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# National Early Permanence Working Group

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Chair of the National EP Working Group



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## RAA Leaders Programme Goals



### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Adoption service welcomes, respects and celebrates the diversity, ethnicity, culture and faiths of all children and families.

#### Strategic Priority 1 Recruitment & Adopter Journey

Adopters from diverse communities feel welcomed to adoption. They are helped to build their skills and strengths enabling them to support their children.

#### Strategic Priority 2 Journey of a Child

A strong RAA / LA partnership improve matching practices and children move to live with the families without unnecessary delay, many though Early Permanence placements.

#### Strategic Priority 3 Adoption Support

High quality adoption support is available to all families. The support meets the needs of the children and families and is offered whenever it is required.

#### Strategic Priority 4 Maintaining Relationships

Evidence based practices that enable children to understand their life history and stay in touch with the important people in their lives are developed and tested.

#### Centres of Excellence

A 2-year funding for RAAs to develop outcome based multidisciplinary / multiagency to provide better services and to secure permanent, sustainable funding arrangements.

#### National Commissioning

A 2-year grant funding to explore national or pan-regional commissioning arrangements for adoption support.

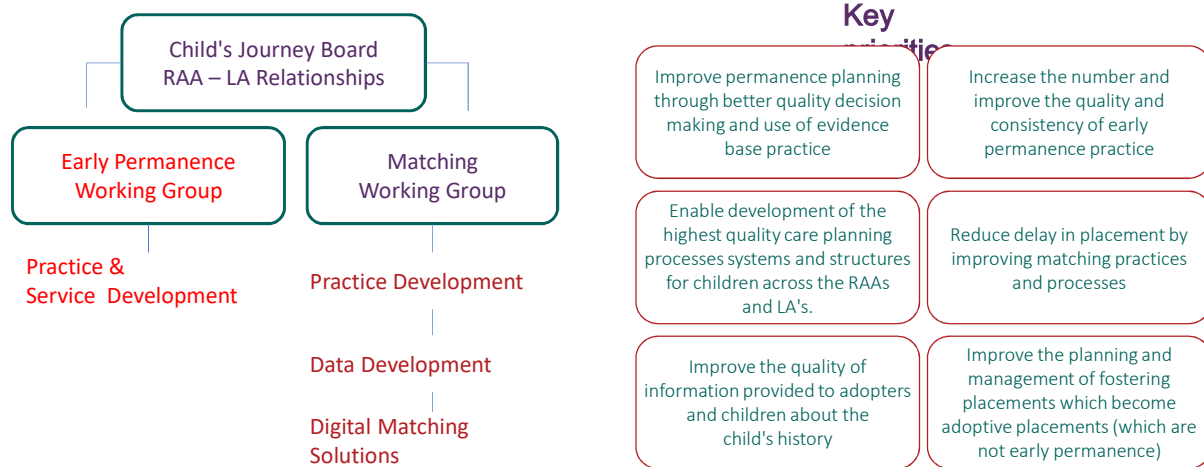
### Voice and Influence

People with lived experience actively participate in the development and delivery of adoption services.

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# Strategic Priority 2 – Child's Journey

Focus on Early Permanence, Matching, and RAA/LA Relationships/quality of practice



Project Managers: Helen Thomas (EP), Helen Stevens (Child's Journey Board & Matching)

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## EP Working Group

commenced 2021

### The Big Issues & Drivers for Change

Early recognition that there is significant variation across England in the use of EP – range from 35% down to 3% ( 2021)

Early recognition that data is in accurate

Also- no clearcut longitudinal research evidence of the impact of EP

Early conversations about language and its importance in EP

Using the umbrella terminology of early permanence, to embrace FFA and Concurrency

No longer using the terminology of risk that that child returns home.

As a system, we have moved on to a universal understanding that these are foster care placements, still in assessment stages

All EP carers must be better prepared for a child returning home

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## EP work underway...

RAA's applying to be awarded the Coram Early Permanence Quality Mark.

The Early Permanence Quality Mark is the standard of excellence awarded to adoption agencies that demonstrate the quality of their service, and their commitment to delivering early permanence for children where adoption is in their best interest†



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## EP Working Group – Aims (2021)

1. To **increase** the number of **EP placements**
2. To **improve the quality** of EP placement practice
3. To ensure that EP carers and placements receive the most appropriate **support** before, during and after placement
4. To ensure that **every area of the country has equal and timely access to early placements**
5. To ensure that the **adopter voice influences** the delivery of EP nationally and regionally
6. To identify areas for potential **innovation** in EP

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## Funded Projects – 19 across England

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Locally developed – regional and pan regional

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Testing out innovation

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Setting out to increase equal access to EP

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Collaborations between RAA's, VAA's and LA's

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Strengthening and embedding practice

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Examples:

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EP for older children

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Wrap around therapeutic parenting

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Will be evaluated for learning and impact

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## The EP Practice Development Group is led by Cathy Sowden, RAA Leader, Together For Adoption

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Online practice group, open to practitioners, managers and any professionals with an interest in EP

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Sessions of interest to promote and share good practice and new ideas

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Sets out to increase the quality of EP practice and support

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Well attended

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Examples:

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Managing Family Time in EP

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Understanding and awareness raising about Hope Boxes

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## Launch of the Early Permanence National Practice Standards - February 2023

Providing practice guidance on all aspects of care planning, delivery and support for early permanence



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## Moving On...

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Away Day in July 2023 to develop a Theory of Change-

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Recognition of a complex system

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Needing to involve the judiciary, CAFCASS and legal system

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Impact of children's workforce turnover

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Communications and centralisation of information and publications

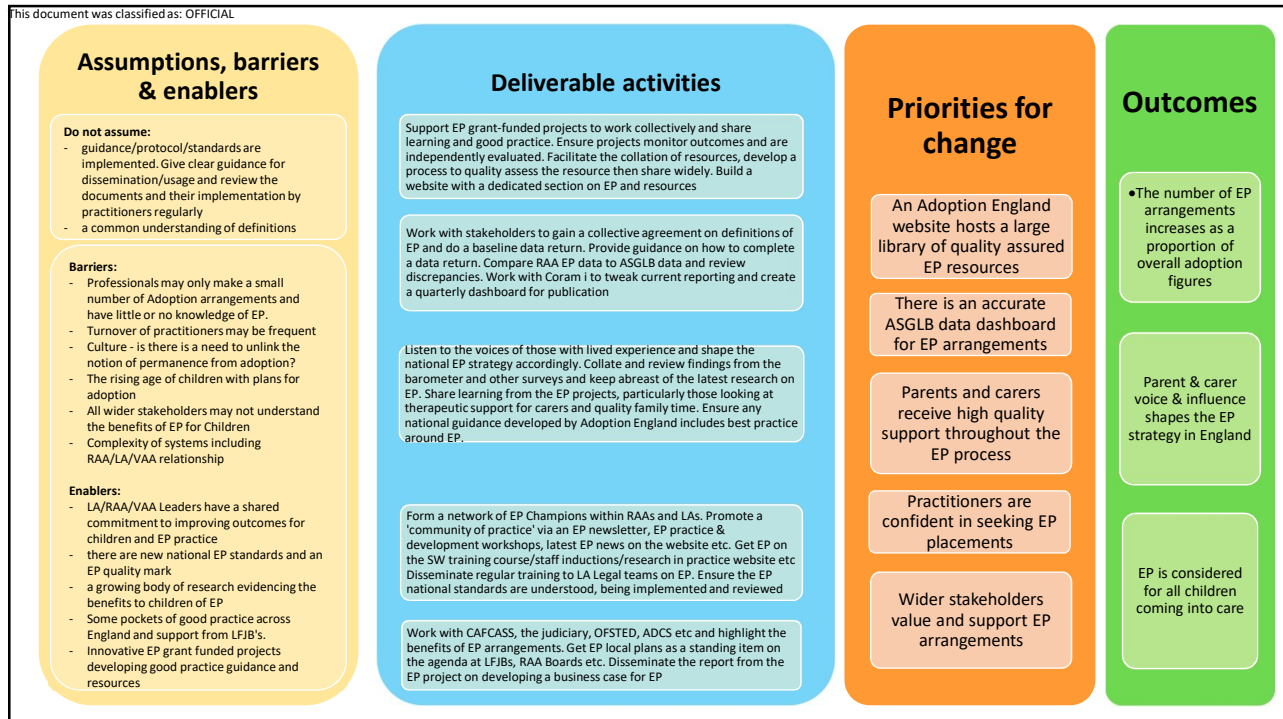
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Continuing concerns around data quality

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A strong wish to set out that those with lived experience of early permanence should influence and inform the national development

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## The Plan is from July 2023- March 2025

Website to host information and resources- need to improve communications and consistency of information

Data work is progressing- currently establishing a benchmark for the past 2 years- progress to improve ASGLB data collection criteria for EP

Practice Group is leading work on support to carers; funded projects testing out support approaches

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AUK have completed a report on user experience of EP, which will inform practice

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A small working group is starting work with Barnardos Pause project to draw on birth parents' views and feedback on EP

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A goal is for each regional Local Family Justice Board to have a shared Early Permanence Plan and regularly review EP

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There is a plan to commission a research partner to evaluate the impact of EP, and the funded projects.

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EP Champions approach to strengthen learning and consistency.