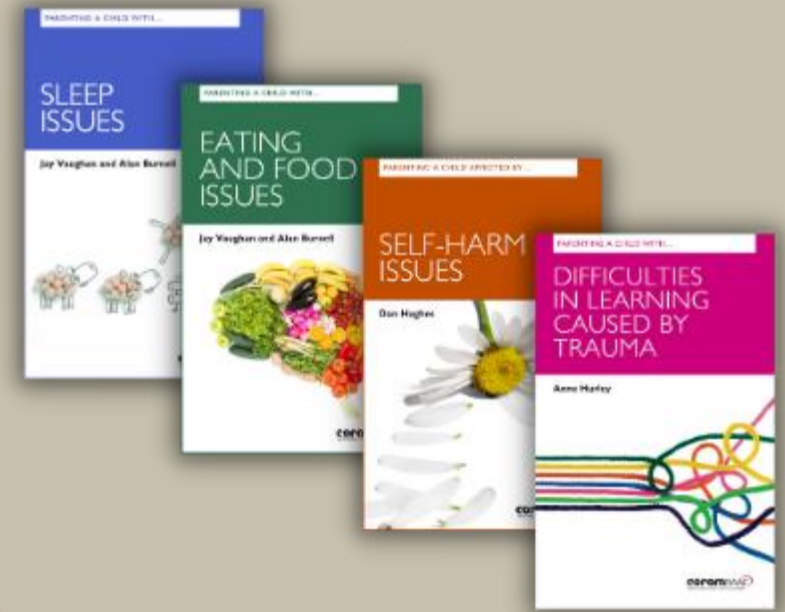




**Adoption Support
Plan (ASP)
ENGLAND: Briefing
Session for IROs**



Who are we?



94%
of all local authorities
in England, Wales,
Scotland and Northern
Ireland are members.

Housekeeping

Please make sure you:

- Silence your phone
- Turn on your camera
- Mute your microphone

- This event is recorded but we will only share the presentation
- Rename yourself so we can send you slides and resources



Learning outcomes

- Key objectives underpinning the development of the new support plan
- Overview of the development work that informed the design of the ASP and learning from the feedback received
- Structure of the ASP
- Suggestions on how to prepare social work teams and adopters for the introduction of the ASP and accompanying guidance in your agency





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Adoption Support Plan

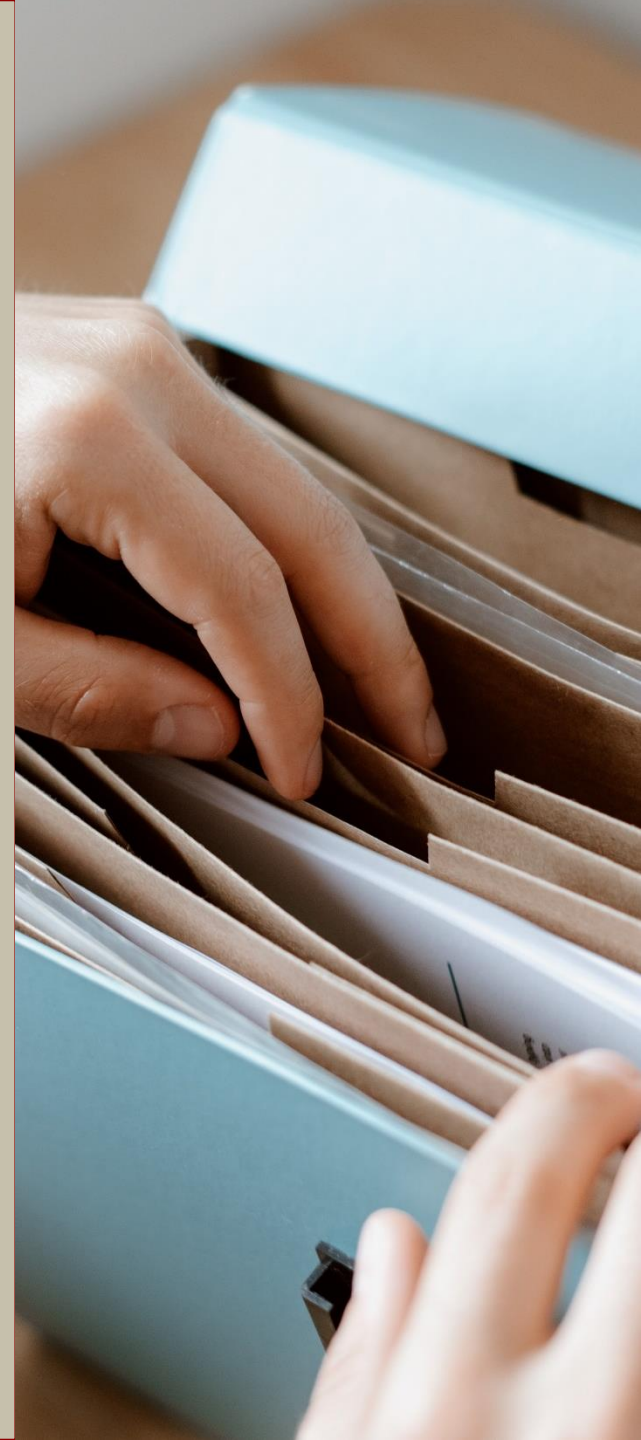
Adoption Support Plan

- The Adoption Support Plan is a **key** document for the child and their adopters
- Each child in a sibling group will have their own support plan which should reflect their individual needs and their needs as a sibling group
- The plan is a summary of what is known at the time of the match and placement. Inevitably things will change for the family so Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 (AAR 36) (6) sets out that this plan must be reviewed as part of the child in care reviews up to the point of adoption order



Adoption Support Plan (ASP)

- The draft ASP is part of the paperwork required when the proposed match is being presented to the Adoption Panel which is confirmed once the match is approved
- The ASP is a document which the adopters will be able to refer to once the child is living with them when they identify areas where they need support
- It can then be used by the Adoption Support Team as a base for an assessment of support needs after the child is adopted where that is requested



Feedback from Adoption Barometer 2023

- **32%** of new adoptive parents said they have a written plan for adoption support. **21%** were not sure if they had this
- **25%** didn't see the support plan until after the child was placed
- **8%** said that they were not shown the plan until they asked to see it. Where plans were in place there was considerable variation in their contents



Feedback from Adoption Barometer 2023 cont.

- **28%** said that their social worker had involved them in creating the plan
- **28%** said that they were not shown a draft version of the support plan or given an opportunity to ask questions or make suggestions before the plan was given to them in its final form
51% of respondents who had a written plan said that they were 'somewhat happy' with it, and 28% were 'very happy'
- **12%** reserved judgement as they considered it too early to know whether the plan would meet their needs and the needs of their child/children



Development of ASP 2024

- The current Adoption Support Plan (ASP) was developed in 2015 and incorporated into the Adoption Placement Report (APR) so it was available as part of the panel papers and would continue to be used and reviewed once the adoption placement was made.
- Adoption England started the development work in 2023 looking at changes suggested by workers involved in matching and supporting prospective adopters and the children who join their families.
- CoramBAAF completed the pilot version of the ASP and wrote the accompanying guidance. The final version will now be shared with the adoption sector through Coram BAAF's licencing agreements.



Regulatory requirements

AAR Reg 31 (2) *Where the adoption agency considers that the proposed placement should proceed, the agency must ... carry out an assessment of the needs of the child and the prospective adopter and any children of the prospective adopter (“the adoptive family”) for adoption support services in accordance with regulations made under section 4(6) of the Act*

Stat Guidance Section 4 also adds that *‘The agency must also consider the arrangements for future contact between the child and appropriate members of their birth family or other people important to the child’*



Objectives for the new ASP

1. To meet the requirements of the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (AAR), Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 (ASSR) and Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013.
2. To separate the Adoption Support Plan from the Adoption Placement Report so it has more visibility and can continue to be used as a standalone document during the child's adoption journey.
3. To clearly represent the child and who they are, what their support needs are now and into the future and to look at the family more holistically and systemically with clear analysis from the social workers
4. To bring all required information together in one report so the adopters can refer to the support plan and know how and where they can access support from when they need it.



Objectives for the new ASP

5. To incorporate the work completed during the assessment of adopters around their strengths and vulnerabilities and take account of this when identifying the support needs of the family.
6. To ensure that adopters are included in the development of the support plan and are given confidence in the support that will be available to them once the child is placed with them.
7. To ensure that the Adoption Support Plan is regularly reviewed before the adoption order is made and can inform assessments of adoption support needs after the adoption order is made.



ASP pilot

- The Adoption Support Plan was piloted by Adoption West; Adopt London North; Aspire Adoption; Adopt Thames Valley and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and feedback provided at the end of the pilot.
- Input and views were also sought from Adoption UK and a couple of VAAs and through CoramBAAF stakeholder groups.
- 3 sets of guidance have been written to accompany the ASP; Guidance for social workers writing the report; A Guide for Adopters; Guidance for IROs



CORAMBAAF ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN

This is the Adoption Support Plan for *insert name of child and their adoptive family – insert name/s of adopters*. It sets out the support that will be available for both the child and the adopters once the child joins their family.

Please refer to the accompanying guide for adopters and guidance for social workers completing the form for more information about how this Plan should be used.

Name of Child:	Date of birth:
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Insert an up to date photo

Name of Prospective Adopter/s:	Date of birth:
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Insert an up to date photo

Date Adoption Support Plan agreed:	
Date Adoption Support Plan updated:	
Date Adoption Support Plan updated:	

There are 5 main areas covered in the ASP

- The Professional Network Around the Child and Family. Contact details – should be kept updated
- All About the Child. This includes a section on 'The arrangements for the Child to Stay in touch with Family and People Important to Them'
- All About The Adopters and Their Support. Includes informal support and agency support
- Adoption Support to the Birth Family. Separate section with signature page
- Review of Adoption Support Plan. Completed before and after child care reviews to update the support offer from the agency

What's new in the ASP

- Descriptive summaries of need rather than tick boxes – identify what support is needed, who will provide this and details of timescales and reviews
- The child is at the heart of the report – it explores their understanding of their life story and adoption journey
- Adopters' vulnerabilities are acknowledged with informal support explored as well as agency support
- Separate section for birth family with the range of support to be offered
- Section to be completed before and after LAC reviews to inform discussions on support up to the adoption order being made



All these forms!

How the Adoption Support Plan fits with other reports

Child's Permanence Report (CPR)
Written during care proceedings. Provided to adopters before a linking visit is made. Updated when the match goes to **Adoption Panel**.

Adoption Placement Report (APR)
Prepared for **Adoption Panel** and sets out the child's needs and how they will be met by the proposed adoptive family.

Adoption Support Plan (ASP)
Prepared for Adoption Panel to accompany the APR. Agreed at the **Placement Planning Meeting**. Can be updated at child care reviews before adoption order. Used to inform adoption support assessment requested after the child is adopted.

Adoption Placement Plan (APP)
Prepared for the **Placement Planning Meeting**. Sets out the plans for introductions, transitions, notifying other agencies and the child moving into the family

Adopters' guide

- Given to the adopter/s with the Adoption Support Plan
- Sets out 'What is an Adoption Support Plan (ASP)?'
- Explains the process for completion - Adoption Support Plan Meeting or planning process
- Adopters' views on the support proposed sought before matching panel and recorded in the Adoption Placement Report (APR)
- The ASP will be finalised and agreed at the Placement Planning Meeting once the match has been agreed by the ADM
- Statutory review process explained. Additional childcare reviews held when necessary or if adopters request a further review
- Post adoption order the ASP will be used by the Adoption Support Team as a starting point for their assessment of the support needs of the family and that may then lead to a new Adoption Support Plan.



Guide for social workers

- Considers who should be the lead worker coordinating the ASP, e.g. a family finding social worker based within the RAA adoption service or the childcare social worker. Particularly important to clarify when an interagency placement is being made with a VAA
- Encourages use of an **Adoption Support Planning Meeting** - a specific meeting where the draft plan is agreed before the match is presented to the Adoption Panel. Helps to make the plan a live document which is central and meaningful to support the child and adopters coming together as a family. Consultation advised with the Adoption Support service so they are aware of any commitments being made and are able to comment on the plan
- Provides more detailed guidance on what to consider and include in the ASP report
- Covers the process and purpose of reviews following placement



Guidance for IRO's

- Introduces the section in the ASP - **Review of Adoption Support Plan** which will be used to inform the child care reviews; cover how the child's or family's needs have changed and record any recommendations following the review meetings which add to or change the support that will be available to the family.
- Sets out the adoption legislation and statutory guidance that governs social work visits post-placement and the frequency and content of reviews after the adoption placement (**ASG 5.24 – 5.27**)
- Looks at the role of the adopters in the review – they have delegated PR; will always have a major role and must be consulted (**ASG 5.37**)
- Considers the content of these reviews – much of the required information is now included in the ASP. (**AAR 36.5**)





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Feedback from the Pilot

Feedback from pilot – social workers

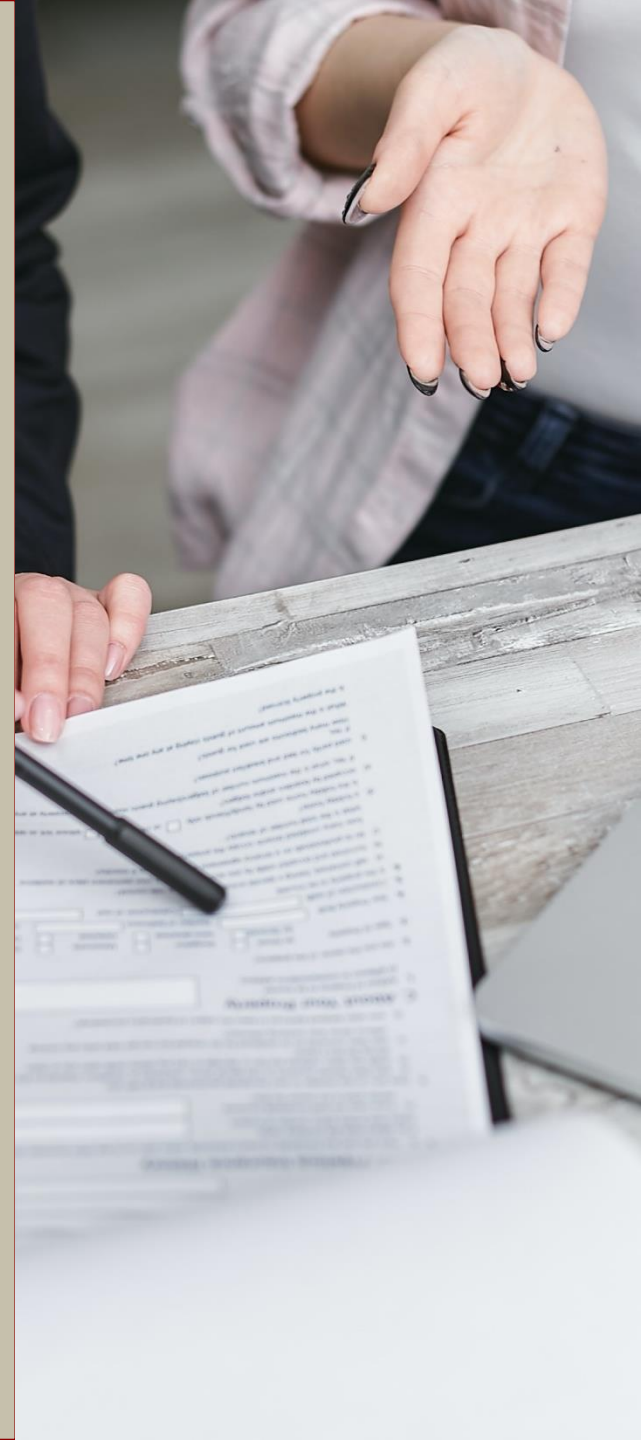
The main area of challenge was highlighting duplicated information in both the APR and the new ASP. There was some suggestion the APR had become '*redundant*'. However the completion of an adoption placement report is a legal requirement set out in the Adoption Agencies Regulation 31(2)(d) and some information about the child's needs is necessary to show how the decision to proceed with the match has been made.

There was some concern about whether adopters really understood the report ... *because they were so overwhelmed with all the different paperwork they were reading at the time*. However this was not borne out in the adopters' feedback and would be mitigated by providing them with the adopters' guidance which sets out the purpose of the ASP and puts it in context with other reports they receive.



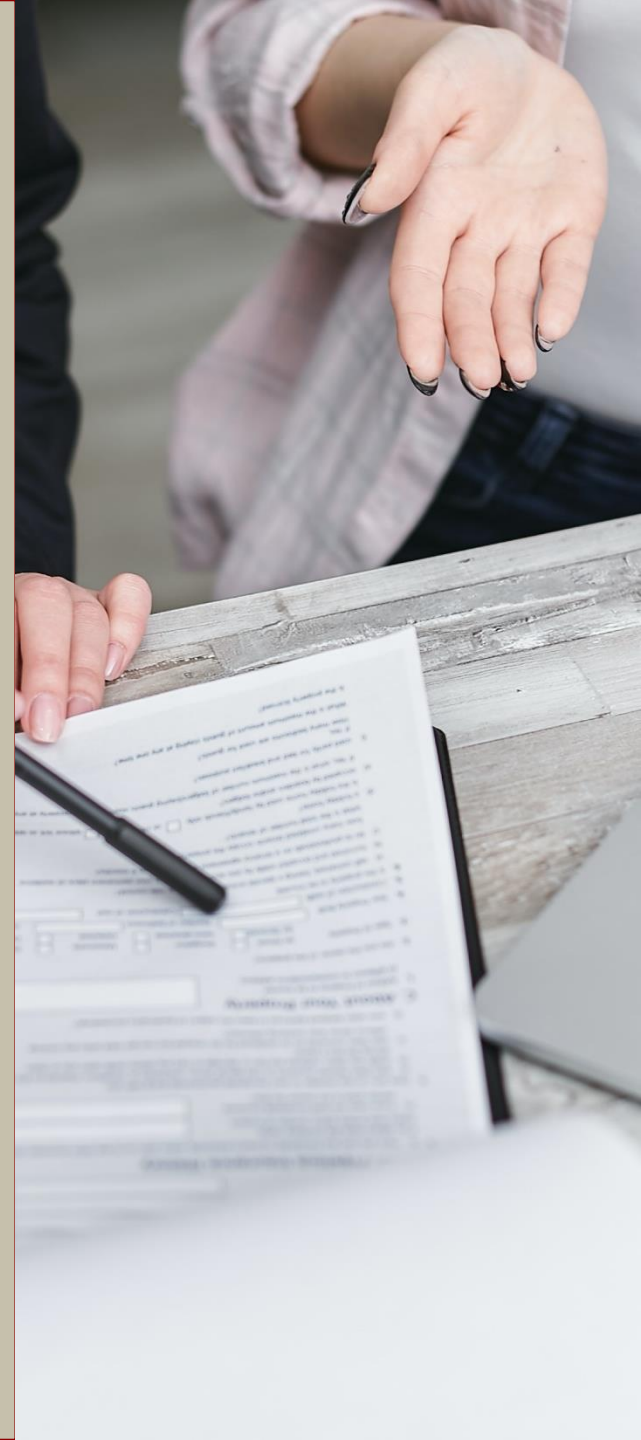
Feedback from pilot – social workers (cont.)

- Some workers commented on the additional time needed to complete the form, particularly where they were also responsible for updating the CPR as well. We have tried to remove some of the duplication whilst needing to ensure the ASP does contain a good picture of the child and their needs as it will continue to be used after the APR is no longer required following placement.
- One family finding team liked the support plan being separate to the APR, but preferred the grid format from the current support plan which they felt more clearly highlights the needs of the child. This was not a view shared by other respondents who preferred having a greater emphasis on the narrative.



Feedback from Pilot – social workers (cont)

- *I really like the new support plan, it gives a good comprehensive overview of the child and is much more friendly and child centred. I look forward to using the support plan again in the future, it's a positive change!*
- *I think these will be much easier to work from, and I like that they are very much part of a reviewing process for a child. It feels much more user friendly than the grid in the combined document, which is very repetitive. This feels much more likely to be used by adopters in the future.*
- *The plan feels like a much easier document to complete if the work to complete it has been done – I think once people have this much more in mind when completing Child Information sessions, medical advisor meetings, and discussions with adopters ahead of and during linking, they will become much easier to complete.*



Feedback from pilot – IRO's

- Many of the cases in the pilot had not been reviewed by the end of the pilot. Only two IRO's provided some feedback. Neither had seen any of the guidance written for IRO's, SWs or adopters.
- They highlighted potential duplication with other information which was considered at the review e.g. the care plan and social worker report to the review.
- They commented on the length of the ASP - *The form was long. It was repeating much of the information the SW has needed to write in many other reports so it is repetitious.*
- In one agency additional reports were submitted re financial arrangements. The IRO commented that *'Families have accepted the support plan. Social workers have struggled, comparing the different forms. We are all time short'*.



Feedback from pilot - Adopters

The majority of adopters felt all the objectives were met and the adopters' guide was seen as *'helpful'* with no changes suggested.

Where adopters were adopting for a 2nd time there were positive comments on the difference to the form they had received for their first child;

- *"We adopted more than one child. Our children's support plans were very different. We know of another family, who seemed to have not such detailed plans. I think this format was different to ours (Not the same agency) It would be great if all formats were the same".*
- *"I have gone back and thought about the process I had with my other child. I have not needed ASF, but did not clearly remember the support bit. This was more important for my next child. I like that it is separate."*



Feedback from pilot – Adopters (cont.)

Adopters were also positive about the ASP form being reviewed;

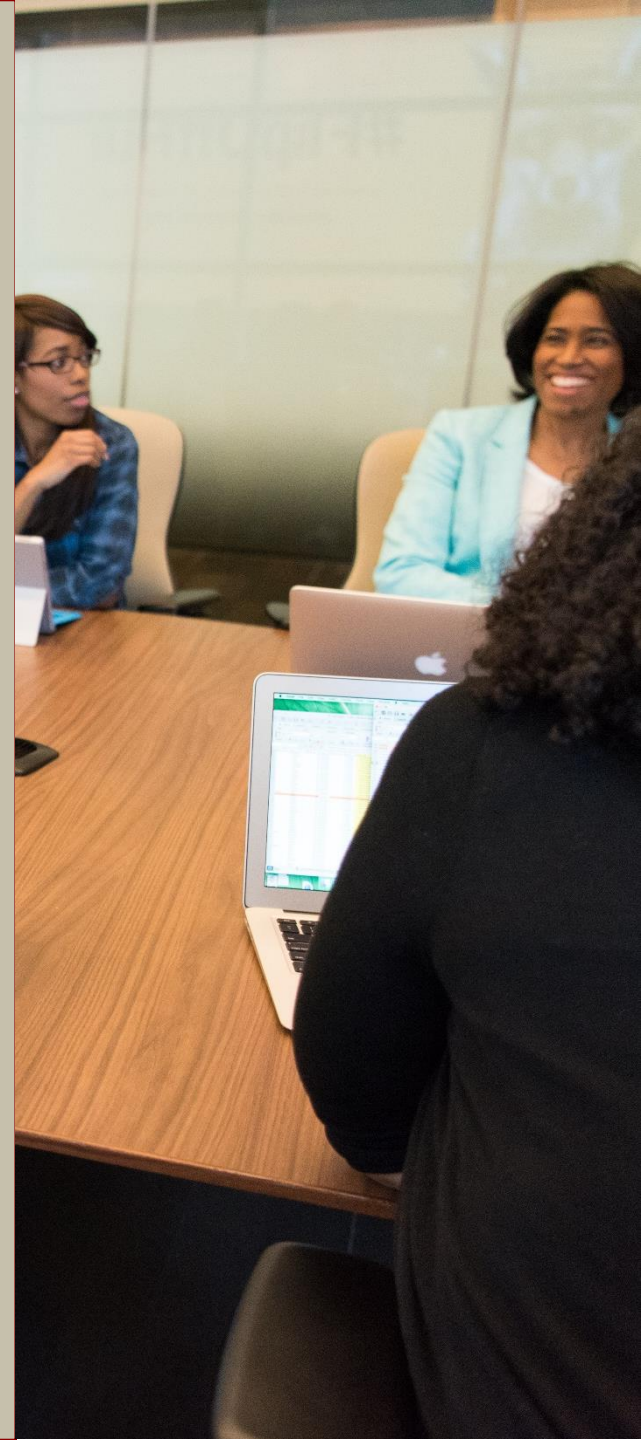
- *Not to the final bit yet, (adoption order) but it (the review) has happened through meetings and discussions.*
- *We liked this format, it was reviewed before we got our order. It has been regularly reviewed, which worked well for us, as we kept having new information to deal with.*
- *We were made to concentrate on small stuff too. I would say, the agency must review it. It is constantly out of date! Can it be highlighted that we, as adoptive parents, can ask for additional reviews.*
- *Review review review..... it always changes. This has been so helpful. (Give) regular advice (to SWs for reviewing. It worked well*



Feedback from pilot - Panels

There was positive feedback from 2 of the RAAs in the Pilot;

- *“Panel have given feedback on each of the forms we’ve seen. Almost universally positive – in terms of general feedback we like the separate form, and now the team are getting more used to completing them alongside the APR there’s much less duplication across the two, which was an early concern”.*
- A 2nd panel from another RAA had seen a smaller number of forms but were very positive about the format stating it was easier to read and *brought the child to life more*. They commented on some duplication with the current APR but despite this saw it as a great improvement on the previous form.



Changes made following the pilot

- The matching grid in the APR 2025 has been amended to reduce the repetition of information but still evidences the ability of adopters to meet the child's identified needs for the match
- Additional prompts and guidance added to cover detailed information about financial support in all the relevant sections of the ASP
- An additional section was added to cover the transition of services where children with disabilities were being placed
- Sections which duplicated information in the forthcoming Child Permanence Report (CPR) 2025 were removed
- Formatting in the guidance documents was improved to make information clearer



CoramBAAF adoption forms update

- The APR (2025) England has been adapted for use only with the ASP (2025)
- The APR (2018) will continue to be available for agencies not using the new ASP
- The CPR (2025) will be published in March 2025
- Work has started on a new PAR which will be published in 2026 - at that time the APR will also be updated into a final version for 2026





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**Introducing the
ASP to your
agency**

Suggestions on how to prepare social work teams and adopters for the introduction of the ASP

- Consider the use of Adoption Support Meetings or how else to include adopters in the planning for adoption support
- Ideally hold briefings with childcare and adoption teams involved; adoption panel members; IROs and adoption support teams
- Consider long-term benefits and positive feedback received from adopters
- Acknowledge and allow additional time for workers to become familiar with the new form and provide templates of exemplars once they are available
- Plan start date for introduction of the form once briefings / training have been completed
- Consider how the ASP can be included in paperwork for reviews without creating further duplication



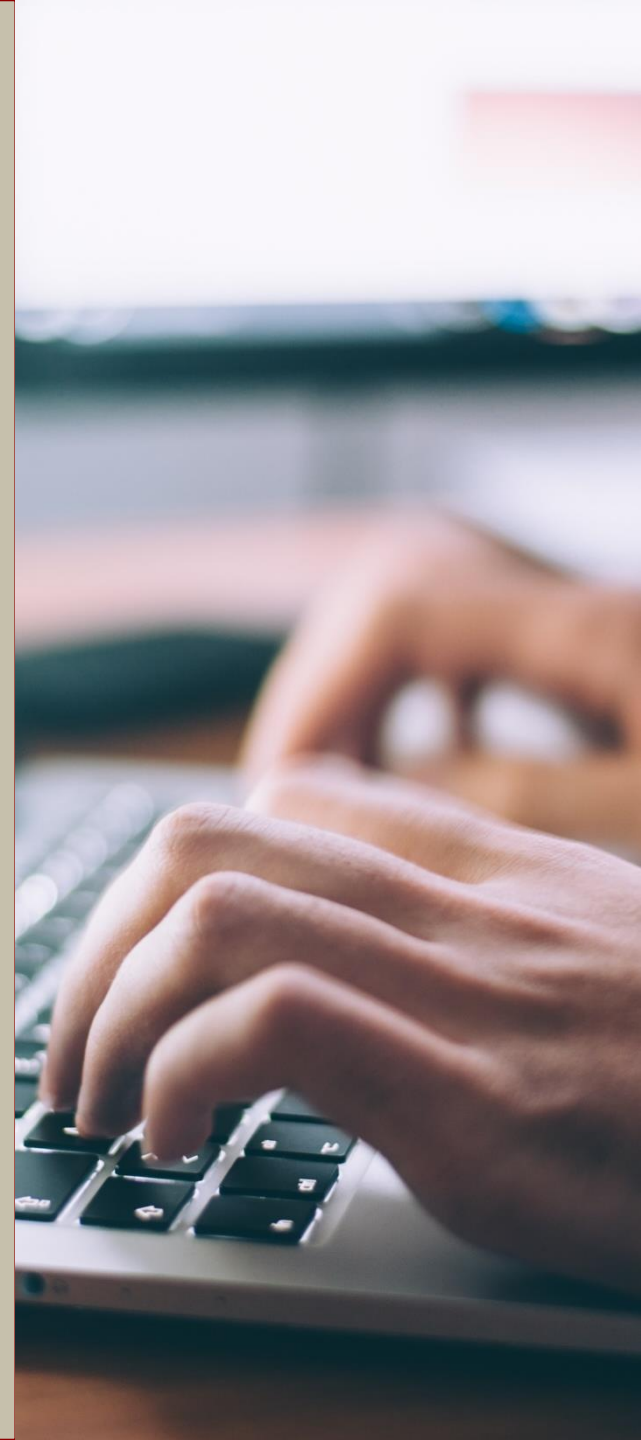
Contact details

If you'd like to discuss the Adoption Support Plan contact;

Jane Poore – jane.poore@corambaaf.org.uk

OR

Elaine Dibben – elaine.DibbenAT@corambaaf.org.uk



Thank you from CoramBAAF



We hope to see you again soon!



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