



Subject:	OAWY 3 Year Plan
Meeting:	Report to the Joint Committee
Date:	21 st January 2021
Service:	One Adoption West Yorkshire
Report Author:	Practice Improvement & Development Manager
1.0	Executive Summary
1.1	This report will highlight the key achievements relating to the 218/19-20/21 OAWY 3 Year Plan and introduce the new 2021/22 – 23/24 plan, Appendix 2.
2.0	Introduction
2.1	In 2018 the OAWY 3 Year Plan was produced setting out the priorities of the agency for that period. With the 3 year period almost complete this report highlights the key achievements so far and introduces the next 3 year plan (2021/22 – 23/24), see Appendix 2.
3.0	Background
3.1	The 2018/19-20/21 3 Year Plan set out the vision, mission and priorities of the agency. Section 4.0 sets out the key achievements relating to the priorities set 3 years ago.
3.2	Appendix 2, section 5.0 introduces OAWY's next 3 year plan starting this April.
4.0	Key achievements – current 3 year plan
4.1	<p><u>Vision</u></p> <p>OAWY's vision is <i>to be a flagship adoption agency that develops & promotes best practice, improving adoption standards nationally.</i></p> <p>In terms of becoming a flagship adoption agency OAWY won the prestigious Excellence in Adoption Practice title achieved at the National Adoption Week Awards in October 2018. In March 2019 OAWY was awarded the Public-Public Partnerships award at the Local Government Chronicle Awards for its successful work bringing together adoption</p>

	<p>services across the five local authorities in West Yorkshire. In June 2019 OAWY received the Full Award - Early Permanence Quality Mark with the independent moderator stating the agency 'is coherently, comprehensive and realistically committed to EPP in the best interests of children'.</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>In terms of promoting best practice for the last 3 years OAWY has organised and hosted a conference each year regarding adoption practice for emerging Regional Adoption Agencies and Local Authorities with the support of Leeds Relational Practice centre, including one around OAWY's experience of becoming an RAA and one around adoption panels and shopfa and medical advisors in 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>OAWY held a conference 'Building an adoption system that respects and values relationships identity' conference in February 2020. This was attended by over 150 social work staff from across the country and the objective was to help the sector move forward on changing practice and culture regarding contact post adoption.</p> <p>Future events on different subjects will be planned to continue to promote best practice.</p> <p>OAWY have also presented at a number of national Coram BAAF conferences and Adoption UK conferences regarding Developing Adoption Support Services, the progress of regionalisation and outcomes for children and families and working with health partners to develop high quality medical advisor support and developing a joint approach to the support for Special Guardians within a regional arrangement</p> <p>OAWY staff have supported other emerging RAA's with policy and practice regarding early permanence.</p>
<p>4.3</p>	<p>Sarah Johal leads on the national recruitment steering group for the recruitment of adopters on behalf of the RAA Leaders Group and OAWY holds and oversees the Section 31 grant provided by the DfE to RAA's for adopter recruitment. Sarah has presented the outcome of this work at a Number 10 Minsters Roundtable event and in a joint symposium with the USA regarding children in care, highlighting the work undertaken across the region as well nationally.</p>
<p>4.4</p>	<p><u>Priority 1 - Recruit & assess sufficient numbers of adopters to meet the needs of our children</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 the agency ensured that generic marketing campaigns were inclusive i.e. for older adopters. In the same year a specific marketing campaign aimed at adopters from faith backgrounds was delivered. In 2019/20 links were established with faith group leaders/ contacts and OAWY had a presence at regional Pride events and targeted social media campaigns around myth busting and early permanence were delivered. In 2020/21 there had been plans to link with local employers but this has been put on hold due to Covid-19. However, monthly meetings with local and national agencies (Barnardo's, My Foster Family, Be My Family) are in place working towards a regional approach to reach out to Black community groups.</p>

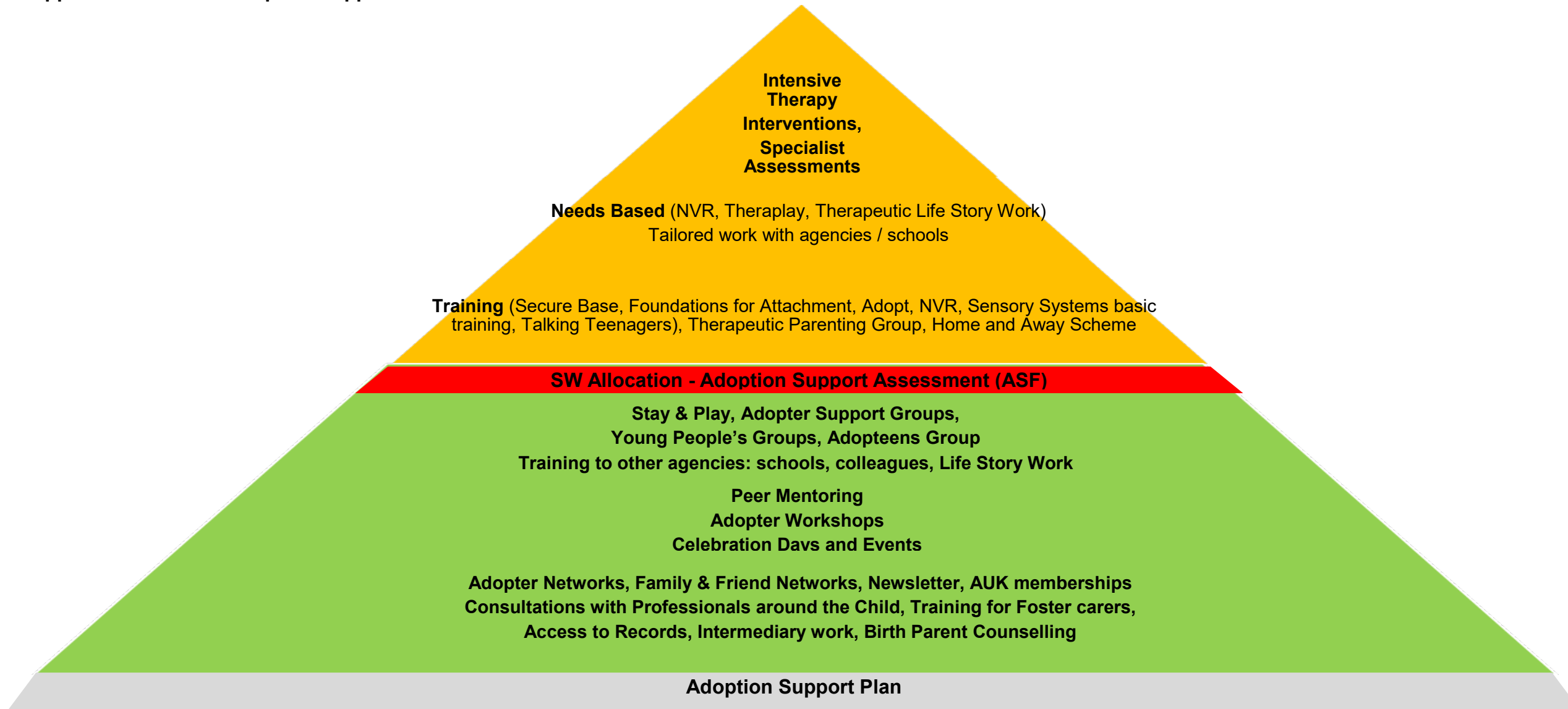
4.5	<p>In 2020 the OAWY website was further developed to allow adopters to access information and forms online. This enables them to move through the assessment process in a timely way. In the same year a new adopter preparation training plan was devised but not rolled-out due to Covid-19. In its place on-line training has been developed to ensure prospective adopters can continue through the process to approval.</p>
4.6	<p>OAWY continues to approve more adoptive households year on year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017/18 - 69 • 2018/19 - 109 • 2019/20 - 113 • 2020/21 – 120* (projected) <p>The number of prospective adopters approaching the agency has increased significantly over the last 3 years. Additional R&A staff are in the process of being recruited to ensure we can retain these adopters and continue to increase our number of adopters.</p>
4.7	<p><u>Priority 2a – Work with local authorities and partners to: Improve early identification of children and further develop the use of EPP across the region</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 EPP champion training was jointly delivered with Barnardo's to LA staff. In 2019/20 the Centre of Excellence and the OAWY Adoption Support team offered consultations upon request at early linking stage. In 2020/21 training had been planned with LA staff but has been put on hold until it is safe to deliver. OAWY staff continue to link with LAs re promoting tracking children suitable for EPP. Despite aims to increase the use of EPP this remains inconsistent in some LA's due to issues relating to care planning. This will remain a priority for the next 3 years.</p>
4.8	<p><u>Priority 2b – Work with local authorities and partners to: Develop practice around identity (relationships with birth families & life story work)</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 Twilight training sessions targeted at adopters for identity and contact were developed. In 2019/20 OAWY held a conference, attended by over 150 social work staff from across the country, based upon identity. Additional conferences planned for 2020/21 have been placed on hold but will hopefully be picked up in 2021/22. The contact project and working group is underway with links into Nuffield regarding wider work going on across the country. Linkmaker have agreed work with OAWY to implement a new app for managing contact arrangements and a pilot is due to start in the autumn. This remains a key priority moving forward.</p>

4.9	<p><u>Priority 2c – Work with local authorities and partners to: Develop knowledge and understanding about matching with adopters who are committed, flexible, open communicators and are willing to access support.</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 working groups were established and ‘adoption clinics’ set-up monthly in each LA. In 2019/20 training on unconscious bias was delivered to all managers and panel members. Information, challenge and support continued to be provided to LAs via the clinics. Language was also changed at information events and adopter prep groups to improve adopters understanding and the importance of openness. Covid-19 has prevented workshops on EPP, CPRs and transition planning being delivered in 2020/21. However, drop in sessions, clinics and team managers meetings with LA staff have been delivered virtually.</p>
4.10	<p>The matching project that has been undertaken has sought to harmonise and agree the approach to matching across the region and practice in this area has moved forward. This will no longer be a key priority in the next iteration of the plan, although is still important.</p>
4.11	<p><u>Priority 3 - Develop our staff team & panel members to ensure all our children & families receive consistently excellent service & support</u></p> <p>A great deal of work has been undertaken to develop our staff and this has been detailed and reported in each of the annual reports. The basic theoretical framework that underpins the work of the agency with regards to restorative practice and understanding and developing a trauma informed approach is key for all staff. All social work staff have completed a skills gap analysis with their line manager. This identifies the necessary skills specific to their role and where there is a development need. In addition a skills audit has been completed – this informs OAWY of the range of skills within the agency. The skills gap analysis and skills audit combined have led to the creation of development plan. The development plan roll-out was due to begin roll-out during 2020/21, unfortunately Covid-19 meant training providers were unable to offer what was required. Q4 of 2020/21 is being used to refresh the skills gap analysis and skills audit to take account for new starts / leavers and roll-out will be picked up early 2021/22.</p>
4.12	<p><u>Priority 4 - Implement a consistent offer of adoption support across OAWY</u></p> <p>Shaping the universal, targeting and specialist support over the last 3 years has been a key priority ensuring the availability and consistency of support across the region. A calendar of training, workshops and events is provided for adopters so they are aware of the range of support available and this is reviewed annually and mapped to ensure a consistent delivery across the region. This year support has had to be made virtual where possible such as stay and play. Appendix 1 shows the OAWY adoption support</p>

	core offer, please note some of the training/ events are not running due to Covid-19.
4.13	<p><u>Priority 5 - Develop a Centre of Excellence for Adoption Support</u></p> <p>The Centre of Excellence pilot project successfully developed a concept for a multidisciplinary model, a genuine partnership between social care, education and health, situated within One Adoption West Yorkshire. An initial three year period of the model is being jointly funded by local authorities and health commissioners. OAWY will work in partnership with the local authorities, health and education providers to deliver and further develop a joined-up, holistic service to adoptive families across the region. Implementing this new approach will be a key priority over the next 3 years.</p>
4.14	<p><u>Priority 6 - Create new partnerships with organisations that will help us achieve our outcomes</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 partnerships were formed with Cornerstone (Peer mentoring and virtual reality), Grandparents Plus (Special Guardianship), Adoption UK (to develop the community support to adopters) and Arc (regarding their life story app). Partnership work continued in 2019/20 with 4 Voluntary Adoption Agencies with the development of the contract for 30 placements. OAWY Head of Service, Sarah Johal became being part of the West Yorkshire Family Justice Board. My Foster Family received a grant to complete outreach work to increase the number BME adopters recruitment.</p> <p>OAWY work with the Sea Glass initiative who receive grant funding to provide support to our young people through song writing, poetry, drama and a new choir.</p>
4.15	<p><u>Priority 7 - Establish & promote a peer mentoring scheme</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 OAWY, working closely with Adopter Voice, recruited and trained 24 peer mentors. These mentors were then linked to 26 families. In 2019/20 the Peer Mentor scheme was commissioned with Adoption UK taking this forward. To date the total number of families who have accessed Peer Mentoring in the region are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 132 families supported with 1-1 mentoring; • 40 families supported via WhatsApp group support. <p>The development of the peer mentoring more recently with the use of the ASF Covid-19 funds to expand this to provide support for children experiencing transitions has been beneficial to families across the region.</p>

4.16	<p><u>Priority 8 - Continue to work with Adopter Voice, AT-ID & birth families</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 a pan - regional independent support service was commissioned in conjunction with One Adoption North and Humber and the South Yorkshire local authorities. This included provision for the continuation of the Adopter Voice, AT-ID and birth families. Quarterly meetings we're held in 2019/20 with Family Action to monitor the success of the SLA. It has been planned to capture the voice of birth fathers and siblings utilising the Futures team, PAC UK and participation workers in the LAs but this has been placed on hold due to Covid-19.</p>
5.0	<p>Proposed 2021/22 – 2023/24 OAWY 3 Year Plan</p>
5.1	<p>Appendix 2 shows the next proposed 3 Year Plan. Once the plan is agreed the planned tasks will be added to the OAWY strategic SIP with a lead(s) assigned. The strategic SIP is presented quarterly at OAWY SLT to ensure actions are monitored and supported.</p>
6.0	<p>Recommendations</p>
6.1	<p>The management board are requested to note the contents of this report and approve the 2021/22-2023/24 OAWY Plan.</p>

Appendix 1 – OAWY Adoption Support Core Offer





One Adoption West Yorkshire's plan 2021 – 2024

What we'll do...

How we'll do it...

Our vision
To be a flagship adoption agency that develops and promotes best practice, improving adoption standards nationally.

Our mission
To find loving families who can meet the needs of children and to offer an innovative and supportive approach to all those affected by adoption.

4 outcomes

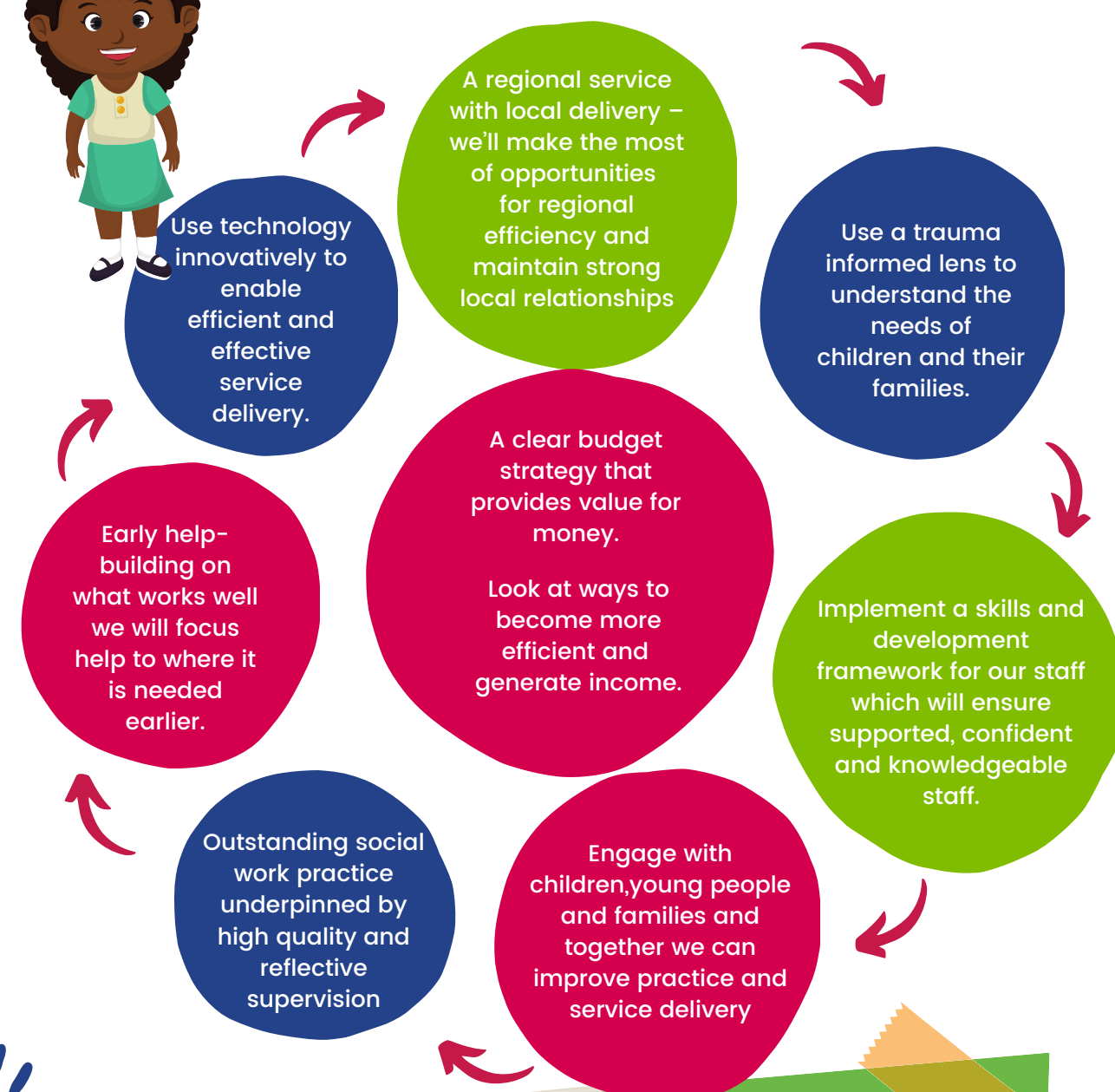
- 1 Children move in with their adoptive family without delay.
- 2 Families get help and support at every stage of the adoption journey.
- 3 Children have good quality care, a good understanding of their identity, a sense of belonging and stability within their adoptive family.
- 4 Children, adoptive and birth parents and adopted adults feel they have a voice and influence.

3 obsessions

- 1 Increase the diversity of adopters recruited.
- 2 Children move in with their adoptive family without delay.
- 3 Provide high quality and timely support.

7 priorities:

- 1 Recruit and assess a diverse range of adopters to meet the needs of the children.
- 2 Work with local authorities and partners to improve the early identification of children needing adoption and the use of Early Permanence and to promote children remaining living within or close to West Yorkshire.
- 3 Work collaboratively with partners to improve the flexibility, variety and quality of contact arrangements.
- 4 Develop and deliver the Black Lives Matter action plan.
- 5 Implement the multi-disciplinary model of adoption support to help parents support their children and build strong relationships.
- 6 Improve the timeliness, accessibility and flexibility of adoption support provision across in the region.
- 7 Collaborate with local authorities to improve the help and support for teenagers and young adults moving towards independence.



How we'll know if we've made a difference

Increased diversity of adopters approved and matched.	High level of family stability.	Improved outcomes from evidenced based evaluations.
Reduced timescale in which children move in with their adoptive family.	Positive service user feedback.	An increase in the frequency and type of contact between families.



Three behaviours which underpin everything:

1. Listening and responding to the voice of the child
2. Using restorative practice: Doing with, not for, or to.
3. Using outcomes based accountability: Is anyone better off?