



FAMILY ADOPTION LINKS

# MARKETING & RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

2025-2026

FAMILY  
ADOPTION  
LINKS

# Introduction

Family Adoption Links, a Regional Adoption Agency (Partnership Model) was established in October 2020. It is a collaboration of adoption services working across North Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Leicester City, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Children's Trust.

'Permanence, Stability, quality of care and avoidance of delay are the factors which most affect children's welfare and their future chances in life' (DFE 2016)\*

Reducing the time it takes to match and place children ensures they are given the best chances for the future. To achieve this Family Adoption Links needs to ensure that it recruits a pool of adoptive families who can meet the diverse needs of the children who require an adoptive family.

Our priority is to secure permanence for children living across the Family Adoption Links region who need a permanent family and who are unable to live with their birth families and for whom adoption is agreed as the best outcome.

## Legislative and Statutory Framework

The work of the Regional Adoption Agency is governed principally by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and several pieces of legislation in England.

The key legislation includes:

- Education and Adoption Act 2016
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005
- Care Standards Act 2000

This legal framework underpins with the core principle and values of the partnership to create and implement a vision across the region and within the Modernising Adoption Agenda also driven by Adoption England.

\*DfE (2016). Adoption A Vision for Change. Department for Education [Online], available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/512826/Adoption\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_30\\_March\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512826/Adoption_Policy_Paper_30_March_2016.pdf)

## Our Principles and Values

Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and wherever possible this should be within their own family or kinship network. Adoption may be a care plan for a child where this is not possible.

- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account at all stages. Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.
- The child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and protected characteristics will be fully recognised, positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.
- The specific needs of children with additional needs will be fully recognised and considered when decisions are made.
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family will be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many organisations, professionals and individuals who have to work together to meet these needs.
- Birth parents and birth families are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption. They will be treated fairly, openly and offered a support service.

## Equality

The adoption services that collaborate within this partnership work within equality legislation and the policies that apply to each partner. The services works positively and respectfully with all families and partner agencies regardless of ethnicity, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.

Every attempt will be made to secure an adoptive family that meets a child's emotional and developmental needs, taking into account their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability and the need to avoid undue delay.



## The Adoption Landscape

Adoption recruitment operates in a competitive marketplace with Adopters viewed as a very much valued resource. Nationally, there has also been an increasing number of challenges in the recruitment of adopters and these include:

- the cost-of-living crisis
- lacking confidence in their suitability, capacity, and trust in the process and the variability in support provided
- fewer children having a plan for adoption
- more children having multiple needs.\*

*\* Adoption England Strategy 2024 - 2027*

This Adoption Strategy is a continuation of the previous year's strategy and will form the basis of a response to stave off competition and promote Family Adoption Links as being the provider of choice to recruit sufficient adopters to meet the needs of children across the region.

A pool of approved adopters more than the number of children with an adoption plan across the partnership waiting for an adoptive placement, enables early linking. This reduces time spent on family finding, resulting in less delay with matches being approved at the earliest.

Those children who are part of sibling groups, those who have medical uncertainties and/or complex needs can take longer to place. All of the partnership subscribes to Link Maker which supports earlier family finding should ready internal links not be achieved. There are systems in place within each partnership for long term placements and rescinding of placement orders if care plans change to permanent fostering.

Each partner Adoption Service need to be able to respond to changes in the needs of children who are entering care to take account of changing demographics and ensure appropriate adopters are being recruited. To remain competitive in the changing marketplace, Family Adoption Links need to be flexible and responsive in its planning, marketing, and delivery of services. The development of this Adoption Strategy will be the foundation for creating a flexible and a responsive approach, as it will take account of the numbers of children needing services, future trends, physical resources, policy and legislative changes.

This strategy sets out how Family Adoption Links will increase and diversify enquiries, boost conversions to applications through nurturing and engagement, and strengthen awareness of our support offer across all partner localities as a trusted and supportive Regional Adoption Agency. It integrates digital marketing, community outreach, partnerships, and content that builds trust through real adopter voices. The plan prioritises children who wait longest (sibling groups, older children, and children with additional needs or medical uncertainties) while maintaining an inclusive, welcoming approach to all prospective adopters.

# Recent Overview

The year 2024/25 was another year of success for the Recruitment and Marketing Team within Family Adoption Links. Achievements included:

- 420 guests registering for our You Can Adopt events
- Trebled the amount of visitors to our website (2023v2024)
- Keep warm strategy for potential adopters to increase our conversion rates achieving average open rates of 68.7% and a link click rate of 13.6%
- The adoption of an 'always on' digital marketing strategy
- Continued consultations with adopters and adopted children on all of our workstreams
- The continued development of the Adopter Training Hub - Eventbrite figures show 1182 places were booked in 2024/2025

Marketing actively contributes to the recruitment of 127 new household approvals and drove 392 attendees to attend the You Can Adopt information sessions against a challenging national recruitment backdrop. The website continues to perform highly, attracting 30,000 users (v 10,000 in the previous year).



Despite this and with record numbers of children with a plan of adoption, 2025/2026 will need us to increase our efforts to recruit adopters. Our aim is to increase the number of adopters within Family Adoption Links and ensure we are attracting the right type of adopters, people who have the potential to be resilient and flexible, and with support, will understand and respond to the needs of children from care, in accordance with the modernising adoption agenda.

In 2025/2026 we will aspire to recruit 140 new households and will ensure that this target figure is kept under review. This is against a national backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis which we anticipate may have a negative impact on the recruitment of adopters.

Particular focus will continue to be on the children that traditionally wait the longest to be adopted which includes sibling groups, children aged 3 and over, children with additional needs or medical uncertainties, and children from the global majority and other ethnic groups. To achieve these objectives, recruitment marketing activity (in line with the Adoption England strategy) needs to raise awareness of the children that require adoption, communicate the benefits of adoption and use the most cost-effective and principally digital methods to reach our target audience and encourage them to apply.

Marketing will continue to play a pivotal role in the development of our workstreams of Family Finding and Assessment, Training, Post Adoption Support, Early Permanence, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Education and Staying in Touch.

## **How Marketing is integrated within Family Adoption Links**

All Marketing activity for Family Adoption Links is directed by the Marketing Officer who also creates and communicates the marketing plan in consultation with each partner to ensure local as well as regional marketing objectives can be reached.

Marketing is on the agenda at each monthly Team Meeting where recruitment needs are discussed and the plan is updated. The Marketing Officer also attends relevant Family Adoption Links workstream meetings ensuring that there is a fully joined up approach throughout the partnership. An example of this would be at the Family Finding and Assessment workstream where individual marketing actions are created for the children who have waited the longest. This coincides with the focus and efforts to recruit adopters and create suitable matches using the Early Permanence route too.

# Our Target Market

Previous adopters who would like to add to their family.



Adults aged 30-55 who have been unable to have children naturally or who would like to add to their family without a pregnancy continue to represent the largest proportion of our adopters.

Those in altruistic professions. Research has shown that these people have a higher propensity to adopt, particularly those children who may have additional needs.



Those people who are interested in the Early Permanence route to adoption.



Those who have raised a family or have children who have reached adulthood and are living independently, known as "empty nesters".

The LGBTQ+ community are an important source of adopters. In addition, research has shown that these adopters have a higher propensity to adopt children who wait the longest which is a key focus area for Family Adoption Links.

Adults aged 30-55 from the global majority and other ethnic backgrounds.



## The children that require adoption

The majority of children with a plan for adoption within Family Adoption Links are single, white British children, however as local and national figures show, the children who wait the longest are:

- Sibling groups
- Children from the global majority and other ethnic backgrounds
- Children aged 3 years and over
- Children with additional health needs or medical uncertainties.

## Sufficiency

It is expected that Family Adoption Links may not provide enough adoptive families for all the children, and that for some children, the right match may not be available within Family Adoption Links families.

As part of achieving excellence Family Adoption Links will work with partner regional adoption agencies across the midlands, and nationally, and with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies to place children. In 2024/2025 Family Adoption Links placed 128 children. Of those 90 (70.31%) were placed within Family Adoption Links and 38 (29.69%) placed outside of the Family Adoption Links partnership.

Family Adoption Links aims to recruit at least 140 families this year, which would reduce the children who would need to be placed by other agencies.

Methods used to identify matches:

- Link Maker
- Family Finding Regional Meetings.
- Regional Profile exchange with Regional Adoption Agencies; and VAAs
- Local profile events organised by Family Adoption Links.
- Adoption Activity Days/Getting to know you events
- Tracking of children to ensure sufficiency of adopters and identify any significant themes.
- All Family Adoption Links adopters are placed on Link Maker under Family Adoption Links parameters.

During assessment of adopters across the partnership there is a strong and consistent message regarding the benefits of regional partnership adopters being matched with partnership children, there are 140 children needing adoptive homes in any one year.

Currently Family Adoption Links needs more adopters, all applicants are taken through the preparation process, as soon as is possible in an effort to reduce delay for children.

# Objectives

As a partnership, our principal aim is always to ensure that we recruit the right type and the right number of adopters to ensure that our children are placed with the right family as quickly as possible. This overarching aim is achieved through the following objectives and tactics (method of delivery) and are measured how successful (or not) the activity is through Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

## Family-Finding Alignment, Capacity and Demand

This area will focus on aligning family-finding activity, matching capacity to demand to support timely, well-matched permanency for children. It will prioritise those who may wait longer, strengthen pathways such as Early Permanence, and build closer working relationships to ensure recruitment activity is targeted, responsive, and impactful.

### Objectives:

- To deliver highly focused recruitment activity in order to achieve sufficiency and match within 18 months.
- Where appropriate to use the lived experience of those who have used the service to promote the value of the adoption experience.
- To focus on priority children (those who may wait longer to be matched; sibling groups, children 3+, additional needs, global majority)
- To raise the profile of Early Permanence to increase Early Permanence placements
- Develop relationships with fostering to increase the profile of adoption as permanence

### Relevant KPIs:

- Number of children waiting (and duration)
- Number of adopters waiting
- Number of children and adopters who attend family finding events and number of links made post-event
- Number of images and videos on Link Maker
- Speed of response to enquiries through Link Maker

## Marketing Strategy, Channels & Content Creation

The information available about our partnership, and the adoption process will be high quality and should be available through formats that gain maximum engagement, such as website, social media, face to face events. Ensuring adopters choose Family Adoption Links, as their preferred RAA of choice, especially those in target groups.

### Objectives:

- Continually explore all avenues of digital marketing eg. LinkedIn, TikTok to ensure the most effective channels
- Use innovative digital mediums such as videos and podcast to promote recruitment.
- Continual development of the website with weekly updates and paid activity.
- Enhance the “keep warm strategy” to continually grow the database.
- Increase the number of households to each information event via website, always-on digital, and social media.

### Relevant KPIs:

- Website KPIs (users, pages visited, bounce rate, time on site)
- Number of messages received / questions from the website
- Number of adopters who open and click on content in email newsletters
- Number of guests who register and attend You Can Adopt events

## Inclusion, Representation & Community Presence

Our marketing and recruitment activities should reflect the diversity of our service needs and the demographics of our partnerships, build meaningful local connections and create accessible touchpoints that encourage visibility and engagement within the local communities.

### Objectives:

- Ensure marketing is inclusive & diverse; recognise key cultural dates, and the context of the target groups for matching.
- Raise profile through community events for example Pride, local fostering events, Caribbean carnival, black history month.
- Collaborations with businesses, churches, schools, doctors, police, etc.

### Relevant KPIs:

- Website KPIs (users, pages, bounce rate, time on site)
- Qualitative feedback using MS Forms
- Number of messages received / questions from the website

## Events, Engagement & Experience

Activity will create meaningful, well-delivered events that are informative, engaging, and connect both external audiences and staff. Providing opportunities to build understanding, encourage action, and strengthen relationships, while ensuring experiences are consistent, accessible, and shaped by feedback.

### Objectives:

- Use Eventbrite for events and training; analyse attendance and feedback
- Deliver You Can Adopt and Prepare to Adopt events
- Participate in National Adoption Week and July recruitment campaign
- Deliver two staff engagement events per year

### Relevant KPIs:

- Number of guests who register and attend You Can Adopt events
- Number of adopters booked on training courses
- Number of children and adopters who attend events and links made post-event
- Amount of activity during National Adoption Week
- Qualitative feedback using MS Forms
- How many staff members visit the intranet

## Data, Measurement, Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

This area will provide the foundation for informed decision-making by strengthening how data is gathered, analysed and used across marketing and recruitment activity. It will focus on understanding adopter journeys and local needs, ensuring insight and feedback consistently shape planning, review and continuous improvement.

### Objectives:

- Accurately collate data for enquiries, IEs, ROIs, Stage 1 applications
- Ensure adopter-centricity using consultation/surveys
- Ensure local needs are reflected via monthly updates and tailored plans
- Audit and analyse marketing activity using recognised models
- Implement clear KPIs and measurements for ongoing review

### Relevant KPIs:

- Number of enquiries received into our partners
- Number of IEs received
- Number of Registrations of Interest received
- Qualitative feedback using MS Forms
- Number of messages received / website questions

## Internal Engagement & Partnership Development

This area will focus on strengthening internal engagement and collaboration across the RAA community, ensuring staff feel informed and involved. It will support greater transparency for shared learning and collective impact, helping to align marketing activity locally and nationally while amplifying our voice across the sector.

### Objectives:

- Engage and inspire staff: 2-way communication, intranet, staff events & newsletters
- Raise profile across RAA community, increase practitioner engagement with RAA workstreams across the partnership and inform national strategy.
- Work with other RAAs to maximise recruitment and matching.
- Ensure transparency and visibility of marketing plans across workstreams.

### Relevant KPIs:

- How many staff members visit the intranet
- Qualitative feedback using MS Forms



# Recruitment Calendar

## Key Activity

Recruitment activity	
Weekly	Promotion through social media platforms (regular posting to drive traffic to website, engagement in recruitment activity and promote FAL as RAA of choice) Website updated with engaging content, podcasts blogs and news focused on myth busting, information and resources (driven through the recruitment team)
Fortnightly	You can adopt information event online
Quarterly	You can adopt in person events
6 times a year	Keeping warm email sent to those who have registered
Across the year (dependant on availability)	Engagement in national campaigns i.e. You can adopt week Promotion through free digital routes (LA newsletters & social media, school posters) Raise profile through community events
Family Finding and Assessment	
Monthly	Producing Linkmaker videos to enhance children's profiles (achieve target of 50%) Regular posting of anonymised children's profiles on social media and our website (boosted where directed)
Twice a year	Getting to Know you event Discovery Video event
Across the year (dependant on availability)	Email newsletters of children that have been waiting sent to local and RAAs in our areas Attend national family finding events (activity days and exchange days)
Training	
Twice a year	Update training calendar on website.
Monthly	Training sessions marketed to adopters through social posts, internal marketing and newsletters
Post Adoption Support	
Quarterly	Thrive Adoption Support Newsletter sent out to over 1,000 adopters
Internal Marketing	
Twice a Year	Staff newsletter Staff conference

# Evaluation & Review

The Recruitment Strategy will be regularly evaluated.

The partnership will carefully consider any feedback through the systems in place including monthly meetings with all partnership representatives to capture the dynamic nature of the collaborative work. The recruitment campaign is reviewed to assess effectiveness, and the Initial Enquiries are managed within the partnership by the central hub so there is a constant overview of the number of enquires at any one time.

The budget will be set and reviewed annually by the Head of Service and presented to the governance board for decision to ensure support for all recruitment activity, including advertising costs. The targets set for the total number of Adopters to be recruited and approved during the year will be reviewed quarterly to assess if the annual target will be achieved.

