South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency (SYRAA)

RAA Business Case V15
Refreshed May 2020 updated by
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1.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Drive towards Regionalisation

In June 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) published their plans for 'Regionalising Adoption,' setting out the proposals for the establishment of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) across the country. The paper gave a clear direction that it is the expectation for all authorities to be part of a RAA by 2020. Further policy statements since then (and following the general election in June 2017) have continued to promote the proposed reforms to adoption services. Indeed, several RAAs are now live including within One Adoption here in Yorkshire and Humber (One Adoption West). In addition, a new wave of local authorities are currently joining the RAA programme. The move towards the creation of RAAs is led by a national agenda to increase the targeted recruitment of prospective adopters and improve timeliness for matching and placement of children with a plan for adoption by creating larger entities with the benefits of scale. There is a risk to authorities that fail to join a regional agency; this would include the government directing how its adoption services would be delivered, in line with other recent interventions into Children's Services. The South Yorkshire RAA (SYRAA) Implementation Board has been explicit that these structural changes must deliver improved outcomes for service users and their families at same or less cost. This is the expectation of the DfE. Further new research had been produced, for example the "Evaluation of regional adoption agencies, (July 2019)" This was DfE research from the 3-year evaluation of regional adoption agencies which highlighted that despite some difficulties and frustrations "going live" now 75% of all Local Authorities in the UK are part of a RAA. It also outlines that it takes up to 36 months for a RAA to embed itself across all Local Authorities'.

This document describes how establishing a single agency will allow the four authorities to provide a more cohesive, efficient, and effective use of resources and development of practice to the benefit of children, adopters and others who gain from adoption services. It proposes that Doncaster Children's Trust will host the SYRAA, the cost of implementation to be funded by the Department for Education. This document also sets out how the SYRAA will work with its partners to deliver Adoption Services.

Legislative Requirements:

The provision of an adoption service is a statutory requirement for all unitary authorities.   The Adoption and Children Act 2002 provides the structure for an adoption service. Under section 3 of the Act each Council must maintain within its area an adoption service designed to meet the needs of children who may be adopted, their parents, natural parents, and former guardians. The development of RAAs does not absolve each local authority of its statutory responsibilities. However, as Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield (BRS) and the Trust are public contracting Authorities they are permitted to delegate their functions or cooperate in the discharge of their functions, enabling the development of regional arrangements for the delivery of an adoption service. Further detail of the legal and governance issues is provided within this document.

Delivery Model:

The delivery model identified for the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency (SYRAA), following a detailed options appraisal (2016-18) is that of a co-operative venture between the Four South Yorkshire Adoption Agencies. The RAA will be hosted by Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST). This decision is supported by the DfE who have strongly promoted RAAs hosted by Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) or by Local Authorities judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Doncaster Children's Services Adoption service has a judgement of Outstanding. The operating model detailed in this report is informed by best practice, national research findings and analysis of performance within the four South Yorkshire agencies.

The 2021/22 objectives of the SYRAA is to deliver 130 approved adopters and place 154 children annually. Other local RAA's delivery models have meant relocation of staff and staff turnover has been high. Staff in the SYRAA will not move from their current locations, will remain employees of their own

authority, only their senior management could change and some reporting lines, but no great changes would occur to disrupt current operations in the short-term, which improves timeliness in the longer term. Indeed, each Local Authority Adoption team will continue their current adoption support, adoption assessments, and family finding until such times as new work streams filter through, which according to other RAA's experience could take up to 12-18 months. Therefore, this gives the SYRAA time to analyse operational issues, to provide staff reassurance, and for the assessment of performance. The financial model detailed in this business plan assumes that each Local Authority and Trust transfer their operational budget for Adoption for 2021/22 into the SYRAA.

Budget:

The principles of the financial arrangements are on the critical path to approval of the SYRAA. The challenge is how to balance the goals of the SYRAA to increase the number of adoptions, driving up demand on all aspects of the service (assessments & support) whilst all funding LAs' are under budgetary pressures. The SYRAA is expected to deliver 130 approved adopters and place 154 children annually. It is proposed that the Regional Adoption Agency would be funded at the current agreed budgets in year one detailed below:

	Operational Budget with business support £'000	Business Support £'000
Rotherham	1.353m	39K
Barnsley	1.003m	31K
Doncaster	1.240m	35k
Sheffield	1.432m	30K
Total	**5.028m**	**135K**

The model proposes that each Local Authority and the Trust retains its own 2021/22 Adoption budgets adjusting for the identified savings to enable a contribution to the SYRAA to fund the central costs. If the SYRAA achieves its stated objectives in respect of adopter recruitment and children placed then all LA's should achieve some financial benefits arising from a reduced cost of inter-agency fees which are charged at £31k for one child and £50k for 2 siblings for example. In addition, there should be some other costs benefit such as of these children spending less time in care and therefore requiring less social work and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) resources.

The SYRAA Board will be ultimately responsible for managing the budget of the SYRAA and will therefore have to raise with the respective local authorities in response to any actual or projected overspend. Each member of the SYRAA will have Finance Manager representation on the Partnership Board in order to ensure as far as is practicable that the forecasted budget savings to be accrued from shared innovations and marketing opportunities are being realised or that remedial action is taken at the earliest opportunity.

The model proposed in this version of the Business Case is the only current viable model identified after an extended period of consideration and negotiation.

These budgets equate to an existing staff structure of 63.2 to 66 FTE's (across the current four adoption agencies) including Business Support. The budgets above for Business Support are the amounts identified by each contributing organisation for business support applicable to the Adoption service.

Start-up Costs The proposed staffing structure for the RAA includes essential additional senior management and business support posts.

- Head of Service up to 82K per annum including on-costs (HOS to be in post from January 2021 a pre RAA cost of 20.5k).
- Performance Analyst up to 35k per annum including on-costs
- Business Support Manager up to 30k per annum including on-costs
- Later in the SYRAA plan, Service Manager – cost absorbed by Doncaster (not included in P&L as current resource could be used.)

These new posts place an additional cost of £145k per annum but represent the necessary costs of setting up a new service and are essential for the management and governance of the Organisation.

Savings/Direct Cost Efficiencies

This spend outlined above of £145k representing the additional staffing can be offset by consolidating costs for example:

Costs	Combined Savings
Panel	60K Based on Panel reduction by 23 & paperless
Subscriptions	32K Subs to external, Link maker, BAAF
Marketing	30K use of social media
Misc.	22K average spend reduction
Total	**145K**

Implementation of the SYRAA in this way potentially enables each LA to review its current adoption spend and identify any potential cost reductions, subject to regional approval.

2.   INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

2.1   SCOPE AND VISION OF THE NEW SYRAA

The proposed Regional Adoption Agency would encompass all four Local Authority areas in South Yorkshire. It is estimated that approximately 154 children annually will be placed by the RAA (some in sibling groups) and 130 adopters recruited. The RAA will operate in partnership with two other RAA's and a central Hub in the Yorkshire and Humber area. This is a stretched target, given that in 2019 all the LA's placed 75 children for adoption with 89 families approved. However, given the efficiencies and partnership working this target is a possibility.

"One Adoption Hub" has provided a coordination function across the Yorkshire and Humber adoption services from RAAs, LAs and partners in the Voluntary Adoption alliance since 2016. However, as of October 2020 it is understood that the hub may not exist in its present form. It is envisaged that this work could be absorbed into the SYRAA at a lower cost and with little effect on staffing ratios or workloads.

The vision for the SYRAA is to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults affected by adoption through:

- Ensuring that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs.

- Targeting recruitment and establishing a wide and diverse pool of prospective adopters.

- Secure matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families.

- Providing creative and outstanding adoption support services.

- Investing in the workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.

- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working.

- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults, and staff to develop and improve the services provided.

2.2   OVERVIEW OF THE OPERATING MODEL

From a local perspective, the four agencies have a long history of working together and South Yorkshire has a clear identity. Past project work included, the Sheffield led 'Empower and Protect' CSE Fostering project, which further established key working relationships. Adoption services have also worked collaboratively in sharing practice and training opportunities. This has enabled constructive working together in developing the target-operating model.

Work undertaken by performance leads across the South has enabled the identification of best practice at several different stages of the child's journey to adoption. South Yorkshire Adoption Agency will combine best practice from the LAs and the VAA while providing the opportunity to create clear practice improvements and enable a viable future market for recruitment. Approximately 63-66 LA staff, many of whom work part time, are expected to join this new organisation in the later stages of its development, to deliver the following main services across South Yorkshire:

- Recruitment and Assessment – to provide the prospective adopters.

- Permanence Planning – ensuring that children identified as requiring adoption achieve a placement.

- Matching and Placement – to match prospective adopters with children in need of adoption.

- Adoption Support – to help all affected by adoption.

2.3   STRATEGIC BENEFITS

The key aims for combining services to create a single Regional Adoption Agency is to improve timeliness and achieve better outcomes for all children and young people with adoption plans in the region. Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies will combine adoption services into a new regional agency to benefit children and their adoptive families, with larger operating areas giving access to a wider pool of adopters and children, more effective matching, and better support services.

The Government set out the challenges they are seeking to address nationally through the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies in the paper 'Regionalising Adoption', published in June 2015.
In summary, these are:

Inefficiencies
A highly fragmented system with around 180 agencies recruiting and matching adopters for only 5,000 children per year (this number has subsequently decreased). Most agencies are operating on a small scale with over half recruiting fewer than 20 adopters. This is not an effective and efficient scale to be operating at and is likely to mean that costs are higher because management overheads and fixed costs are shared over a smaller base. Having a system that is fragmented in this way reduces the scope for broader, strategic planning, as well as specialisation, innovation, and investment. Large numbers of small agencies

render the system unable to make the best use of the national supply of potential adopters, more vulnerable to peaks and troughs in the flow of children, and less cost effective.

Matching
The system needs to match children with families far more quickly. Nationally, the data also shows that, between January and March 2019, 4,620 children required adoptive placements. In South Yorkshire (2018/19), 89 adoptive families were approved when 140 children required placements. ALB analysis of trend data 2019 confirms that significantly more children 170+ are entering the system. The costs of delay, both to children and to the system, are high. It is vital that children are given the best and earliest possible chance of finding a family, irrespective of authority boundaries and lack of trust of other agencies' adopters. Successful matching relies on being able to access a wide range of potential adopters from the beginning and operating at a greater scale would allow social workers to do this, thus reducing delay in the system. It could also reduce the number of children who have their adoption decisions reversed. During 2019/20 there have been 32 reversals of SBPFA decisions across South Yorkshire, this represents a 28% increase since 2018 (a 92% increase was seen from 2017/18 to 2019/20).Furthermore, the opportunity for practice innovation created by moving to a new delivery model also has real potential to improve matching.

Recruitment
Whilst there has been growth in adopter recruitment there are still too few adopters willing and able to adopt 'priority' children. Recruitment from a wider geographical base as part of a regional recruitment strategy will go some way to addressing this. Incentives also need to be better aligned so that agencies are encouraged to recruit the right kind of adopters given the characteristics of the children waiting. Recruitment from a wider geographical base than an individual local authority, that takes account of the needs of children across a number of those local authorities in a regional recruitment strategy and uses specialist techniques for recruiting adopters for hard to place children, would potentially lead to fewer children waiting.
ALB data states that during 2019/20 the South has seen an overall reduction in the number of enquiries (a 20% decrease from the previous year) to 310, with Sheffield having the biggest decrease, followed by Rotherham. However, adoption applications increased to 93, with approvals at 89.

Adoption Support
Currently adoption support services are provided by a mix of local authority provision, the NHS, and independent providers (voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies and small independent providers). There is a risk that the public and independent sectors are unlikely to be able to grow sufficiently to meet increased demand for adoption support. There are regional gaps in the types of services on offer and little evidence of spare capacity. The sector is currently dominated by spot purchasing and sole providers. This is not an efficient way to deliver these services. For providers to expand and therefore operate at a more efficient scale, services need to be commissioned on bigger and longer-term contracts. RAAs should enable this to be done. It is envisaged that the Hub will act as a conduit to the wider voluntary sector, providing economies of scale and opportunities for innovation

The Local Perspective

The statutory functions required of local authorities in respect of adoption are provided by each of the three local authorities and the Trust within their own geographic areas. There is already a great deal of joint working between the four adoption agencies to provide parts of the current service.

Combining the three local authority services and, the Trust together within One Adoption South Yorkshire (this branding may change in 2020/21), will enable efficiencies to be achieved and improvements to services for all those affected by adoption. This larger organisation will provide resilience and improved outcomes at the same or less cost than currently.

In terms of recruiting adoptive parents all the agencies are currently competing. There is a duplication of effort and associated costs with the risk that people wanting to be considered as adoptive parents are confused about where and how to proceed with their enquiry. The SYRAA will have a single point of contact for prospective adopters, reducing the current fragmentation of services. Similarly, a single point of entry to the adoption service locally will improve access to adoption support services for adoptive

families, and for adopted adults and birth family members, who have a statutory entitlement to receive a service.

It is expected that by pooling resources to create a single service management overheads and fixed costs will be reduced over time. The new service will allow for the more efficient use of staff time, for example prospective adoptive parents are provided with training as part of the assessment process. South Yorkshire Adoption Agency will deliver training courses across the whole area resulting in less duplication and more timely access to the training courses for prospective adopters. There will also be the opportunity for trialling new approaches, including the use of experienced adoptive parents as trainers/mentors.

There are currently four Adoption Panels operating across the three Local Authorities and the Trust. Proposals in relation to South Yorkshire Adoption Agency will result in the standardising and regularising of panels which whilst still held locally will reduce in number (and therefore cost) from 71 to 48. Panels will consider applications from prospective adopters and placements of children with approved adopters. Agency Decisions in relation to prospective adopter approvals will be made by the Agency Decision Maker for the RAA. Each agency will continue to have a designated Agency Decision Maker for considering and agreeing the plan that a child should be placed for adoption and agreeing the match to appropriate adopters. Eventually the plan would be to reduce to one ADM preferably the Head of Service.

The new combined service provides the opportunity for the provision of a service of excellence for adoption support. This will be a multi-disciplinary service in partnership with colleagues from health and education and providing comprehensive and high-level targeted support for adopted children, adoptive parents, adopted adults and birth family members.

The SYRAA will build on the existing local expertise among managers and social workers to improve on the identification of children at an early stage. Early identification of children will enable fuller and more accurate assessments of an individual child's needs to inform matching and prepare the child. Being more strategic in terms of recruitment will also widen choice of potential adoptive families for children, which again should lead to better and more sustainable matching.

Benefits will be delivered through adopting the "best practice" from the four contributing organisations. This will be of value in delivering benefits from the areas of Early Permanence (concurrency and fostering to adopt), improved adoption support, making optimal use of colleagues in health and education as well as those in the SYRAA registered as social workers and those without social work qualifications but with other relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

2.4   REALISING THE BENEFITS OF THE SYRAA

Benefits expected to be realised through the project are listed below:

A detailed performance framework has been shared with the board and is available on request.

- Improved timescales for adopter assessments

- Higher conversion rate from enquiry to approval because of prompt recruitment team response and consolidated training.

- Working in partnership but led by Local Authorities the early identification of children with potential adoption plans and more children placed on an Early Permanence (Fostering to Adopt or concurrency) basis

- Reduction in the number of children for whom the permanence plan has changed away from adoption

- Increase in the percentage of children adopted for care

- More timely matching of approved adopters

- Improved timescales for placing children with their adoptive families

- Fewer prospective adopter approvals rescinded as approved adopters are not matched with a child

- Fewer adoption placement disruptions pre-and post-adoption order

- Improved performance measurement and management across the service

Early Gains of collaborative working include:
- Improvements in the tracking of children with a plan of adoption leading to a reduction in timescales
- Joint profiling events and early alert system, which has resulted in EPP placements and the early identification of adopters for two sibling groups.
- Rescheduling of information evenings to maximise resource across the South resulting in reduced waiting time for people wanting to adopt.
- Development of combined information re enquiries to inform marketing and recruitment work.

2.5   STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Consultation with stakeholders is an integral part of the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency project.

There has been ongoing development work undertaken by staff from across the adoption agencies in the South. The business case reflects the effort that staff in all agencies have invested which is already delivering positive results. The level of engagement of all staff has been commendable and their comments, concerns and contributions have very much informed the business case.

Additionally, the following groups have been consulted and contributed to discussions about service delivery/development throughout the duration of the project:

- Teen groups in Barnsley and Doncaster (2016)

- Adopter Voice (Yorkshire and Humber) undertook a robust in-depth survey of the timeline and experience of adopters within the adoption process and beyond. The resulting timeline is recognised as a national exemplar for agencies developing Adoption services. (2017)

- Leeds Beckett University were commissioned (October 2016) to deliver workshops involving a cross section of staff. The formal research report identifies both opportunities and challenges from a staff perspective all of which have been taken account of in the proposed structure of the RAA.

- Adopters have participated well in the Leeds Beckett workshop (2016). The Adopter Development coordinator in the South established a good network of adopters who have contributed to the task and Finish groups.

- Key topics raised by service users and staff have been incorporated into the task and finish groups (2018-2019)

Ongoing stakeholder engagement and feedback are included in plans for the implementation phase of the project. A Stakeholder Communications plan has been developed to ensure effective engagement with various stakeholder groups including Executive Level Officers, Adoption Teams, wider Children's Social Care staff, Service Users and Partners.

Elected members and portfolio holders have been consulted in all four local authorities, as well as the Doncaster Children's Services Trust Board.

3   SYRAA OPERATING MODEL

3.1   PROCESS

The target operating model for the new SYRAA considers its role in the delivery of the following main services across South Yorkshire:

- Recruitment and Assessment – to provide the prospective adopters.
- Permanence Planning – Identifying children who need adopting.
- Matching and Placement – to match prospective adopters with children in need of adoption.
- Pre-and Post-Placement Support – to help all affected by adoption.

3.1.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below sets out the RAA and LAs will work together, summarising roles and responsibilities for each. This table is used by all RAA's across the UK and therefore is not unique to the SYRAA.

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters	✓	
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
PERMANANCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to childcare social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments if commissioned by LA	✓	
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for "Should be placed for Adoption" decisions		✓
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM		✓

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child appreciation day	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child		✓
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book	✓	✓
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child's care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter		✓
ADOPTION SUPPORT		
Assessment for adoption support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre- and post-Adoption Order		✓
Adoption support delivery including: • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption/special guardianship training • Independent Birth Relative services • Support with ongoing birth relative contact • Adoption counselling and training	✓	
Financial support to adopters including adoption allowances		✓
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		
Stepparent/partner adoption assessments		✓
Inter-country adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	

As part of implementation the project team will explore potential areas for the VAA to partner with SYRAA to support service delivery including consideration of the following areas:

✓ Targeted recruitment activity focusing on Early Permanence and targeted assessments for priority children
✓ Specialist adoption support training
✓ Specialist practical or therapeutic support services for children and families post placement and post order

- ✓ Adoption counselling and services to adopted adults
- ✓ Continued provision of VAA families
- ✓ Life Story Work and book

Practice improvements will be delivered through the implementation of new ways of working. South Yorkshire Adoption Agency will work jointly with the other RAA's in Yorkshire and Humber to seek to explore further sources of funding to work jointly with the VAA and ASA sector, for example, in the areas of Early Permanence and adoption support to design and deliver practice improvements.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED SYRAA ORGANISATION

What Research and Best Practice Tells us

Research identifies several factors which contribute to timely, successful family finding and matching outcomes for children with a plan of adoption.

The University of Bristol, (June 2010) and Oxford University (Feb 2015) identified within research briefs, key factors seen to enhance the adoption journey for both children and their prospective adopters.

Quality of information – all information at all parts of the process must be of high quality, factual and comprehensive. Poor quality information is identified as a direct correlation to disruption.

Local authorities with access to a **wider pool of prospective adopters** experienced less delay in their family finding and matching processes.

Family finding done at the point of **ADM decision** (rather than at the granting of the placement order) resulted in children experiencing less delay.

Delay was reduced when **case responsibility for children transferred to adoption service** at point of placement order.

Delay was also reduced when **early family finding strategies** were agreed for individual children deemed to have complex needs.

Tracking of children throughout their journey is critical and adoption workers involved in this can drive and empower the process.

Timely joint decision making regarding whether to pursue ethnic matches or sibling separation also reduced delay for children.

Post placement support (in a variety of formats) is particularly valued by adopters, contributes to positive transitions, and reduces the risk of disruptions.

Proposals contained within this report have taken account of these key factors alongside the need for quality and efficiency.

Staffing

63-66 Adoption staff would be part of South Yorkshire Adoption Agency within their own locales to deliver Adoption services across South Yorkshire. There will be no TUPE agreement, the agreed HR strategy is that staff will remain within their locale. However, a new Head of Service post would be created in the hub and therefore reporting lines would change for existing Heads of Service (HOS) and with some loss of role for the HOS.

An overall project plan and Service Level Agreement/Memo of Understanding (intention of change) will be created and staff consulted slowly, after this business case is agreed. It will include aspects of the HR activity that is required and will set out the responsibilities for each party to ensure that legal and operational requirements are met.

HUB Roles (DONCASTER)

The only new roles (Appendix B 1&2) in the establishment of the new organisation are:

- 1 FTE Head of Service (also ADM)
- 1.5 FTE Business Support Manager
  Other posts will be agreed over time:
- 1 FTE Service Manager (funded separately by Doncaster or using existing resource)

These staff will be centrally based in the HUB, Doncaster.

The **Head of Service** is expected to provide leadership and vision for the continuous development of the SYRAA, leading the strategic planning, development and management of all aspects of the SYRAA to ensure the delivery of high quality, effective and legally compliant Adoption services. They will manage the operational relationship with Local Authorities through interaction at Senior Management level.
An ability to work in a transformation role will be essential as part of this role to drive the practice improvement and cultural change required to deliver on these.

The **Service Manager** (agreed over time) will be responsible for all the social work teams and the monitoring and driving of performance. They will deputise for the Head of Service when necessary. This will involve travel in the South Yorkshire area, but could be supported by the other service managers in the partner authorities

When the SYRAA is established, the existing staffing structures from the four organisations will remain unchanged other than reporting lines. A full staffing structure based on assessment of need, aspiration and on achieved targets could be created in the first 24 months and then logically examined over time to meet the organisation's needs.

3.3 PERFORMANCE

In respect of performance, each area Adoption Team will continue to provide adoption assessments, family finding and post-adoption support whilst the local authority will retain responsibility for 'Should be Placed for Adoption' and matching decisions as well as for any adoption allowances. However, by having a larger pool of adopters to select from it is envisaged that the timescales especially for the 'Hard to Place' children, including sibling groups, older children and children with a disability or from a BAME background will be reduced. Where specific legal or HR advice is required this will be provided by the local authority within which the issue has arisen i.e. where specific legal advice is required this will be provided via the case managing local authority.

It is reasonable to assume that performance within the SYRAA is likely to surpass that of each individual authority given the opportunities to have shared recruitment meetings, joint recruitment campaigns and marketing opportunities and the potential to reach a wider target audience by sharing marketing ideas.

Identified best practice models from each individual organisation will also be adopted across the SYRAA to ensure that, as far as can be reasonably expected, performance within all existing measures will be expected to improve.

Other performance enhancers include:

- Reduced Panel overheads.
- There will be the potential to facilitate larger scale and more visible advertising at better negotiated cost - the aim being to reach a wider target audience of potential adopters. - More regular and larger scale family finding activity days with shared costs.
- Shared duty, initial contact and visits which will provide a more responsive approach.
- Shared drop in/information events which could mean that there are information sessions on a weekly basis providing more choice for potential adopters to attend. This in turn should speed up the assessment and approval process.
- Shared training to provide adopters with far greater consistency.
- Consistency in respect of adoption allowances across the region.
- Shared resources such as the Children's guides, preparation materials for children and adopters and transition planning.
- Shared agreement of exchange of adopters for harder to place children which would mean no interagency fees within the South Yorkshire region. The SYRAA may then also be able to negotiate a mutual exchange of adopters within the Yorkshire and Humber hub on a no fees basis.
- Pooling of all recruited adopters to accelerate the matching process and minimise delays for children in being placed with their adoptive families.
- Greater understanding of children with an adoptive plan across the region without losing the local knowledge when tracking children (the loss of local knowledge was a significant risk identified in Leeds Beckett University risk analysis research for the RAA). This will facilitate more targeted recruitment and marketing campaigns and ensure that the adopters recruited are more able to meet the needs of children in the region.
- A shared tracking of children would improve timeliness of Permanence Plans being achieved for the children across the region as well as locally.
- Pooling this knowledge could lead to potential targeted recruitment campaigns and identification of post adoption support needs. For example, if it became apparent that there a high number of children with disabilities across the region, a targeted campaign could be implemented to recruit specifically for these children whilst considering additional post adoption support needs.
- A greater opportunity for informal post adoption support such as service user support groups creating a wider opportunity for adoptive families.
- Shared learning from Best Practice to ensure that the SYRAA becomes a more efficient and effective service in the region.

3.4 PROPERTY AND IT IMPLICATIONS

All LA's and the Trust have been working in partnership to ensure Adoption teams are based in appropriate workspaces in all four LA areas. The initial working model is that most adoption teams will remain sited in their current workplaces with accommodation provided at nil cost. A small centralised team of up to 4.5 staff members will require accommodation in Doncaster.

Premises costs have assumed that South Yorkshire Adoption Agency can be accommodated within existing LA premises.
With regards to IT costs, decisions on this can be made when the project goes live, it is envisaged as in the West RAA that interim arrangements re data sharing platforms whilst more detailed analysis of need and revenue is undertaken.

3.5   HR IMPLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

A Human Resources work stream was established during 2016 with representatives from Doncaster Children's Services Trust (the Trust), Sheffield City Council, Rotherham MBC and Barnsley MBC.

In the original business cases, TUPE of staff was planned, but after discussion with all partners, TUPE was felt to be not appropriate at this time but may need to be considered in the future through appropriate consultation. The project manager met with HR reps in May 2019 and again in June, July, Sept, and November 2019. The preferred option for the staff was to create a secondment model with a Service Level Agreement/Memo of Understanding (intention of change) issued in the initial stages of the business planning. The HR group have added some detail that is explained below:

- The process of staff becoming part of the RAA is relatively simple at the outset. No one is moving office and their terms and conditions remain with the Local Authority they work for. However, a new Head of Service post would be created in the hub and therefore reporting lines would change.
- An overall project plan and Service Level Agreement/Memo of Understanding (intention of change) will be created after this business case is agreed and will include aspects of the HR activity that is required and will set out the responsibilities for each party to ensure that legal and operational requirements are met.
- The HR workgroup (July 2019) agreed (as the DCS had in 2018) that the terms and conditions of employment will remain unchanged when the RAA "goes live" in 2021. This means there will be no immediate change in the day-to-day workloads, for example, an assessment social worker, will have to finish the assessment from their previous caseload, which could take up to a year, giving the HR group and Local Authorities time to assess staffing arrangements.
- There will be a period of discussion with staff and trade unions with the new Head of Service and HR reps which will take place over a defined period of time, at each partner's location, therefore, lessening the impact on staff operational tasks. These discussions will reassure staff that there will be no immediate direct changes; reassurance will be the key to their co-operation. With a 2021 start date, consultations will need to start late October 2020 to coincide with the Head of Service recruitment.

The group proposed that the best course of action, as the SYRAA matures and the four local authority teams become more integrated and work even more closely, the operating model could be reviewed in conjunction with staff, DCS, elected members and Heads of Service. This would ensure that the SYRAA is delivering the best possible outcomes for young people and families in South Yorkshire and that the project is respecting the different terms and conditions of employment of the respective partners.

This approach ensures minimal impact on staff and it mitigates against issues that could arise by the four local authorities' that is, having different terms and conditions of employment, and different rates of pay. However, on examining differing rates of pay across the group, there were no large inequalities in pay. For example, most Team Managers across the group are on similar pay levels, so there is low risk of an equal pay claim in most regards. However, a suggestion would be to complete a full staffing review as the SYRAA progresses.

If full realisation of the SYRAA benefits and economies of scale means more formal integration of staff, then this will be explored appropriately with all four partners. Experience from other Local Authorities who have established RAAs suggests that it takes up to 36 months for the operational model to become fully embedded. During this period, any vacancies that arise within each of the 4 respective teams would be recruited to by the relevant local authority, i.e. if a Barnsley Social Worker supporting the Adoption Team were to leave then Barnsley would recruit the replacement. Furthermore, when there was a staff vacancy, each partner would agree where the resource would be best placed to service the objectives of the RAA and that could be within another Local Authority.

Whilst staff are working under the SYRAA approach, the policies, procedures and terms/conditions of employment for their employing local authority will apply, e.g. if an employee wishes to apply for discretionary leave it will be under the relevant policy of the employer. It is envisaged that where appropriate, the SYRAA Head of Service would maintain an oversight of relevant employment matters that arise and of any changes to any staffing conditions.

If during the establishment of the SYRAA it becomes appropriate or necessary to enter more formal arrangements for staff supporting the RAA this would be consulted upon as required with employing organisations and relevant staff representatives, leaders, and managers. Should formal arrangements be agreed to be put in place it is recognised that such arrangements should be time limited with a clear end date with accompanying rationale. If formal agreements suggest "secondment" as an option, further work and agreement would be required with the four local authorities to manage the impact and risk, i.e. differing terms and conditions (including pay) across South Yorkshire.

It should be noted that if any secondments of staff into the SYRAA are proposed, these would be short-term arrangements pending a longer-term position that ensures the SYRAA is staffed in a long term and sustainable manner.

It is envisaged that a service level agreement/ Memo of Understanding (intention of change) would be mutually agreed between all four local authorities prior to the SYRAA launch to clarify working arrangements, accountabilities, responsibilities, and risk.

Any HR risks can be mitigated by working through issues proactively. That is, when the project "goes live" by analysing staff welfare regularly through questionnaires, supervision, and quarterly analysis of leavers, noting disciplinary issues and feedback from staff, a successful integration can be measured and evaluated.

Engagement and communication activity are essential to keep staff informed of progress and developments and to respond quickly to questions and concerns. The HR leads will work with the communications work stream to establish a quarterly HR work stream.

3.6   DATA AND INFORMATION

Data and Information Sharing arrangements will be required for the day-to-day operation and management of the SYRAA. Management Information will be generated automatically from core systems where possible. Information is required to be presented to the SYRAA Management team, Ofsted, Local Authorities including senior management teams and elected members, the Adoption Leadership Board, the Department for Education, and other partners.

3.7   COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND PR

Marketing and recruitment campaigns to attract new adopters, particularly for the harder to place priority children, are of paramount importance to the success of SYRAA

An integrated Yorkshire and Humber brand had been developed following extensive consultation with staff and adopters "One Adoption" and was approved by all DCS's in Yorkshire and Humber in 2016. Within this overarching brand for the hub, logos for South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and North & Humber have also been created. However, "One Adoption" brand may change this year, but the SYRAA "Hub" marketing team are primed to produce high quality branding materials based on Doncaster's Fostering marketing.

The One adoption hub website was fully launched in 2017, as a recruitment tool, with separate areas for each of the three RAAs detailing their information evenings. Given the potential changes to the One adoption branding, the SYRAA can update this website with new branding quickly and the SYRAA will be added to, possibly after staff and carer consultations.

A Twitter, Instagram and Facebook feed will be started in 2021 this will link with the website taking traffic to the website. Media activity will increase around National Adoption Week in October 2020 and 2021. A landing site for the website can be created to divert traffic to a single point until the website is completed. Video on Instagram and You Tube in 2021/22 will be key to marketing and plans. All branding will be consistent across the SYRAA social media sites.

It is envisaged that the Doncaster Hub will manage a centralised budget for promotion of adoption in the region with a retained budget for local promotion. They will enable the agency to effectively target regional and sub-regional campaigns and achieve a high profile.

3.8   PROPOSED GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Brief

Senior lawyers from the in-house legal service of each of the four organisations have been engaged in a work stream to design and develop the legal framework for the delivery of the new service, having regard to the preferred delivery option identified in paragraph 2.3, i.e. that the regional agency be delivered through Doncaster Children's Services Trust. Specialist external legal advice has been procured where appropriate to support the work of the legal team.

Procurement/Cooperation Agreement

The carrying on of adoption services by the Trust on behalf of BRS is a 'Procurement' caught by the application of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). Accordingly, the Trust would normally be expected to compete for the right to be awarded the work, as part of a procurement exercise under the Regulations. There is no guarantee that this would result in the preferred arrangement.

The Trust currently carries out Adoption Services functions on behalf of Doncaster MBC under the Direction of the Secretary of State. It is an adoption agency and a 'public contracting authority' for the purposes of the Regulations. Detailed consideration has been given as to whether the Trust can be directly appointed to carry out the adoption services for BRS, as opposed to having to bid as part of a procurement exercise. The conclusion of BRS legal advisors is that they may rely on an exemption set out in Regulation 12(7), which was enacted to capture the essence of the ECJ judgment in *Commission v Germany* (Case C-480/06), known as the *Hamburg* exemption. Under this exemption BRS will be able to enter a cooperation arrangement with the Trust, on the proviso that all the requirements set out in Regulation 12(7) are met and the general principles of the *Hamburg* judgment are satisfied.

- There is no private sector party to the agreement.
- The co-operation is governed solely by considerations and requirements relating to the pursuit of objectives in the public interest.
- The character of the agreement is that of real co-operation aimed at the joint performance of a common task, as opposed to a normal public contract.
- It enables the public service activity to be carried out more effectively.
- There are mutual requirements for co-operation with "give or take" between the parties.
- Payment is related to the reimbursement of costs (and is not based on the generation of profit).
- The arrangements are not contriving to circumvent the procurement rules.

Regulation 12(7) states that a contract concluded exclusively between two or more contracting authorities shall fall outside the scope of Part 2 of the Regulations (and therefore outside the requirement to advertise and procure the opportunity) where all the following conditions are fulfilled:

Condition 1: The contract establishes or implements a co-operation between the participating contracting authorities with the aim of ensuring that public services they must perform are provided with a view to achieving objectives they have in common.

Condition 2: The implementation of that co-operation is governed solely by considerations relating to the public interest.

Condition 3: The participating contracting authorities perform on the open market less than 20% of the activities concerned by the co-operation. (Regulation 12(8) provides that turnover will be calculated using the average total turnover, or an appropriate alternative activity-based measure such as costs incurred by the relevant legal person or contracting authority with respect to services, supplies and works for the three years preceding the contract award.)

In order to ensure and demonstrate the integrity of proposed arrangement the documentation will be drafted to ensure that conditions consistent with the requirements of Regulation12(7) are properly prescribed (and duly agreed to) and that there are provisions for monitoring that they are maintained throughout the life of the agreement

Governance

The SYRAA Implementation Board is to be established with the participating LAs, and Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) working in partnership to deliver a South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency, hosted by DCST. A service agreement, service specification and budget for a five-year period are to be in place for the service. The SYRAA will begin trading in January 2021. The focus of the Board will be to oversee and assist the formation of the SYRAA. The South Yorkshire RAA Implementation Board will comprise of a representative from each of the involved LA's, DCST, Adopters and VAA alliance representation. Representatives will be at first and second tier senior management within their own organisations - DCS's and Assistant Director. Having sufficient seniority to make decisions, implement change and commit resources within their own agencies.

More detailed work will be undertaken in respect of governance arrangements, but the all parties have agreed the principle of accountability and decision making through co-operative agreement.

The diagram below provides an overview of the proposed SYRAA Governance Structure.

SYRAA Governance Structure
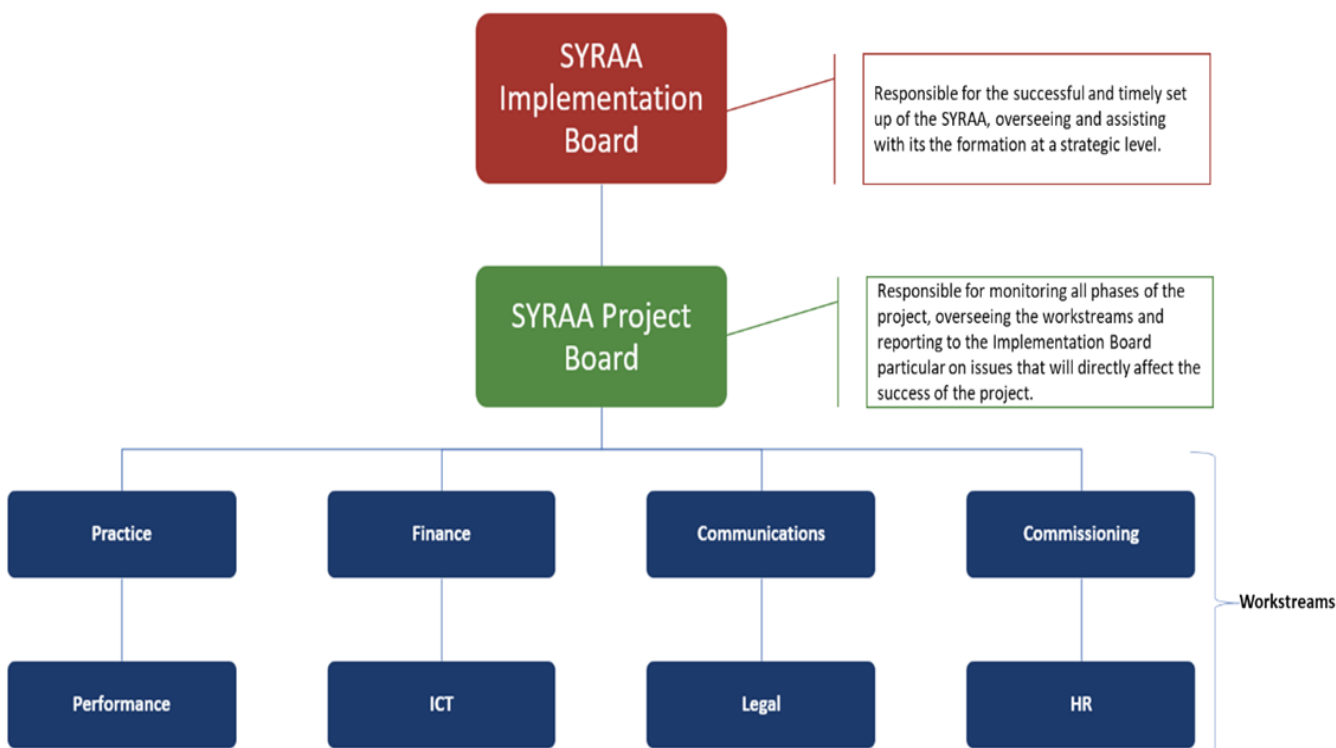
4. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

4.1   FINANCIAL COSTS

The initial budget for delivering the adoption service in 2020/21 available to the SYRAA is forecast to be £5.028m based on each partner's 19/20 budget for adoption services. This figure is based on the operational staff delivering the adoption service, the running costs of providing an adoption service and the inter-agency adoption fees (which will vary).

This budget excludes non-cashable items such as professional support costs (Finance, HR, ICT etc.) as these are harder to isolate and identify for such a small service and it has been agreed that the SYRAA will have to pick up these additional costs. It also excludes service management, as this is non-cashable for each organisation although these costs have been identified for each LA and the Trust at £117K

4.2 FINANCIAL RISKS

Inter-Agency – The financial model above assumes that a reduction and eventual phasing out in inter agency placement fees will be achieved to mitigate the additional costs for the SYRAA. This assumption will need to be carefully managed and monitored as part of the performance and financial framework.

Redundancy – No allowance has been made for any costs of redundancy, as no redundancies are proposed. This is believed to be a prudent assumption at this stage given vacancies within some of the area's and the overall shortage of social workers across the four organisations e.g. it is assumed no qualified social workers will be made redundant as the demand for these workers currently exceeds the supply nationally.

Underfunding The primary risk is that the agency is underfunded and therefore unable to deliver adequately for the children of South Yorkshire. This will also influence timescales for children waiting and influence Ofsted judgements about the service provided to Children in Care.

Host Costs There is a further risk to the host authority around the hosting overhead costs.
It is also unclear at present, as to accommodation arrangements, which may lead to additional costs. Financial risks can be part mitigated by an inclusionary note in the Partnership Agreement explaining the treatment of any over (and under) spends. This reduces the risk to the host but would not affect the overall financial pressure. (See Risk Mitigation section below for more information).

4.3 FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS

VAT
It should be noted that the Trust's VAT status has now been resolved (2018) and there are no outstanding tax implications or cost pressures from VAT.

Inflation
There are inflationary pressures that the SYRAA will be subject to in 2020/21 such as an assumed pay award of 2% and the introduction of the Apprenticeship levy – however, these pressures would exist for LA's / Trust whether the SYRAA is implemented. Given the current impact on the UK's financial markets and inflation rates by COVID19 (June 2020) inflation rates should be an agenda item for every finance meeting until resolved.

Services not in Scope
Adoption Allowances are not in scope of the SYRAA and all costs and benefits have been excluded from the Business Case. These allowances will remain with the LA's / Trust. It is anticipated that allowances across South Yorkshire will be reviewed and recommendations made to each Local Authority to regularise allowances at the second annual review. Further Local Authority savings are anticipated because of this review.

Underspends & Overspends

It is proposed that governance structure will be established with representation from the three local authorities and Doncaster Children's Services Trust as set out in the Governance section of this Business Case and that this decision-making function will authorise the treatment of under and over spends. It is envisaged that any underspends will be redistributed to each of the SYRAA partners at appropriate time points and as agreed by SYRAA Governance Board. Overspends will need to be reviewed, for example legacy inter-agency costs should likely be borne by the relevant local authority/Trust. The Partnership Agreement will consider and incorporate these arrangements. However, with tight forecasting each quarter and hiring a Head of Service with sound financial acumen overspends will not occur. If further money is required to meet objectives, then a short business case will be distributed to partners for agreement but ideally these objectives would be for new initiatives or for increasing staffing due to recruitment success.

Performance Framework

A performance framework will be developed to allow that Governance Board to be able to approve a budget for future years that considers this framework and the funding of any deficits. The funding for the SYRAA in future would move away from 100% historical costs to a methodology that reflects some element of service activity, e.g. having a fixed element to the funding with a variable element dependent upon the number of adoptions delivered.

Inter-agency Fees

Initially inter agency fees would continue inside South Yorkshire across the four Local Authorities. As stated, before it takes at least 36 months to embed a SYRAA so it is envisaged that these fees would continue but phased out over time. With the 4 regions of South Yorkshire combined it is assumed in the future that there is potential to reduce the number of children placed outside of South Yorkshire and reduce inter-agency costs via increasing the prospective adopter pool across a wider geographic area.

Adoption Support Fund

It is assumed that this fund continues and there will be no increase to the SYRAA for costs associated with adoption support. The indications from Central Government are that this fund will continue but being mindful of the move towards regionalisation.

Staff Structure

The staffing budget for 2020/21 will be based on the current staffing structure but with additional monies for the HUB posts. It is acknowledged that this might not be fully operational initially but several new posts are required for the SYRAA to be operational before January 2021 such as Head of Service, business support, for the status quo of existing structures to be maintained. It needs to be acknowledged that 2021/22 will be a transitionary year within which some posts may need to be recruited to ensure that the SYRAA is operating optimally.

Direct Cost Efficiencies

The coming together of the four organisations and the streamlining of practices should lead to efficiencies on areas such as Panel Expenses, Subscriptions / Licences, and other overheads. Further work needs to be in identifying these.

Marketing Costs

Costs are included in the Business Case in line with existing spend.

Business Support and Panel Administration costs

Business Support and Panel Administration costs are included as budgets transferred in the first year of operation 2021/22.

Redundancies

No allowance has been made for redundancies because no redundancies are being proposed in relation to establishing the RAA. If any redundancy situation does arise within one of the four Local Authorities / Trusts involved in the RAA, those costs will be borne by the respective employing organisation. Even

though no redundancies are proposed, this statement is necessary to provide clarification for financial purposes should the situation arise given that four different organisations are involved.

Staffing

No staffing costs are built into the budget, the proposed staffing structure allows for 63 to 66 FTE staff including Business Support to be remunerated by their own LA's, until HR decisions are made.

Cash flow Payments to the SYRAA from Local Authorities
It is proposed that each partner will pay their budget contribution three months in advance starting from the 'Go Live' date forecast of January 2021 to ease the SYRAA's cash flow. Advance payments will minimise any cash flow issues and an unnecessary administrative burden on governance. This will need to be agreed within the Partnership Agreement.

5. COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

Service Delivery of the following areas will be covered:

- Targeted recruitment activity focusing on Early Permanence and targeted assessments for priority children.
- Partner (non-agency) adoption assessments.
- Specialist adoption training.
- Specialist practical or therapeutic support services for children and families post placement and post order.
- Adoption counselling and services to adopted adults.
- Continued provision of VAA families.

As part of the implementation phase of the project, the Commissioning lead has reviewed current commissioning arrangements and will advise on future commissioning to achieve service improvements at best value. Ad hoc partnership work will also be formalised, and the most appropriate commissioning and procurement arrangements will be determined during this period.

6. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

A "go live" date of January 2021 is envisaged, given the business case has been agreed by Barnsley and Rotherham. Once Doncaster and Sheffield agree, the staff consultations can be arranged, moving the project forward.

7. NEXT STEPS

Agree the details in this report and move to Project planning phase.
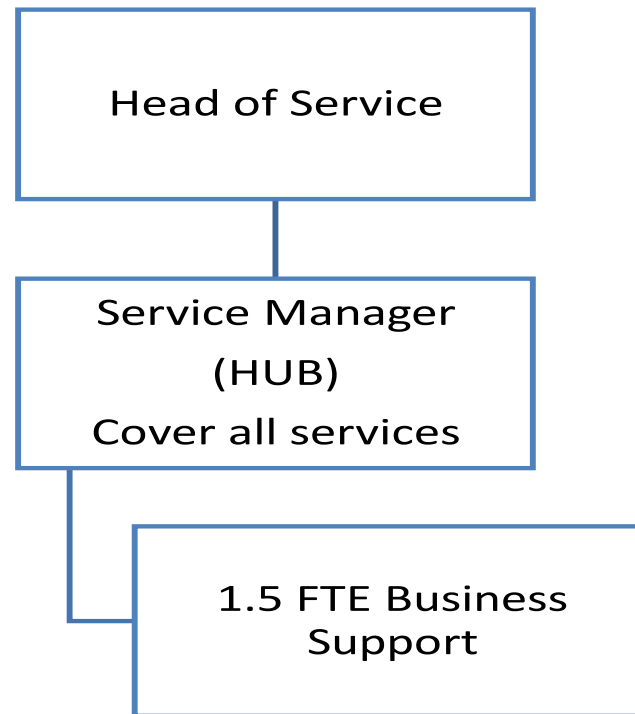
Alasdair Kennedy Project Manager SYRAA
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FAQ's

Appendix A

- Staff currently will not be TUPE and no one is moving office.
- 130 adopters are achievable and is comparable with commercial/charitable agencies
- Current workloads for staff will take at least a year to clear, given the SYRAA time to establish and time to work out the operational nuances.
- Doncaster is an ALMO
- VAT issue was agreed in 2016
- A service/performance agreement end date will need to be set
- A service/performance agreement will be drawn nearer "go live" date.
- Staff will remain on their own contracts
- New person specs will be developed for any new roles
- Only the HUB (Doncaster) has new staff
- Staff insurance will be managed by increasing premiums in HUB
- GDPR needs explored in HR workgroup
- Salaries inconsistencies are not a risk in the model being proposed.
- Adoption Support Fund allocation can be agreed after "going live"
- ICT support and integration are not agreed, but as with West RAA this can be agreed within project planning stage and during first year of operation.
- RAA will be Ofsted inspected, Service Manager will be Registered, with Head of Service, Responsible Individual.
- Overspends will not occur due to strict forecasting and business reviewing. If extra finance is required a full business case sign off from all parties will be required. Strict Spending Limits will be applied to Heads of Service.

HUB (Doncaster)(NEW POSTS)

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Head of Service     │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Service Manager     │
│         (HUB)           │
│    Cover all services   │
└─────────────────────────┘
        │
        │   ┌─────────────────────────┐
        └───│   1.5 FTE Business      │
            │        Support          │
            └─────────────────────────┘
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Combined structure


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┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Head of Service     │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Service Manager     │
│         (HUB)           │
│    Cover all services   │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Sheffield	Barnsley	Rotherham	1.5 FTE Business Support
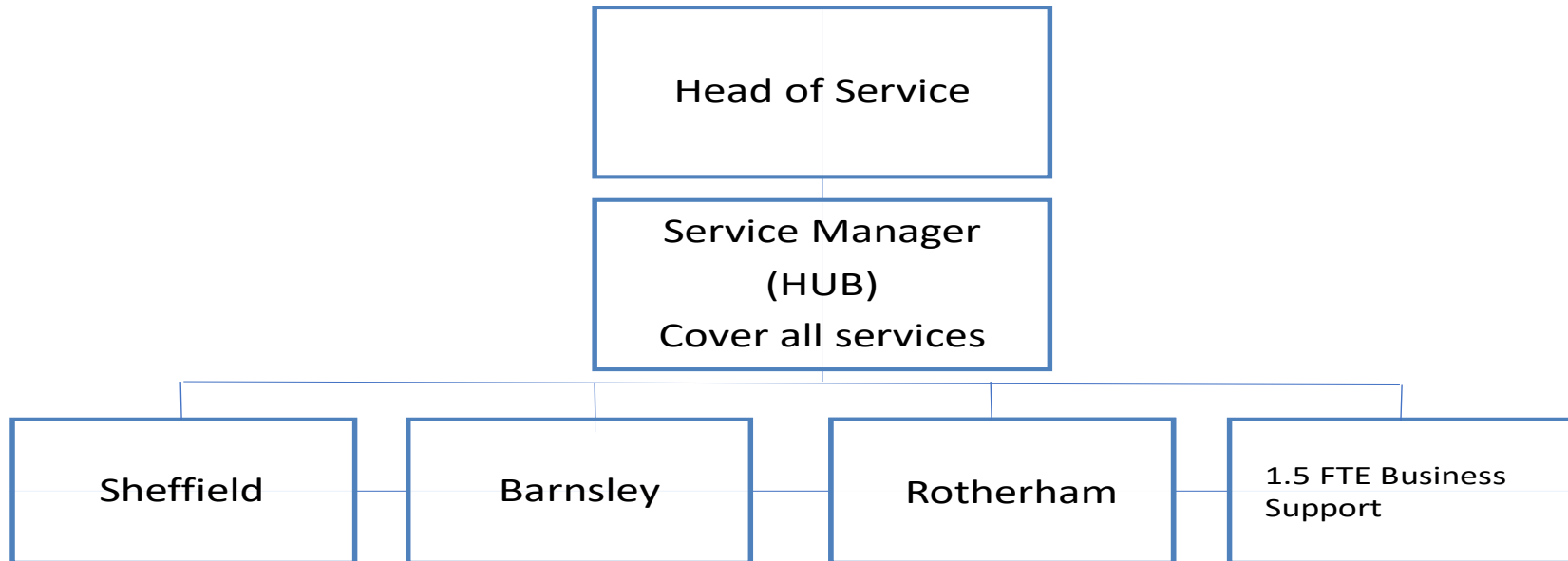
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Appendix D

Risk Mitigation Document

	Risk Description	Mitigation
1	PACE OF CHANGE AND INNOVATION: The Local Authority Hosted model may not offer the same opportunities for pace of innovation and change if the adoption agencies are still subject to Local Authority control, because of the complexity of sign off processes in large organisations	Doncaster will have appropriate functions and decisions delegated by the Local Authorities under the Inter Authority Agreement. As work is progressed to standardise best practice a focus on opportunity for innovation is paramount; similarly, when considering best delivery mechanism for services innovation is a key consideration.
2	EXTERNAL FUNDING: The Local Authority Hosted model may not offer the same opportunities to attract additional external funding that setting up an independent sector social enterprise would offer.	Risk share agreement to include a mechanism for addressing any reduction in funding streams. Through Commissioning of services from Voluntary Adoption Agencies that do access external funding the RAA can benefit from innovation and Improvement.
3	PERFORMANCE: Opting for a Local Authority hosted model may detract from better performers, rather than improving the poorer performers.	Appropriate Staff employment arrangements: Comprehensive change management will be undertaken to ensure all staff are engaged fully and committed to improving practice and outcomes for families and children.
4	COST: Doncaster as the Host of the SYRAA will attract additional costs e.g. corporate service functions such as IT and HR	Funding Model has appropriate mechanisms so the Host does not wholly bear additional cost and appropriate mechanisms to manage financial risks agreed by all authorities.
	COST: of a second development to the final model	Provide capacity in the structure and governance to lead the work. Budget holders with governance to enable direction for resources required without further cost. Agreement at outset that any surplus achieved will be dispersed, if appropriate.
	COST: Poor cash flow in the first year the low level of surplus, lack of reserves and contingency could be a potential a concern.	Create cash flow projections, arrange draw down facilities, close monitoring.

5	STAFFING: All Local Authorities may see vacancies arise as staff employment arrangements are completed.	Leadership and commitment demonstrated in each Local Authority to the "single service" concept and strategy to staff to reduce likelihood of resignations Early quantification of risk through robust HR processes; scope actual staffing requirement for the Regional Adoption agency; address any gap with intensive recruitment campaign
6	OFSTED: Local Authorities may see the change as untimely if Ofsted inspections are due	Robust leadership and change management to establish a clear time table, raise staff awareness of what will change and when and the expectation of them in the interim The DfE Regional Adoption Agency group and Ofsted are in discussion on the new reporting regime requirements and are using early Regional Adoption Agencies as a learning opportunity; both are aware of the risk any change programme poses to staff
7	TARGETS: Local Authorities may see targets as too ambitious TARGETS: Not being able to recruit enough adopters, leading to more interagency placements and financially viability issues.	Leadership and commitment demonstrated in each Local Authority by the SYRAA Head of Service to the "single service" concept and strategy to inspire staff to meet new targets. Time and Motion study prepared by external assessor to look at internal responses to enquires and assessments. Consideration to outside assessors used by SYRAA to complete adoption assessments. The SYRAA will co-ordinate and target recruitment activity and scope for enhanced recruitment has been built into the model.
8	FRAGMENTATION: there is a risk of this in South Yorkshire Region, if the spokes work too independently of each other. This could confuse potential adopters, children, and stakeholders.	There will be a single Head of Service, single phone number, email and web page or landing page.

9	INNEFECTIVE COMMS: Separation initially of services could cause delay. IT systems are also different.	Effective local information sharing and close working relationships between children's and adoption social workers will mitigate against this risk.

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Project Manager

South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency

Document Revised by AGF Kennedy 2020 V16