

The Development of a Regional Permanency Arrangement

Outline Business Case

The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership



This Outline Business Case (OBC) sets out the case for creating a Regional Permanency Arrangement across Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council. The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership is proposing a collaborative partnership arrangement which brings together the specialist expertise of the four participating Local Authorities, working together to find local, caring, stable and loving homes for Looked After Children (LAC) who require permanence to give them a sense of stability, continuity, commitment and identity.

******Public Document******

Regional Permanency Arrangement

Detailed Outline Business Case

1. Outline Business Case Purpose:

- To document the case for creating an innovative, dynamic and forward thinking Regional Permanency Arrangement across Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.
- To enable the four Local Authorities to reach consensus regarding the strategic direction and next steps to take in the creation of a Regional Permanency Arrangement. This will include Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship.
- To set out the actions, plans and timescales to enable the Local Authorities to progress to the design phase of the Regional Permanency Transformation, as set out in this Outline Business Case (OBC).

2. Programme Description:

Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council, through the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership, are developing an innovative, dynamic and forward thinking Regional Permanency Arrangement. This will be achieved via a joint service delivery model across the Local Authorities. The arrangement will be the first of its kind in the country and will focus on finding local, caring, stable and loving homes where Looked After Children achieve emotional (attachment), physical (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility).

The Local Authorities are committed to delivering a Regionalisation of Adoption Programme (which is required by law) which goes well beyond Adoption and includes Fostering, Connected Persons, Special Guardianship and other forms of permanence. This Regional Permanency Arrangement is focused on improving outcomes for Looked After Children.

The Regional Permanency Arrangement will operate through a hub and spoke model which enables Local Authorities to benefit from a network of regional delivery whilst maintaining their own individual independence. This will ensure the Partnership reflects the local landscape, adapted as necessary to the needs of individual Local Authorities, whilst demonstrating clear links to the local Children & Families System.

The proposed model demonstrates learning from delivery adopted by Integrated Children & Families Services across England in relation to the principles of multi-agency teams, integrated working and governance. Such ways of working have been successfully embedded within Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), Multi Agency Early Help Partnerships, West Mercia YOS, Stoke-on-Trent YOS and the Staffordshire YOS.

Statutory responsibilities relating to Looked After Children will continue to sit with Local Authorities.

3. The National Context:

Department of Education (DfE), Regionalisation of Adoption Programme:

In June 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) published a paper, 'Regionalising Adoption,' this publication set out the proposals of the Coalition Government for the establishment of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs). The paper gave a very clear directive to Local Authorities to form part of a Regional Adoption Agency by the 1st April 2020.

The move towards the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies is led by the DfE to reduce the large number of agencies providing adoption services by creating 25-30 Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA's). The expectation is that larger delivery models should be able to pool resources and share best practice to better target the recruitment of prospective adopters and speed up the matching and placement of children for adoption.

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Further Government Policies, Guidance and Regulations have continued to support and implement the Adoption Reforms. Section 15 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016 grants the Secretary of State for Education the power to direct one or more named Local Authorities to decide for any or all their adoption functions to be carried out on their behalf by one of the Local Authorities named, or by another agency. This power was recently enacted by the Secretary of State for Education and is available for use at any time.

The DfE has developed a national infrastructure for supporting the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies and has made available transformation grants to regional partnership arrangements. This infrastructure includes a delivery partner who continue to support the sector with the move to Regional Adoption Agencies, by both supporting existing projects and bringing new Local Authorities into the programme. The delivery partner focuses particularly on sharing learning, developing system leadership, encouraging the sector to work together and focusing on best practice development.

Department of Education (DfE) Fostering Review:

In February 2018, Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers published an independent review of the fostering system in England, which included thirty-six recommendations to the DfE about how the outcomes of children in foster care can be improved. This was an independent report and followed a closed consultation seeking views on the current state of foster care in England and how to improve the prospects of Looked After Children. The review also included a survey of the views and experiences of children in foster care, conducted by the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield.

The Fostering Review reported that, for many children and young people, foster care provides the protective - and loving - environment that they need to develop and thrive. Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers write: "*The care system in England, in which fostering plays a predominant role, has an undeservedly poor reputation. The reality is that fostering is a success story*". The Fostering Review shows, however, that not every child in foster care experiences or benefits from that environment and that there is more to be done to ensure every child in foster care benefits from stable, high quality care.

The DfE's response sets out its vision for all children in foster care to have stable lives, establish trusted relationships, to feel cared for and to benefit from high quality foster care for as long as they need it. The DfE want a care system in which children can experience a 'normal life' and have access to the same opportunities that are available to their peers. Children's needs – and views – should be the driving force for all decisions made about their care.

The recommendations of the Fostering Review were not all directed at Central Government. To make tangible improvements in fostering, all professionals and leaders, whether in Local Government or in private providers, need to work together in pursuit of children's interests. The DfE are currently scoping opportunities for regional partnership arrangements to develop, test and evaluate innovative changes to the Fostering System.

It is anticipated by the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership that future legislation may be developed to implement national reform of the Fostering System, similar to reforms introduced for Adoption, with active exploration of regional partnership working.

The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

The Children and Social Work Bill received Royal Assent, becoming law on the 27th April 2017. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) is intended to improve support for Looked After Children, promoting the welfare and safeguarding of children. The Act also makes provisions about the regulation of social workers. The Act sets out Corporate Parenting principles for Local Authorities to be the best parent it can be to Looked After Children in its care.

The legislation extends the current considerations of the court when making decisions about the long-term placement of children to include an assessment of current and future needs and of any relationship with the prospective adopter. Under this Act, when courts are considering whether to make a care order they must consider the 'permanence provisions' of the care plan prepared by a Local Authority including: additional

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information about the impact of any harm a child has suffered; their current and future needs (including any needs arising from exposure to that harm); and the way in which the proposed permanence plan for the child will meet those needs. This Act has led to increased scrutiny of all “permanence” options, including Adoption, Connected Persons, Special Guardianship (SGO) and Long Term Fostering by the courts.

4. The Regional Journey So Far....

In April 2017, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council joined together to facilitate a collaborative working arrangement, through the establishment of the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership. The partnership was formed to promote improved outcomes for Looked After Children requiring permanency.

The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership was informally developed following discussions between the four respective Chief Executives, Executive Directors of Children’s Services and Assistant Directors accountable for Looked After Children’s Services.

These high-level discussions were underpinned by the shared vision to deliver an enhancement of a standard Regional Adoption Agency, as required in the Education and Adoption Act 2016, through the development of a Regional Permanency Arrangement which includes Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship (SGO).

Each Local Authority believes that to achieve long term improved outcomes for children, we need to a permanency system which operates on a regional footprint, maximising resources, capacity and flexibility. This will lead to improvements in sustainable service delivery, effective practice and long-term outcomes for children, (whilst maintaining the independence of each individual Local Authority.)

The Partnership was formed to scope a potential Regional Permanency Arrangement which is focused on (active exploration of potential methods for) joint working for improving outcomes for Looked After Children requiring permanency. This activity was predicated on a sub-regional partnership model (as opposed to a separate legal entity or delivery vehicle). This active exploration has focused on “function” before “form” and has led to the development of this outline business case.

The Partnership has evolved on the basis that any future partnership working achieves a range of financial and non-financial benefits. The Partnership is also clear that any future partnership arrangement cannot lead to increased financial costs or pressures because of the development of this Partnership.

Executive Directors of Children’s Services, Assistant Directors (accountable for Looked After Children’s Services), Operational Managers, Commissioners and Representatives of Stakeholders have worked collaboratively to develop delivery models which have the potential to be appropriate for the delivery of the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership vision, outcomes, values and success measures.

Each specific delivery model was modelled against operational delivery, demand, efficiency, quality, performance, service scale, organisational structure, governance, integrated working, finance and sustainability. Following this modelling, the delivery options were evaluated by each Local Authority, through a methodology recommended by the DfE.

Following a critical evaluation of the potential models (through a partnership development session), a preferred option has been identified which maintains a focus on improving outcomes for our children and a focus on “function” before “form”. Outlined below is a high-level summary of the three options considered by the partnership:

- **Option One:** The development and establishment of one regional Permanency Agency operated within one delivery vehicle.

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- **Option Two:** The development of a joint service delivery model which operates across the four Local Authorities of the partnership.
- **Option Three:** Each Local Authority within the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership is delegated specific functions which they then deliver on behalf of the whole partnership e.g. Fostering, Adoption, Special Guardianship and Connected Persons.

Option two was adopted to enable Local Authorities to benefit from a network of regional delivery whilst maintaining their own individual independence. This will ensure the Partnership reflects the local landscape, adapted as necessary to the needs of individual Local Authorities, whilst demonstrating clear links to the local Children & Families System.

In December 2017, the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership submitted proposals for the development of a Regional Permanency Arrangement to the DfE, as opposed to a standard Regional Adoption Agency. This proposal was focused on maintaining the independence of each Local Authority whilst achieving long term improved outcomes for our children, through a sustainable Regional Permanency System which operates on a regional footprint.

In January 2018, we entered a period of dialogue with the DfE to explore our proposals further which were scrutinised by Ministers and Senior Civil Servants within the department. In May 2018, we were formally invited to join the Regionalisation of Adoption Programme and have access to a national network of support and a transformation grant of up to the value of £610,000 between 2018 – 2020.

The proposals set out by the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership have been highlighted as transformational, innovative, forward thinking and unique by national leaders in permanence.

5. The Local Journey So Far....

Staffordshire County Council:

Staffordshire is home to historic and vibrant market towns, picturesque villages and stunning countryside. Staffordshire's economy is strong and growing, from start-ups to world-renowned businesses, and is home to many of England's leading tourist attractions. Staffordshire's Children's Services are currently rated as "Good" in all aspects of OFSTED's "Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers" framework.

There is a total of 1138 Looked After Children in Staffordshire at the time of writing (January 2019). At the end of the 2017 reporting period, Staffordshire had 995 Looked After Children and the number of Looked After Children adopted in the same year was 40.

Staffordshire County Council have a long history of integrated working across all Local Authority Services with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, including the joint alignment of Children's Safeguarding Boards, joint commissioning of the Advocacy & Independent Visiting Service, the joint commissioning of the Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Service and most recently the development of the Pan Staffordshire Approach to Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy. Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council are also served by a range of public bodies which cover the two Local Authorities, including Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Commissioners Office.

Staffordshire County Council & Stoke-on-Trent City Council initially came together in 2015 to consider opportunities for the development of a Regional Adoption Agency (with consideration to a wider Regional Permanency System). Following engagement with the DfE, the two Local Authorities were not invited to join the Regionalisation of Adoption Programme on the basis that the proposed partnership arrangement was too small in terms of scale. Staffordshire County Council has continued to explore future opportunities for the delivery of a Regional Permanency System whilst undertaking some low-level partnership working with neighbouring Local Authorities.

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Stoke-on-Trent City Council:

Stoke-on-Trent is a city built on a history of industrial greatness and creative artistic flair. Growing the economy and investing in the area to attract jobs, businesses, residents and visitors is making the city a huge success. More money is being generated through more new people paying council tax and business rates and additional income is being invested to support of the provision of essential services valued by residents. Stoke-on-Trent's Children's Services are currently rated as "Good" for Adoption Performance under the OFSTED "Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers" framework.

There is a total of 843 Looked After Children in Stoke-on-Trent at the time of writing (January 2019). At the end of the 2017 reporting period, there was 655 Looked After Children and the number of Looked After Children adopted in the same year was 45.

As outlined above, Stoke-on-Trent City Council have a long history of integrated working across all Local Authority Services with Staffordshire County Council. As noted above, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council initially came together in 2015 to consider opportunities for the development of a Regional Adoption Agency (with consideration to a wider Regional Permanency System). Following engagement with the DfE, the two Local Authorities were not invited to join the Regionalisation of Adoption Programme on the basis that the proposed partnership arrangement was too small in terms of scale.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council continued to explore future opportunities for the delivery of a Regional Permanency System whilst undertaking some low-level partnership working with neighbouring Local Authorities. During this time Stoke on Trent City Council has also been on a journey of improvement and development in respect of all aspects of Children's Services.

Shropshire Council:

Shropshire is a large, rural and sparsely populated county. Shropshire is the second largest inland local authority area and one of the most rural places in the UK, yet close enough and connected to the major cities of Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester and to shopping and leisure destinations in Cheshire and Staffordshire, as well as a direct rail link to London. Shropshire's large geography, means that the economy operates and reaches in different directions. Shropshire's Children's Services are currently rated as "Good" overall in respect of the OFSTED "Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers" framework.

There is a total of 377 Looked After Children in Shropshire at the time of writing (January 2019). At the end of the 2017 reporting period, Shropshire had 290 Looked After Children and the number of Looked After Children adopted in the same year was 15.

Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council have a long-standing history of integrated working with a Joint Adoption Service (JAS) across the two Local Authorities, hosted by Shropshire Council. Like Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Council have a range of public bodies which cover the two Local Authorities.

In 2015, the two Local Authorities joined the City of Wolverhampton Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council to develop the Adoption@Heart Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council were actively engaged in the project until February 2017, when they concluded that being part of the arrangement was not in their best interests due to funding concerns and uncertainty about the benefits for their rather different child population profile compared with that of the four Black Country Local Authorities. Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council were supported by the DfE to leave the arrangement to pursue a wider model of permanence.

Telford & Wrekin Council:

Telford & Wrekin is described as a place of contrasts - the rural and historic sitting alongside 'new town' housing and modern industrial estates. Two thirds of the Borough surrounding Telford is classified as rural. Telford & Wrekin Council's Children's Services are currently rated as "Good" for Adoption Performance under

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the OFSTED “Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers” framework.

There is a total of 383 Looked After Children in Telford & Wrekin at the time of writing (January 2019). At the end of the 2017 reporting period, Telford & Wrekin had 380 Looked After Children and the number of Looked After Children adopted in the same year was 20.

As outlined above, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council have a long-standing history of integrated working with a Joint Adoption Service (JAS) across the two Local Authorities, hosted by Shropshire Council. Like Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Council have a range of public bodies which cover the two Local Authorities.

6. The Permanency Context:

Most children will have their need for stability and nurturing met by their birth parent(s) and will not require support from, or come to the attention of, Local Authority Children’s Services. Where families require additional support, Children’s Social Care will endeavour to provide the right assistance to help them to maintain the care of their child/children wherever this is in their child/children’s best interests. Where this is not possible child/children will come into the care of the Local Authority.

Permanence, in the context of children’s social work, is defined as a framework of emotional (attachment), physical (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility) which gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.

The Children Act (1989) Guidance and Regulations sets out the clear expectation that Local Authorities should, wherever necessary; secure permanent care arrangements for children in their care. This has been strengthened in the revised regulations where achieving permanence for every child must be a key consideration from the day a child becomes looked after (Care Planning Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, revised 2015). This philosophy was also reinforced in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 and the Children & Social Work Act 2017.

When children do become looked after by the Local Authority, the following options for permanence must be fully considered:

- To remain with, or return to their birth parent(s).
- To live with a connected person (close to the child) by virtue of a Special Guardianship Order, or Child Arrangement Order.
- To be adopted into an alternative family.
- To be long-term fostered by a family.

Special Guardianship Order: Special Guardianship provides an alternative legal status for children, and provides greater security than long term fostering, but without the absolute legal severance from the birth family that stems from an Adoption Order. It is a legal route to permanence for children for whom adoption is not appropriate.

Long-Term Fostering: A long-term fostering placement is defined as one where the child has a clear sense of stability and belonging, and the carers expect the child to be part of their family into adulthood. The child’s primary attachments will be within the foster family, despite the potential for ongoing contact with birth family members. Often, wherever possible, the plan for children in long-term fostering placements should be made with a view to securing their legal permanency, by a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) at the appropriate time.

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Adoption: Adoption is the legal process by which a child or a family group of children who cannot be brought up within their birth family become full, permanent and legal members of a new family. Adopters become the child's legal parents with the same rights and responsibilities as if the child was born to them. Adoption is a lifelong commitment, which requires very serious thought and preparation. Where the plan for the child is adoption, there will be robust evidence addressing all realistic options for securing permanence and security for the child, via other options. The evidence will contain an analysis of the arguments for and against all these options, along with a fully reasoned recommendation. Before deciding to grant an Adoption Order the court must be satisfied that adoption is the only option available to secure the long-term welfare of the child.

For a variety of reasons, it may not be possible for some Looked After Children to secure any of the above outcomes. The specific reasons for this may be complex and varied, and should only be agreed following careful assessment, management endorsement and a rigorous review; all of which must place the child's best interests at the centre of decision-making. In such circumstances, care planning will be driven by the pursuit of achieving enduring stability for the child/young person.

For a small number of Looked After Children, placement within a residential or specialist educational setting will be the appropriate environment to ensure that their needs are best met. For some older children these settings provide the right environment to meet their needs into adulthood. In other circumstances, this will be a time-limited arrangement to address specific needs and issues at a point in a child's life. The arrangements for every child living in these settings will be kept under careful review through the care planning and review process.

7. Vision, Objectives & Outcomes:

Vision:

"To achieve improved outcomes for Looked After Children requiring permanency by working together to find local, safe, resilient, caring, stable and loving homes."

Mission:

"Through an arrangement which operates on a regional footprint, maximising resources, capacity and delivers flexibility, leading to improvements in sustainable service delivery."

Strategic Outcomes:

- Children entering care, who require long-term/permanent care away from their birth parents, will achieve emotional (attachment), physical (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility) which gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.
- Adopters, Foster Carers, Connected Persons and Special Guardian's will feel better supported throughout their journey to provide local, safe, resilient, caring, stable and loving homes which will achieve emotional (attachment), permanence (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility) for Looked After Children.

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Priorities:



Success Measures:

- **The Child, Adopter & Carer Journey:**

- Children entering care who require long-term/permanent care away from their birth parents, receive a consistently high level of organisational commitment and experience a journey which is focused on achieving permanency. Looked After Children from day one will have access to a consistent, high quality, effective and person-centred permanency offer. We are focused on ensuring that all our children who require permanency have stable lives, establish trusted relationships, feel cared for and benefit from high quality permanency for as long as they need it. Children will experience added value because of the Partnership, including increased likelihood of appropriate adoption matches, reduced likelihood of placement breakdowns/disruptions, access to specialist support provision/services and increased opportunity of achieving long term emotional, physical and legal permanency.
- Adopters, Foster Carers, Connected Persons and Special Guardians will experience a one of a kind arrangement, which works collaboratively across four Local Authorities to support local families from every walk of life to Adopt, Foster and provide permanency to local children. Adopters, Foster Carers, Connected Persons and Special Guardians will have access to a seamless system which provides them with the information, advice, guidance and support they need to care for local vulnerable children. Adopters, Foster Carers, Connected Persons and Special Guardians will experience added value because of the Partnership, including increased specialist training and development opportunities, access to specialist support provision and access to a wider support network.

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- **Governance & Strategic Direction:**

- The governance systems will be aligned and developed to ensure robust arrangements where Senior Leaders have a strategic focus on achieving permanence for children entering care who require long-term/permanent care away from their birth parents. Our regional governance systems will be underpinned by clear strategic plans in place to manage future demand, develop quality services which achieve excellence, deliver value for money and achieve appropriate efficiencies and cost savings. Our regional governance systems will develop a clear approach to using evidence and analysis to understand demand, regional sufficiency planning and inform future planning and commissioning of services, relating to permanency.
- Local Authorities will be equal partners in the Partnership and decision making will be made through a robust regional governance system which includes equal representation from each Local Authority.
- The development of a Regional Permanency Strategy which has a clear commitment to developing and delivering integrated children focussed, outcome-based services. Regional Permanency Strategic Plans will reflect the local landscape, adapted as necessary to the needs of individual Local Authorities, whilst demonstrating clear links to wider local Children & Families Transformation Programmes.
- Children, Adopters, Foster Carers, Special Guardians, Connected Carers and Birth Parents will actively be engaged in coproduction to develop our Regional Permanency Arrangement.

- **Financial Sustainability:**

- The Regional Permanency Arrangement will achieve financial sustainability to meet the changing needs of Looked After Children and the challenges facing the four Local Authorities. During the design phase of the Regional Permanency Transformation Programme, we will develop a financial formula to underpin the Regional Permanency Arrangement. This formula will be outlined in detail and will be included in the full business case which will require Cabinet approval by the 31st December 2019.

- **Intelligence, Data & Performance:**

- Information governance is integrated in all aspects of the Regional Permanency Arrangement and up to date and comprehensive intelligence and performance data is used regularly with partners to plan and assess impacts of the Partnerships decisions. Academic research / analyses will be used to optimise performance and outcomes with automated analytical insight where possible. The Partnership will continuously adapt and improve using research as evidence in line with strategic objectives.

- **Regional Culture:**

- Our vision and ambitions will be evidenced through all tiers of our partnership, including the workforce, elected members, partners, Foster Carers, Adopters, Special Guardians and will be communicated effectively to birth parents, and Looked After Children. The workforce will take personal responsibility and ownership to work across the regional boundaries to focus on improving outcomes for children, requiring permanency through effective practice development.
- There will be opportunity for learning and development, recognising and respecting cultural diversity across Local Authorities. Workforce Development will be informed by evidence-based practice and impact will be evaluated and future development plans informed.

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- Regional workforce will have a clear understanding of the impact of their work on improving outcomes for children requiring permanency. Workforce will have access to the learning and development opportunities at the right time, including a range of evidence-based programmes and training from a range of partners. Workforce will be supported by a common purpose by delivery models, structures, governance and clear direction from Senior Leaders/Managers. Staff from the four Local Authorities will have shared priorities, focused on improving outcomes for children.
- **Delivery Structures, Processes & Practice:**
 - In order to deliver phase one by April 2020 we will, through an incremental Regional Permanency Transformation Programme, align our permanency (relating to Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardians) governance, delivery structures, systems, processes and practice to enable our workforce from the four Local Authorities to work together to ensure that all children entering care across the regional footprint, who require long-term/permanent care away from their birth parents, receive a consistently high level of organisational commitment which is forced on improving children's outcomes.

Our Strategic Success Measures will be translated into a Regional Permanency Quality & Performance Framework to robustly measure the impact on delivering our Strategic Priorities. Workstreams have been formed which seek to achieve the vision, mission, priorities and success measures of the Partnership.

8. High Level Benefits Analysis:

Financial Benefits:

There are a range of financial benefits to a Regional Permanency Arrangement, but it is important to note that these financial benefits are only achievable long-term and are not anticipated to be achieved until the completion of Phase Three. The financial benefits are summarised below:

- The development of a Regional Permanency Arrangement is anticipated to generate some long-term efficiencies which can be redirected to alleviate future financial pressures.
- The investment of individual Local Authorities will have increased "value for money" and "impact on improved outcomes" through the collective development of innovative services which are developed at scale, without additional investment or expenditure.
- Decrease in the number of Looked After Children with "harder to place" characteristics who are placed with specialist, intensive and costly placements, alleviating future financial pressures.
- The development of a model of delivery which is focused on achieving permanence at the earliest stage, is likely to reduce the number of children requiring specialist, intensive and costly placements and services, again alleviating future financial pressures. Evidence demonstrates that achieving permanence and stability for children who enter care avoids longer-term costs associated with instability and the need for more and more expensive specialist provision (I.e. Demos, In Loco Parentis, 2010).
- Through a Regional Permanency Arrangement, we anticipate an increase in the number of children Adopted or cared for by Special Guardians, avoiding future care costs if the child was to continue to be a Looked After Child.

Non-Financial Benefits:

There is a range of human and reputational non-financial benefits, but it is important to note that these benefits are only achievable long-term and are not anticipated to be achieved until the completion of Phase Three. The non-financial benefits are summarised below:

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- Increased numbers of children adopted because of a greater range of Adopters leading to long term improved outcomes for Looked After Children
- Increased number of Looked After Children who achieve emotional (attachment), physical (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility) which gives our children a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.
- Increased number of Looked After Children with “harder to place” characteristics achieve emotional (attachment), physical (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility) because of the opportunities to explore potential new ways of working through a regional arrangement.
- Increased numbers of children who achieve early permanence, supported through a regional approach.
- Improve the long-term outcomes of children by achieving emotional (attachment), physical (stability) and legal permanence (in respect of who discharges parental responsibility).
- Reduced numbers of placement breakdowns because of the development of a regional approach to Effective Practice and the development of specialist, innovative and outcome focused models of practice and support only available through a regional operating model.
- Increased numbers of children achieving permanence, will better prepare Looked After Children for the transition to adulthood, leading to wider benefits to society, the economy and the public purse.

Looked After Children, Adopters, Carers and Special Guardians will be able to access sustainable, specialist, intensive and quality services to support the achievement of permanency, which are available due to the regional scale.

9. Regional Delivery Model:

The Partnership is seeking to create a Regional Permanency Arrangement across Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council with the creation of a joint service delivery model. The proposed model demonstrates learning from delivery adopted by Integrated Children & Families Services across England in relation to the principles of multi-agency teams, integrated working and governance. Such ways of working have been successfully embedded within Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), Multi Agency Early Help Partnerships, West Mercia YOS, Stoke-on-Trent YOS and the Staffordshire YOS.

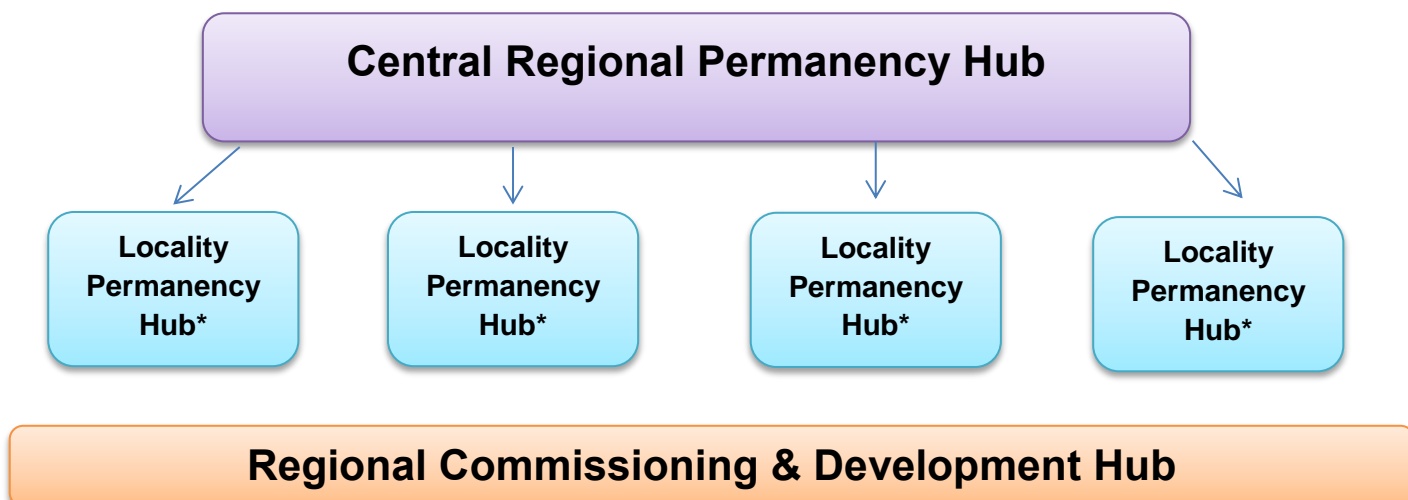
The Regional Permanency Arrangement will operate through a hub and spoke model which enables Local Authorities to benefit from a network of regional delivery whilst maintaining their own individual independence. This will ensure the Partnership reflects the local landscape, adapted as necessary to the needs of individual Local Authorities, whilst demonstrating clear links to the local Children & Families System. The Partnership will adopt the following principles in developing a Regional Permanency Arrangement:

- The services relating to Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship will be delivered through a Regional Permanency Arrangement.
- Looked After Children will, wherever possible and appropriate, remain in the local area to which they were born.
- The workforce will not be transferred to an alternative Local Authority or delivery vehicle.
- The development of a regional permanency model cannot increase the financial pressures on individual Local Authorities.

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The proposed regional delivery model is as follows:



Central Regional Permanency Hub:

The Central Regional Permanency Hub will co-ordinate functions from across the partnership to ensure that we are able to operate on a regional footprint, maximising resources, capacity and flexibility, leading to improvements in effective practice and long-term outcomes for children. The Central Regional Permanency Hub will include functions which will benefit from operating on a regional footprint. Functions include the development of marketing and recruitment strategies, specialist training, learning and development programmes and specialist placement support services for Looked After Children, Adopters, Foster Carers, Special Guardians and Connected Persons, The Central Regional Permanency Hub will be delivered through the four Local Authorities and our voluntary sector partners. The “form” of the Central Permanency Hub will be developed in each phase of the transformation.

Locality Permanency Hubs:

Locality Permanency Hubs will bring together permanency functions within each Local Authority. The Locality Permanency Hubs will operate within individual Local Authorities and will form part of the wider Children & Families System. Consistent practice across Locality Permanency Hubs will be coordinated and directed by a Central Permanency Hub and Regional Commissioning & Development Hub under the leadership of the Regional Head of Operations and Regional Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Regional Commissioning & Development Hub:

The Regional Commissioning & Development Hub will be accountable to the Regional Head of Operations for the leadership, management and coordination of specialist functions which enable the development and delivery of a Regional Permanency Arrangement which operates on a regional footprint, maximising resources, capacity and flexibility, leading to improvements in effective practice and long-term outcomes for children. The Regional Commissioning & Development Hub will have unique functions in relation to commissioning, development, change, and transformation whilst coordinating the infrastructure of individual Local Authority functions to contribute to the delivery of a joint service delivery model.

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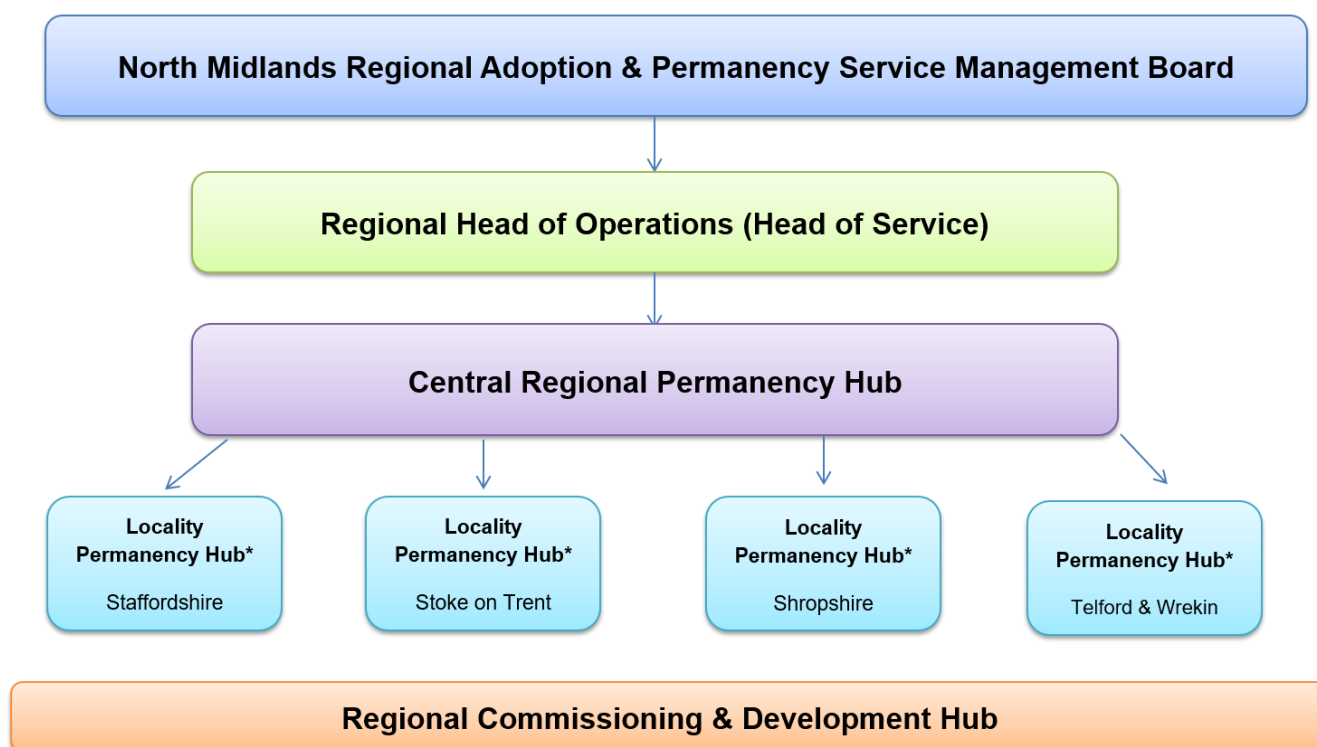
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Voluntary Alliance:

In forming our partnership, we have facilitated informal conversations with the voluntary sector across our region to develop a deeper understanding of how we can most effectively engage voluntary sector partners in the development of our partnership. We recognise that the voluntary sector would like to be a fundamental part of developing our delivery model at the earliest opportunity and we are therefore proposing to invite the voluntary sector across our region to form an “Alliance”. It is the intention of our partnership to invite the alliance to be a strategic partner with our partnership and to work in coproduction with our partnership to develop our delivery model. This “Alliance” will become an essential part of our delivery model and will be developed in co-production with voluntary sector.

10. Regional Governance System:

The governance systems will be aligned and developed to ensure robust arrangements where Senior Leaders have a strategic focus on achieving permanence for children entering care who require long-term/permanent care away from their birth parents. Our regional governance systems will be underpinned by clear strategic plans in place to manage future demand, develop quality services which achieve excellence, deliver value for money and achieve appropriate efficiencies and cost savings. Our regional governance systems will develop a clear approach to using evidence and analysis to understand demand, regional sufficiency planning and inform future planning and commissioning of services, relating to permanency.



Regional Management Board:

The Board will be accountable for the Regional Permanency Arrangement and will provide strategic leadership to achieve the long-term vision and objectives of the arrangement. The Board will be chaired by a Director of Children’s Services (on behalf of the four respective Local Authorities) and will include Assistant Directors/Strategic Leads responsible for permanency and representatives of Local Authority Commissioners (where appropriate). Because Staffordshire County Council will be the legal entity and accountable body for the Regional Permanency Arrangement, the Board will not be chaired by a Staffordshire representative. The Board will have specific delegated authority for the Regional Permanency Arrangement, acting as a single line

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of accountability and on behalf of the four respective Local Authorities. The key responsibilities and functions of the Board are as follows:

- To provide strategic leadership to the Regional Head of Operations and hold them to account for the performance of the partnership.
- To hold Staffordshire County Council to account for the Line Management arrangements of the Regional Head of Operations.
- To be assured through Data, Performance and Quality Assurance intelligence that the arrangement is operating a full range of Permanency Services based on the principles of already established “Good” practice, in accordance with the requirements set out in the partnerships vision, policy, guidance, regulation and statutory requirements.
- Accountable for the Regional Permanency Arrangement, including the discharge of delegated functions on behalf of the four Local Authorities. Functions will be delegated to the Board via Cabinet/Governance approval of each of the four Local Authorities (similar to the process undertaken by current Regional Adoption Agencies).
- To set the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Regional Permanency Arrangement under the advice of the Regional Head of Operations and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- To approve the budget of the Regional Permanency Arrangement, under the delegated functions to the Board.
- Scrutinise, review and make recommendations on internal control and risk management arrangements.
- To oversee the budget and financial performance of the Regional Permanency Arrangement in line with the delegated functions.

The Board members will be accountable to Elected Members and Senior Leaders of their respective organisations. When decisions are required outside of the delegated functions these members will ensure that any appropriate mechanisms are used. If there is a time when decisions cannot be made this will be escalated by the Chair of the Board to the collective group of Directors of Children’s Services and Chief Executive Officers, of each Local Authority, for agreement and decision.

Regional Head of Operations:

The Regional Head of Operations will be responsible for the Regional Permanency Arrangement. Whilst employed by Staffordshire County Council will report directly to the Management Board. The post holder will have line management responsibility for staff within the arrangement, through matrix management, and will have operational responsibility for the Regional Permanency Arrangement on a day to day basis. The Regional Head of Operations will have a single line of an accountability to the Management Board and will have a range of functions.

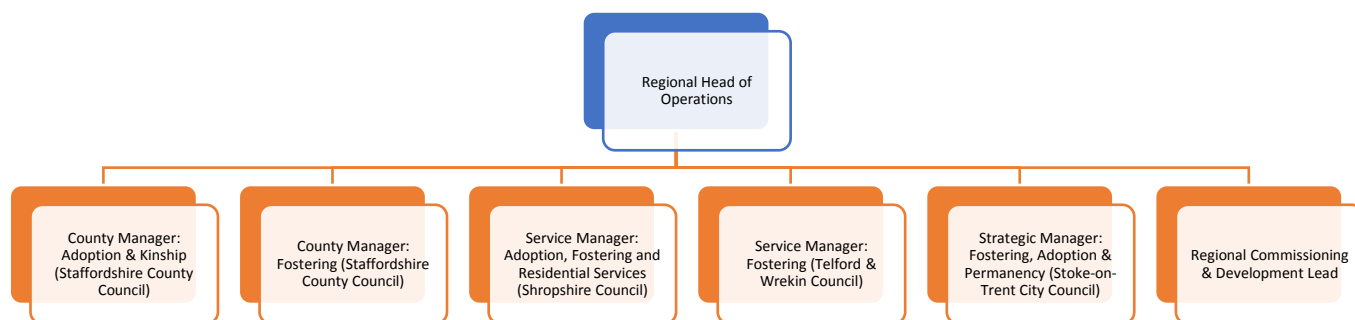
The Regional Head of Operations will represent the region at the West Midlands Regional Adoption & Special Guardianship Leadership Board. The Regional Head of Operations will seek to engage the Regional Permanency Arrangement in broader opportunities for transformation and development across the West Midlands and England.

Regional Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

It is proposed to bring together Service Leads responsible for Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship from each participating Local Authority to form a Regional Senior Leadership Team. Responsible (through matrix management) to the Regional Head of Operations (who is accountable to the Regional Management Board), members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will provide strategic and operational management across the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership. Service Leads will continue to be employed by their individual Local Authority and will continue to have a line of accountability within this management structure. The structure of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will initially take the following form:

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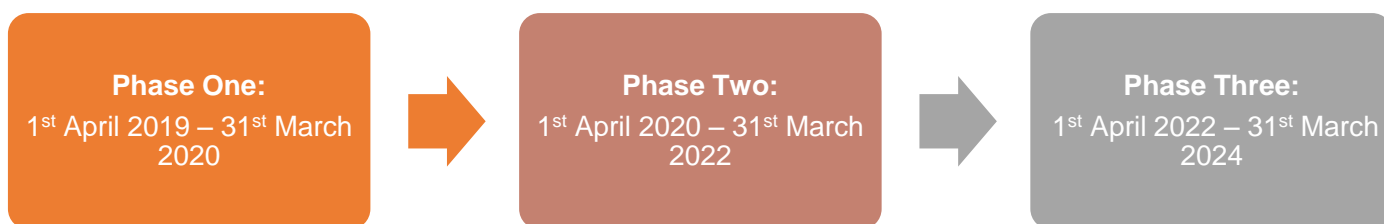
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This Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will act as a Regional Resource Panel ensuring consistency in decision making and that resources are maximised to achieve best outcomes for children whilst achieving “best value”. The SLT will also act as the Statutory Agency Decision Maker for the Regional Permanency Model with responsibility to the Regional Head of Operations.

11. Function:

Functions will be transferred into the Regional Permanency Arrangement at different stages in the Regional Permanency Transformation, as outlined in the following diagrams.



Phase One:

Adoption functions will be prioritised in the first phase of the Regional Permanency Transformation in order to develop a live Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by the 1st April 2020 (to comply with the Education and Adoption Act 2016). Adoption functions include those that relate to Adopter Recruitment, Adopter Assessment, Adoption Matching and Post Adoption Support. Priority functions within Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship will also be included in Phase One to allow adequate time to deliver the ambitions of the Partnership by the 1st April 2024. *Appendix B highlights the functions which will form part of Phase One.*

Phase Two:

Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship will be prioritised in the second phase of the Regional Permanency Transformation with the vast majority of functions in respect of Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship going live before the 1st April 2022. Functions in this phase include Assessment, Permanency Support, Training & Development and Supervision of Foster Carers, Connected Persons and Special Guardians. *Appendix B highlights the functions which will form part of Phase Two.*

Phase Three:

Phase three will focus on the final functions of Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship. Work to integrate the functions of Phase Three into the Regional Permanency Arrangement is likely to begin in phase one and phase two but due to the complexity will not go live until phase three. Functions in this phase include a Regional Fostering Marketing Strategy, Fostering Recruitment, Assessment & Eligibility of Fostering Allowances and Other Payments, Administration/Support of Fostering Panels in respect of SGO/Connected Persons and Assessment & Eligibility of Financial Allowances in respect of SGO/Connected Persons. *Appendix B highlights the functions which will form part of Phase Three.*

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12. Financial Principles:

In proposing the development of a Regional Permanency Arrangement, the four Local Authorities are clear that it provides an opportunity to achieve a range of financial and non-financial benefits as outlined in this OBC. The four Local Authorities are clear that any future partnership arrangement cannot lead to increased financial costs or pressures because of the development of this Partnership. The four Local Authorities are also clear that no Local Authorities will be disadvantaged financially because of the development of this arrangement.

During the design phase of the Regional Permanency Transformation Programme, we will develop a financial formula to underpin the Regional Permanency Arrangement. This formula will be outlined in detail and will be included in the full business case which will require Cabinet approval by the 31st December 2019. The partnership has committed to developing a financial formula which is aligned to the following principles:

- Each Local Authority will adopt a “status quo” in respect of current financial commitments for Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship, until the Partnership have agreed a financial formula.
- The agreed budgeted resource across the four Local Authorities will be delegated to the Regional Permanency Arrangement. The budget will be set on an annual basis by the Management Board (under delegated authority) and implemented by the Regional Head of Operations (supported by the SLT). The total budgeted resource will not lead to additional financial pressures on a Local Authority.
- Future partnership financial arrangements will ensure Local Authorities are not funding services/provision for Looked After Children who they are not responsible for. The individual Local Authority financial contribution to the Regional Permanency Arrangement will be calculated on the number of Looked After Children and demand.
- Analysis of spending patterns in relation to Inter-Agency Fees will inform regional commissioning planning and options for expanding/deepening regional resources. In year one of the Regional Permanency Arrangement, all four Local Authorities will remain committed to the current level of expenditure for Inter-Agency Fees and to allow detailed analysis of spending patterns.
- The Regional Permanency Arrangement may lead to the scoping, design and recruitment of a small number of jointly funded regional posts which provide financial benefits to each Local Authority.
- The Regional Permanency Arrangement may lead to the scoping, design and implementation of shared resources which provide both financial and non-financial benefits.

13. Delivering Our Transformation Programme:

The development of this Outline Business Case has provided a valuable opportunity for the four Local Authorities to achieve greater consensus on our collective strategic vision, outcomes, priorities and success measures along with our proposed Regional Permanency Delivery Model. To maximise the potential benefits of the new delivery model, and to manage the risks, it is recommended that the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership pursue a well organised and sequenced plan to achieve go live of Phase One (2018 – 2020), Phase Two (2020 – 2022) and Phase Three (2022 – 2024). It is proposed that that a change cycle be adopted to guide each phase of the programme.

Adopting a Change Cycle provides us with a framework for enabling change across our partnership. The Change Cycle provides a framework to strategic activity of identifying need, allocating resources and identifying a delivery model (provided or commissioned), to best meet that need, within available resources. Put simply, it enables Local Authorities and their partners to develop services that will deliver the priority outcomes set out in their strategic plans. Following the Change Cycle will allow our partnership to be innovative – to generate new perspectives on, and solutions to, old problems. This will deliver a shift in the type and efficiency of the services on offer and transform the child’s experience of these services. Regardless of the context, audience or setting, the focus remains on developing services FOR outcomes.

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To deliver the Regional Permanency Transformation through a Change Cycle, a transitional governance structure will be adopted by the North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership which is outlined below:

1	Regional Programme/Management Board	The Programme/Management Board will be accountable for the governance and decision making in respect of the Regional Permanency Transformation. Each Local Authority is represented.
2	Regional Steering Group	The Regional Steering Group will be the driving force responsible for the leadership and delivery of the regional transformation plan. Each Local Authority is represented.
3	Regional Permanency Operational Delivery Group	The Group will lead the delivery of Practice Workstreams and regional practice improvement. Each Local Authority is represented.
4	Regional Advisory Groups	It is also proposed to establish a number of Advisory Groups of stakeholders to ensure the views, opinions and experiences of stakeholders influence the development of the partnership moving forward.
5	Workstreams	Workstreams will take the specific lead for driving forward specific areas of development within the Regional Permanency Transformation. Each Local Authority is represented.

14. Next Steps:

- If approved, the programme will move into the design phase of the new operating model which prepares the detail for phase one to go live in April 2020.
- We will continue to engage stakeholders, including the workforce, Looked After Children, Adopters, Foster Carers, Special Guardians, Designated Family Judges, Family Justice Boards and CAFCASS, partners, residents and other stakeholders to co-produce the development of this operating model which focuses on permanence.
- Lead Cabinet Members for Children & Young People, along with Directors of Children's Services (DCS), will be invited to quarterly strategic partnership meetings to continue to provide political, member led leadership to the development of our Partnership and Regional Permanency Arrangement.
- We will return to the Cabinets of Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council with a full business case in respect of a Regional Permanency Arrangement by the 31st December 2019.

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Appendix A: Document Information

Programme Title:	Regional Permanency Arrangement Development
Document Background:	This Outline Business Case (OBC) sets out the case for creating a Regional Permanency Arrangement across Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council. The purpose of this document is to enable the four Local Authorities to consider and agree the strategic direction and the next steps in the creation of a Regional Permanency Arrangement which includes Adoption, Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship. During the next phase in the Transformation Programme, this document will be developed into a detailed full business case.
Programme Summary:	<p>The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership is proposing a collaborative partnership arrangement which combines the specialist expertise of the four Local Authorities, working together to find local, caring, stable and loving homes for Looked After Children (LAC) who require permanence, giving them a sense of stability, continuity, commitment and identity.</p> <p>The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership, will be a one-of-a-kind partnership, which will create a sustainable Regional Permanency System. Operating on a regional footprint, maximising resources, capacity and flexibility, leading to improvements in sustainable service delivery, effective practice and long-term outcomes for children, whilst maintaining the independence of each individual Local Authority.</p>
Document Author:	Joseph Sullivan, Regional Commissioning & Development Lead, The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership.
Lead Sponsor:	Karen Bradshaw, Programme Board/Management Board Chairperson, The North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership.
LA Sponsor (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Helen Riley, Deputy Chief Executive & Director for Families & Communities, Staffordshire County Council. 2) Mark Barratt, Interim Director of Children & Family Services, Stoke-on-Trent City Council. 3) Karen Bradshaw, Director of Children's Services, Shropshire Council. 4) Clive Jones, Director of Children & Adult Services, Telford & Wrekin Council.
Document Restriction:	Public
Version:	Version Six
Appendix B: Functions:	

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Phase One: 2018 - 2020	
<p>Adoption (Phase One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Internal Policies, Procedures & Guidance (to include disruption) • Assessment of Adopters-Domestic/FFA • Regional Adoption Brand Development • Adoption Marketing Strategy • Adopter Recruitment Activity / Recruitment Information • Adoption Preparation & Training • Additional Training and Preparation for Potential Adopters to meet the needs of specific children • Agency Decision Maker role, function and processes • Court Process and Costs for Adoption Applications • Oversight of Medicals for Adopters • DBS Checks for Prospective Adopters • Early Identification & Tracking of Children Requiring Adoption • Challenge to Care Plans and Matching re adoption • Identification at earliest opportunity of Harder to Place Children for adoption • Preparing Profiles of the Child, Including Early Profile re Adoption • Adoption Family Finding (Linking & Matching) • Identifying Suitable Adopters at Earliest Stage • Early Permanency-Concurrency Service • FFA placements-Supervision & Support of carers • Inter-agency placements and fees • Administration of Adoption Panels • Adoption Panel roles, functions and processes • Shared Regional Adoption Panels (to include any financial implication) • Adoption Introductions • Post Approval Support (i.e. Reviews & Training) • Post Adoption Support (to Include Assessments/ASF) • Adoption Support Allowances & Approval of Allowances • Review of Adoption Support Plans • Workforce Development & Therapeutic Interventions re Adoption • Adoption Support Fund Assessment & applications • Commissioning of Post Adoption Support • An Intermediary Service for Adoption • A Non-Agency Adoption Service 	<p>Fostering (Phase One):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Marketing Strategy for Targeted Regional Fostering Campaigns • Fostering Recruitment Information Content • To agree a consistent determination of foster carers approval and the terms of their approval across the partnership. • Mapping Pre-approval training across the partnership • Mapping all Post-Approval Fostering Training, Learning & Development. • Delivering some Post Approval training jointly across the partnership. • Agree Long Term Approach & Benchmark for Fostering Payments (Phased Implementation) • Fostering Tracker & Best Interest Panel • Fostering Panel Central Lists and Fostering Panel Administrative Functions will be mapped • Regional Coordination of Family Finding Targeted Programmes & Events-Fostering • Fostering Placement Disruption - Standardised Process/Support/Functions • Regional 'Harder to Match Children' Support Offer / Regional Register of Specialist Support Available for 'Harder to Match Children'-Fostering • Map 'Stability Packages' Support-Fostering • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Foster Carers • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Children in Foster Care • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Birth Families (Fostering) • Process for Tracking Permanence • Identification at earliest opportunity of harder to place children for fostering • Mapping and understanding the health landscape across the region, strategic discussions re potential alignment of commissioned health provisions and specialist CAMHs services • Mapping of carers/placements-Fostering <p>Special Guardianship & Connected Persons (Phase One):</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Inter-Country Adoption Service • Access to files for Adopted Adults & counselling (policy and procedure and how we secure this information on systems) • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Adopted Children • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Birth Families (Adoption) • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Adopters • Combined License E.g. Link maker/Coram BAAF membership • Administration of Adoption Support Fund-application forms • Sustainability of Adoption Support Fund-Explore • Alignment with LA Children's Services Statutory Complaints Processes re Adoption • Framework & regional register of specialist support available for harder to match specialist providers-adoption • Pre-adoption support for birth parents and families • Implementation of tracking for adoption • Benchmarking of child's care plans and matching-Adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGO & Connected Persons Internal Policies, Procedures & Guidance • Agree: Standardised Approach to Who Undertakes Assessments i.e. CSW/FSW • SGO & Connected Persons Regional "AS IS" Development (Including Mapping of LA's FGC Function/Process in Permanence Journey) • SGO & Connected Persons Tracker • Regional Agreement: SGO Ongoing Support /Events/Universal Services (Phased Implementation) • Regional Agreement: SGO Financial Support (Phased Implementation) • Regional Agreement: Permanence Panel Arrangements re SGO matches • Supervision via Reciprocal Arrangements Geographically-SGO • Standardised approach of what goes with the child – Life Story Book/Letter-SGO <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Brand Development • Alignment with Local Authority Access to Files – open cases/closed cases (policy & procedure & practicalities) • Alignment with Local Authority Children's Services Statutory Complaints Processes (in respect of Regional Permanency Arrangement)
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*Adoption functions will be prioritised in order to comply with the requirement to form a fully operational Regional Adoption Agency by the 1st April 2020. The functions of Fostering and Special Guardianship will not necessarily be live until Phase Two and Three.

<p>Phase Two: 2020 - 2022</p>	
<p>Adoption (Phase Two)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Adoption Contact for Birth Family Members • Birth parent support to prevent reoccurring care proceedings • System Process for Post Order Support-Strategic Alignment-Adoption • Responsibility for the preparation of child's Life Story Book (needs to interlink and influence CSW teams re direct work as well as later in life letters) <p>Fostering (Phase Two)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked After Children's Family Finding Services-Fostering 	<p>Special Guardianship & Connected Persons (Phase Two):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to Extend to SGO Family Network • Standardised Special Guardianship & Connected Persons Support Offer • Standardised Approach to SGO & Connected Persons • Standardised Approach SGO Support Plan • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Special Guardians • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Children (Under SGO or Connected Persons Arrangement)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Enquiries/Front Door Functions • Coordination & Management of Fostering Panels • Administration of Fostering Panels • Assessment of Foster Carers • Fostering Pre-Approval Training • Function of Fostering Support E.g. Support Groups • Foster Carers Supervision/ Q&A process to review & Explore New Models E.g. Group Supervision • Post-Approval Fostering Training, Learning & Development (include TSD Standards) • Assessment of Supported Lodging Carers • Supervision and support of supported lodgings carers • Shared Learning Reviews-Fostering • Specialist Commissioning of IFA's-Fostering • Agree Long Term Approach & Benchmark for Fostering Payments (Phased Implementation) • Supported board and lodgings and 'staying put' Internal Policies, Procedures & Guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation, Engagement & Participation of Birth Families (SGO/Connected Persons) • Regulation 24 (Threshold/Decision Making/Quality)
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<p>Phase Three: 2022 - 2024</p>	
<p>Fostering (Phase Three):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Internal Policies, Procedures & Guidance (Fully Integrated/Aligned) • Fostering Marketing Strategy (Fully Integrated/Aligned) • Fostering Branding Functions (Fully Integrated/Aligned) • Fostering Recruitment Activity (Fully Integrated/Aligned) • Fostering Reviews (Fully Integrated/Aligned) • Assessment & Eligibility of Fostering Allowances and Other Payments (Fully Integrated/Aligned) 	<p>Special Guardianship & Connected Persons (Phase Three):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration/Support of Fostering Panels in respect of SGO/Connected Persons • Delivery and Function of Fostering Panels in respect of SGO/Connected Person • Fostering Reviews of carers to include progress towards achieving an SGO order • Assessment & Eligibility of Financial Allowances in respect of SGO/Connected Persons