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Operating in Local Partnerships to Achieve Permanence for Children Now and in their Future Lives

“This paper sets out our proposals to move to Regional Adoption Agencies. We believe they will help: speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children; improve adopter recruitment and adoption support; and reduce costs.”

Regionalising Adoption
Department for Education, June 2015

Challenges

- Inefficiencies
- Matching
- Recruitment
- Adoption Support

Opportunities

- Recruitment driven by the needs of a larger number of children
- Access to a larger pool of adopters
- Share and develop wider support services
- Develop excellent practice, skills and behaviours
- Clearer transparency and protocols for early planning
- Opportunities to share costs and benefit from economies of scale

Kent by Numbers

- 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- 4 Adoption Panels
- 5 CIC Service Managers
- 4 Agency Decision Makers (ADMs)
- 5 Political Groups
- 1,400+ Looked After Children
- 2 Panel Advisors
- 1 Partnership with a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA)

Coram Kent Partnership

	2011/12	2014/15
Adoption Approvals	67 families	119 families (new process) 19 families (old process)
Children Matched	78	145
Children Placed	68	143
Adoption Orders	70	182

What We Have Learnt

- Complexity
- Scale
- Different organisational cultures
- Creativity and innovation

Complexity

Complexity Theory: The study of complex and chaotic systems and how order, pattern and structure can arise from them

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex ... It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage – to move in the opposite direction.”

Albert Einstein

Scale: The Self-Sufficiency Risk

“A key difference was in Local Authorities’ willingness to widen the search for adoptive families and place out of area ... County Authorities, which were more able to place in house than smaller agencies in urban areas, used inter-agency placements less, which led to more delay in finding placements for children with complex needs.”

Farmer & Dance
(Link Manor Systems)

Different Organisational Cultures

- Common goals
- One agreed information system
- Ownership and accountability
- Whole system focus
- Create a new culture

Creativity and Innovation

- Adoption activity days
- Family finding – telling the story
- Challenge pre-conceptions – be ambitious
- Post-order support – diversity and choice
- Established routine v new ideas

Permanence: Now and for the Future

“We know that children adopted from care have often lived through terrible experiences, which do not just simply disappear once they have settled with their new families.”

Edward Timpson

Minister for Children and Families