to be offered a range of services within the core offer including training, workshops, support and social events. • As part of the transitional arrangements Hertfordshire will continue with the established coffee mornings for adopters held 4 times per year at the current venue of Harlington Village Hall. This will be reviewed in co-production with adopters. <p>HAS will provide or commission all adoption support services and will undertake adoption support fund (ASF) assessment and applications.</p> <p>HAS will monitor and report on ASF and non-ASF post adoption support funding and liaise with LLA on non-ASF funding requests.</p> <p>HAS will monitor 'match-funding' where ASF limit reached.</p> <p>HAS will manage other post order support costs within agreed cost envelope of SLA.</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

Adoption support plans	<p>LLA will provide copies of historic (active) support plans for HAS to administer.</p>	<p>HAS will provide or commission all adoption support services and will undertake adoption support fund (ASF) assessment and applications.</p> <p>HAS will monitor and report on ASF and non ASF post adoption funding and liaise with LLA on non ASF funding requests.</p> <p>HAS will consider all requests for funding support and Match funding via the Hertfordshire Finance Panel and a recommendation will then be made to Luton’s Financial Decision Maker.</p>
Referrals and safeguarding	<p>LLA will signpost all referrals for support from adoptive families to HAS.</p> <p>Where a safeguarding referral has to be made Luton will conduct any appropriate section 47 enquiry and will allocate a Luton social worker where thresholds are met, whilst simultaneously notifying HAS of any referrals involving an adopted child and provide CAN and CP support where necessary and liaise with HAS Adoption Support Team.</p>	<p>HAS will receive and respond to support referrals from those affected by adoption, both direct and via LLA.</p> <p>HAS will liaise with LLA where safeguarding matters for an adoptive family (pre and post-order).</p>
Out-of-hours services	<p>All adopters with Luton children placed will have access to the Luton Emergency Duty Team out of core hours.</p>	<p>HAS to provide Out of Hours support</p>
Indirect/Letterbox contact	<p>LLA will need to prepare and transfer data and records of all indirect contact arrangements, current and recent historic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAS will oversee Letterbox contact between adopted children and birth families. • Keep records in both paper and electronic form as appropriate. • All queries regarding Letterbox to be dealt with by the Letterbox Support Officer or Letterbox Co-Ordinator
Supervised & Sibling Direct Contact	<p>Responsibility for direct contact requirements are to be decided based on analysis of current arrangements and Luton resourcing.</p>	<p>Responsibility for direct contact requirements are to be decided based on analysis of current arrangements and HAS resourcing.</p> <p>HAS to support any existing arrangements and work towards sustaining ongoing arrangements.</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

<p>Adoption allowances</p>	<p>Adoption allowances will be paid for by Luton after undertaking the appropriate assessment.</p> <p>LLA will continue to administer adoption allowances for existing and new cases.</p> <p>LLA will be responsible for means testing and annual review each year</p>	<p>Hertfordshire Adoption Service will make a request to Luton regarding Adoption Allowances following criteria applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sibling group • Child with a specific medical need • Child with a disability • Child with significant emotional or behavioural issues <p>All allowances are agreed for an initial term of 2 years and reviewed</p> <p>Hertfordshire Adoption Service will consider requests for an Adoption Allowance at the Herts Funding Panel, following this a recommendation will be made to a designated Financial Decision Maker in Luton.</p>
<p>Adoption Support Fund</p>	<p>LLA will cease to administer ASF applications.</p> <p>New ASF account to be opened, for HAS to process new ASF applications.</p>	<p>HAS will administer historic ASF data.</p> <p>HAS responsible for undertaking all new applications; to the Adoption Support Fund (excluding Special Guardianship).</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

<p>Access to records and files</p>	<p>LLA to facilitate access to care records and files.</p>	<p>HAS to provide / commission Birth Records Counselling. Hertfordshire to make requests for access to files, need either by 'Box It' for Luton or Bedford Borough Council for other cases. On receiving the records an Adoption Support Worker will provide Schedule II counselling to the adopted adult, prepare a summary of the records to share with adopted adult. Where appropriate Hertfordshire will provide more intensive counselling and support if required.</p> <p>An Intermediary Service will be provided to birth relatives initiating contact, seeking to search for an adult person. In all other cases advice will be given regarding Intermediary Services. Hertfordshire will use discretion to provide Intermediary Services to anyone that may be considered vulnerable.</p>
<p>Therapeutic support to birth parent</p>	<p>Luton Children's Social Worker will provide to birth parents whilst they are working with the family. Luton to signpost to Hertfordshire for more specific events.</p>	<p>HAS will provide / commission this as a statutory requirement. Hertfordshire provide support via a 'First Families' Support Group and more specific support relating to Letterbox via the Letterbox Co-Ordinator. Birth parents can be allocated a Social Worker to provide a specific piece of work.</p> <p>Hertfordshire will provide a group within Luton for birth parents to offer support at the identified venue.</p>

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & INSPECTION

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF LUTON LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF HERTFORDSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE
<p>Data analysis</p>	<p>LLA will liaise with HAS and co-produce ALB data; LLA to co-ordinate child data and HAS responsible for adopter data.</p>	<p>HAS will produce a regular report to Luton on performance in a standard format. The schedule and format will be agreed between LLA and HAS in the first 6 months.</p> <p>HAS will provide adopter data for ALB purposes.</p>

Annex C DRAFT – SUBJECT TO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH LUTON BOROUGH

Quarterly reporting	Joint responsibility; format to be agreed in first 6 months.	Joint responsibility; format to be agreed in first 6 months.
ALB returns	LLA to co-ordinate child data for ALB return.	HAS will provide adopter data for ALB purposes. HAS will assist LLA with adopted child data for active cases.
OFSTED Dataset	LLA to co-ordinate child data.	HAS will provide adopter data.
Benchmarking	LLA to co-ordinate child data.	HAS will provide adopter data.
Other data requests	LLA to co-ordinate child data.	HAS will provide adopter data.
Case notes		

Who is completing the EqIAⁱ and why is it being done?

Title of service / proposal / project / strategy / procurement you are assessingⁱⁱ	Hertfordshire Adoption Service providing services for Luton Borough Council
Names of those involved in completing the EqIA	Sue Lowndes
Head of Service or Business Manager	Sue Lowndes
Team/Department	Adoption & Fostering Service Children's Services
Lead officer contact details	Head Adoption and Fostering Hertfordshire County Council Postal Point SFAR103 Farnham House Stevenage SG1 2FQ Mobile 07833 484306

<p>Focus of EqIA – what are you assessing?ⁱⁱⁱ What are the aims of the service, proposal, project? What outcomes do you want to achieve? What are the reasons for the proposal or change? Do you need to reference/consider any related projects?</p>	<p>The transfer of Luton Borough Council’s Adoption Service function to Hertfordshire County Council</p>
<p>Stakeholders Who will be affected? Which protected characteristics (<i>see end-notes 11-20</i>) is it most relevant to? Consider the public, service users, partners, staff, Members, etc</p>	<p>Hertfordshire County Council Employees Luton Borough Council Employees Independent members of the Hertfordshire Adoption Panel Independent members of the Luton Adoption Panel Individuals currently in the assessment process or currently approved as Hertfordshire Adopters Individuals currently in the assessment process or currently approved as Luton Borough Council Adopters Individuals or families receiving adoption support from Hertfordshire & Luton Councils Children looked after by Hertfordshire & Luton Council with a current plan for adoption and waiting to be matched</p>

2. **List of data sources used for this EqIA** (include relevant national/local data, research, monitoring information, service user feedback, complaints, audits, consultations, EqIAs from other projects or other local authorities, etc.)

A range of useful local data on our communities can be found on [Herts Insight](#) and on the [Equalities Hub](#)

Title and brief description (of data, research or engagement – include hyperlinks if available)	Date	Gaps in data Consider any gaps you need to address and add any relevant actions to the action plan in Section 4.
Adoption Leadership Board Data	31 st March 2018	
Regional Children’s Services Performance data – Tartan Rug	Sept 2018	
Hertfordshire Self-Assessment of Children’s Services	June 2018	
Luton Self- Assessment of Children’s Services Luton’s 2018 self-assessment	June 2018	.
Ofsted Inspection of Children’s Services (Hertfordshire) https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/hertfordshire	2018	
Ofsted Inspection of Children’s Services (Luton) https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/luton	2018	
Annual Adoption Report (Hertfordshire)	2017/18	
Annual Adoption Report (Luton)	2017/18	

Hertfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council Demographic information (Local Authority Interactive Tool)		
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3. Analysis and assessment: review of information, impact analysis and mitigating actions

Protected characteristic group	<p>What do you know^{iv}? What do people tell you^v?</p> <p>Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who uses the service? Who doesn't and why? Feedback/complaints? Any differences in outcomes? Why? 	<p>What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)^{vi}?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider positive and negative impacts On service users / the public AND, where relevant, staff* <p><i>* if your proposals relate mainly to a staff restructure or reorganisation, you should use the template here</i></p>	<p>What can you do^{vii}?</p> <p>What reasonable mitigations to reduce or avoid the impact can you propose?</p> <p>How will you communicate/engage or provide services differently to create a 'level playing field' – e.g. consultation materials in easy read or hold targeted engagement events</p> <p><i>If there is no current way of mitigating any negative impacts, clearly state that here and consider other actions you could take in the action plan in section 4.</i></p>
<p><i>In terms of adoption service regulations and national minimum standards, all Adoption Agencies are all required to promote adoption for all children inclusive of their protected characteristics, and we are required to offer adoption support to adopted adults inclusive of their protective characters</i></p>			
Age ^{viii}	<p>The Adoption Services provides a service for both adults (applicants, adopted adults) and children who are adopted or have a plan for adoption.</p>	<p>Adults include those wishing to become adopters, those approved adopters looking to have child matched, those families and individual adults or birth relatives who may seek support due to lives being affected by adoption.</p>	<p>The change proposed is likely to benefit children with a plan for adoption in Hertfordshire through recruitment of a wider and more divers pool of adopter applicants across Hertfordshire and Luton to increase the timeliness of the adoption match</p>

Protected characteristic group	<p>What do you know^{iv}? What do people tell you^v?</p> <p>Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the service? • Who doesn't and why? • Feedback/complaints? • Any differences in outcomes? Why? 	<p>What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)^{vi}?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider positive and negative impacts - On service users / the public - <i>AND, where relevant, staff*</i> <p><i>* if your proposals relate mainly to a staff restructure or reorganisation, you should use the template here</i></p>	<p>What can you do^{vii}?</p> <p>What reasonable mitigations to reduce or avoid the impact can you propose?</p> <p>How will you communicate/engage or provide services differently to create a 'level playing field' – e.g. consultation materials in easy read or hold targeted engagement events</p> <p><i>If there is no current way of mitigating any negative impacts, clearly state that here and consider other actions you could take in the action plan in section 4.</i></p>
		<p>Children with a plan for adoption are looked after by the Local Authority – children with a plan for adoption are not usually over the age of 8</p>	<p>Adopted adults and families in HCC will also benefit from the opportunity to commission adoption support services from a larger pool of adopted adults and families.</p>
<p>Disability^{ix}</p>	<p>The Adoption Service seeks to promote the positive outcomes for all children and adults whose lives are affected by adoption regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, racial and or cultural identity, and religion</p>	<p>As above (1)</p>	<p>As above (1)</p>
<p>Gender reassignment^x</p>	<p>The Adoption Service seeks to promote the positive outcomes for all children and adults whose lives are affected by adoption regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual</p>	<p>No identified impact</p>	<p>No identified impact</p>

Protected characteristic group	<p>What do you know^{iv}? What do people tell you^v?</p> <p>Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the service? • Who doesn't and why? • Feedback/complaints? • Any differences in outcomes? Why? 	<p>What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)^{vi}?</p> <p>- Consider positive and negative impacts - On service users / the public - <i>AND, where relevant, staff*</i></p> <p><i>* if your proposals relate mainly to a staff restructure or reorganisation, you should use the template here</i></p>	<p>What can you do^{vii}?</p> <p>What reasonable mitigations to reduce or avoid the impact can you propose?</p> <p>How will you communicate/engage or provide services differently to create a 'level playing field' – e.g. consultation materials in easy read or hold targeted engagement events</p> <p><i>If there is no current way of mitigating any negative impacts, clearly state that here and consider other actions you could take in the action plan in section 4.</i></p>
	orientation, disability, racial and or cultural identity, and religion		
Pregnancy and maternity^{xi}	The Adoption Service provides counselling for birth parents and for adults relinquishing a baby for adoption.	No identified impact	No identified impact
Race^{xii}	The Adoption Service seeks to promote the positive outcomes for all children and adults whose lives are affected by adoption regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment ,sexual orientation, disability, racial and or cultural identity, and religion	As above (1)	It is anticipated that the proposal will benefit HCC children with BME background with a plan for adoption from having a more diverse population of prospective adopters in Luton who may better meet their racial and cultural needs

Protected characteristic group	<p>What do you know^{iv}? What do people tell you^v?</p> <p>Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the service? • Who doesn't and why? • Feedback/complaints? • Any differences in outcomes? Why? 	<p>What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)^{vi}?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider positive and negative impacts - On service users / the public - <i>AND, where relevant, staff*</i> <p><i>* if your proposals relate mainly to a staff restructure or reorganisation, you should use the template here</i></p>	<p>What can you do^{vii}?</p> <p>What reasonable mitigations to reduce or avoid the impact can you propose?</p> <p>How will you communicate/engage or provide services differently to create a 'level playing field' – e.g. consultation materials in easy read or hold targeted engagement events</p> <p><i>If there is no current way of mitigating any negative impacts, clearly state that here and consider other actions you could take in the action plan in section 4.</i></p>
<p>Religion or belief <small>xiii</small></p>	<p>The Adoption Service seeks to promote the positive outcomes for all children and adults whose lives are affected by adoption regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, racial and or cultural identity, and religion</p>	<p>Same as above (1)</p>	<p>Same as above (1)</p>
<p>Sex/Gender^{xiv}</p>	<p>The Adoption Service seeks to promote the positive outcomes for all children and adults whose lives are affected by adoption regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, racial and or cultural identity, and religion</p>	<p>Same as above (1)</p>	<p>Same as above (1)</p>

Protected characteristic group	<p>What do you know^{iv}? What do people tell you^v?</p> <p>Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the service? • Who doesn't and why? • Feedback/complaints? • Any differences in outcomes? Why? 	<p>What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)^{vi}?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider positive and negative impacts - On service users / the public - <i>AND, where relevant, staff*</i> <p><i>* if your proposals relate mainly to a staff restructure or reorganisation, you should use the template here</i></p>	<p>What can you do^{vii}?</p> <p>What reasonable mitigations to reduce or avoid the impact can you propose?</p> <p>How will you communicate/engage or provide services differently to create a 'level playing field' – e.g. consultation materials in easy read or hold targeted engagement events</p> <p><i>If there is no current way of mitigating any negative impacts, clearly state that here and consider other actions you could take in the action plan in section 4.</i></p>
Sexual orientation^{xv}	The Adoption Service seeks to promote the positive outcomes for all children and adults whose lives are affected by adoption regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, racial and or cultural identity, and religion	No identified impact	No identified impact
Marriage and civil partnership^{xvi}		As above (1)	As above (1)
Carers^{xvii}		As above (1)	As above (1)

Protected characteristic group	What do you know^{iv}? What do people tell you^v? Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the service? • Who doesn't and why? • Feedback/complaints? • Any differences in outcomes? Why? 	What does this mean – what are the potential impacts of the proposal(s)^{vi}? - Consider positive and negative impacts - On service users / the public - <i>AND, where relevant, staff*</i> <i>* if your proposals relate mainly to a staff restructure or reorganisation, you should use the template here</i>	What can you do^{vii}? What reasonable mitigations to reduce or avoid the impact can you propose? How will you communicate/engage or provide services differently to create a 'level playing field' – e.g. consultation materials in easy read or hold targeted engagement events <i>If there is no current way of mitigating any negative impacts, clearly state that here and consider other actions you could take in the action plan in section 4.</i>
Other relevant groups^{viii} Consider if there is a potential impact (positive or negative) on areas such as health and wellbeing, crime and disorder, Armed Forces community.		No anticipated impact	No anticipated impact

Opportunity to advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations^{xix}

The change proposed is likely to benefit children with a plan for adoption in Hertfordshire through recruitment of a wider and more diverse pool of adopter applicants across Hertfordshire and Luton to increase the timeliness of the adoption match

Adopted adults and families in HCC will also benefit from the opportunity to commission adoption support services from a larger pool of adopted adults and families.

It is anticipated that the proposal will benefit HCC children with BME background with a plan for adoption from having a more diverse population of prospective adopters in Luton who may better meet their racial and cultural needs

Conclusion of your analysis and assessment - select one of the outcomes below^{xx} and summarise why you have selected i, ii, iii or iv; what you think the **most important** impacts are; and the key actions you will take.

OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS	SUMMARY
<p>i. No equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major change required to proposal 	<p>No further action is required</p>
<p>ii. Minimal equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adverse impacts have been identified, but have been objectively justified (provided you do not unlawfully discriminate) - Ensure decision makers consider the cumulative effect of how a number of decisions impact on equality - No major change required to proposal 	

<p>iii. Potential equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take 'mitigating action' to change the original policy/proposal, remove barriers or better advance equality - Set out clear actions in the action plan in section 4. 	
<p>iv. Major equality impacts identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adverse effects are not justified, cannot be mitigated or show unlawful discrimination - You must stop and remove the policy [you should consult with Legal Services] - Ensure decision makers understand the equality impact 	

. Prioritised Action Plan^{xxi}

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned Include actions relating to: • mitigation measures • getting further research • getting further data/consultation	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Lead officer and timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored/reviewed to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				
NONE				

This EqIA has been signed off by:

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer:

Date:

Head of Service or Business Manager:

Date:

Review date:

Please now send the completed EqIA to equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

