

Benefits offered by Coram Capital Adoption to all partners

- Coram placed 87 children in adoptive families in 2014/15 and ensures that careful recruitment means that a **diverse pool of adopters** is available.
- Coram offers **concurrent planning placements** as choice to speed permanence planning in the interests of young, vulnerable children and has a great deal of expertise in supporting these placements.
- Families approved by Coram's panel have automatic access to our wide range of **support services**, including art and music therapy, parenting skills groups for adopters of children aged three to eight (Incredible Years, adapted for adopted children), and the STOP parenting skills training for the adopters of adolescents.
- **Training events** at Coram are open to our partners. In the last year this included conferences with David Brodzinsky, Julie Selwyn, speakers on concurrent planning, and attachment research.
- All domestic adopter assessments will go to the Coram adoption panel, thus providing a **significant financial saving** for participating local authorities (LAs). Matches will remain the responsibility of the LA panel.
- Coram is establishing an **Advisory Panel** for Coram Capital Adoption which will include members of the Judiciary and The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) to improve dialogue and mutual understanding.
- LAs that join Coram Capital Adoption will be offered a **diagnostic assessment of their adoption services** which includes analysis of the child's journey from the entry into care to identify blockages in the system and issues which cause delay. This enables tailored strategies to be put in place to improve planning and timescales for children.
- Coram's Research and evaluation team offer evaluations of the service offered by Coram and by partners, including **user surveys of adopters** which allow LAs to identify their strengths and areas requiring improvement, and which provide Ofsted with evidence of their open communication with adoptive parents.
- Coram's **longitudinal study** of the development of attachments between adopted children and their adoptive parents has been influential in informing our understanding of the qualities in adopters which influence good outcomes. The study has now reported on outcomes for adolescents, and we continue to develop our insight into this process, and to advance grant funded **research and development**.

Contact us

Coram welcomes enquiries from London local authorities that may be interested in joining Coram Capital Adoption, and benefitting from sharing key resources to build capacity for adoption and permanence solutions.

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Coram Capital Adoption

An approach to regionalisation of adoption services in London

Coram Capital Adoption is an exciting partnership between a growing group of London local authorities and Coram's successful voluntary adoption agency.

Find out more about the benefits of our regionalised approach and how your local authority can increase efficiency and improve permanence planning and placement choice and speed for children waiting to be adopted.

Background

Building on success

Coram was awarded a Department for Education (DfE) grant in 2015/16 to establish wider partnership with local authorities (LAs) in and around London, which has become known as Coram Capital Adoption. This was built on the success of existing partnerships with a number of local authorities, which are outlined here:

Harrow: Since 2006 Coram has provided domestic adoption services for the London Borough of Harrow, and during that time placements of children have increased. In addition, concurrent planning placements have been a regular feature of the partnership, enabling vulnerable babies in court proceedings to achieve early permanence with the minimum number of moves. In 2005/6, before the partnership, two children were placed for adoption. In 2006/7, when the partnership had commenced in the third quarter, six children were placed for adoption. In 2014/15 10 children were placed for adoption.

Redbridge: Coram also works with the London Borough of Redbridge. In the three year period from 2008 to 2011, 19 children were placed for adoption by Redbridge – an average of six per year. In 2014/15, 16 children were placed. In 2012/13, four children were adopted in Redbridge, compared to 16 children in 2014/15.

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC): Coram has also worked in partnership with CCC since October 2011, and in 2014 established a new voluntary adoption agency, Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption (CCA) to deliver domestic adoption services for CCC. In Cambridgeshire placement numbers increased from 27 in 2012/13 to 46 in 2013/14.

Kent County Council (KCC): Likewise Coram's partnership with KCC saw placement numbers rise to 170 in 2013/14 from the previous baseline of 60 completed placements in the year preceding the partnership (2010/11).

Coram Capital Adoption

Coram Capital Adoption comprises a growing number of local authorities in and around London, including Harrow, Redbridge, Thurrock and the City of London, with other partners joining soon.



Fall in Placement Orders and Adoption Placements

In the last year the number of Placement Orders has dropped dramatically across the whole country, which has impacted on the number of children being referred for adoption. There is a need for strategic thinking by local authorities (LAs) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) to consider how to recruit and prepare adopters for the children who are in need of adoptive families and to secure permanence planning.

At the same time LAs need to focus on the child's journey to ensure that the children for whom adoption is the appropriate plan are identified early, and that court proceedings are conducted in a robust and positive spirit. This should be backed by thorough assessments and analysis of the issues. The regionalisation agenda creates an opportunity for sharing expertise, some back office functions, and reducing costs, whilst also widening choice for the children needing families and increasing the speed at which children can be appropriately matched with adopters, including through concurrent planning.



Why work with Coram?

Coram Capital Adoption and the regionalisation agenda

Coram's model for working with London Local Authorities (LAs) is aligned with and anticipates the government's regionalisation agenda. This is being developed dynamically with LAs and offers the option of joining a successful regional partnership with a group of LAs in London, with Coram, which is a successful and entrepreneurial voluntary adoption agency (VAA), acting as the coordinating hub.

Coram is passionate about adoption as a positive option for children who cannot live with their birth family. Coram has an excellent track record for placing a wide range of LA children in adoptive and concurrent planning placements. Coram also offer an extensive range of adoption support services at all stages of the adoption process to Coram adopters and their children. Coram's disruption rate is exceptionally low. Coram is committed to working with LAs in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration, in order that those children who need adoption can find their permanent family at the earliest opportunity, and be supported to heal and develop their potential. The government is introducing legislation which will require LAs and VAAs to work collaboratively within regions to increase efficiency, reduce costs and improve placement choice and speed for children waiting to be adopted. Coram Capital Adoption offers the benefits of collaboration with the opportunity to tailor the delivery package to meet the requirements of each individual Local Authority.

Coram already has a track record of working successfully in partnership with LAs, and was awarded the Outstanding grade in all aspects of our work in Ofsted inspections of both our adoption and fostering services in 2015.

The model for Coram Capital Adoption is best described as 'hub and spoke' for the whole adoption function

The 'hub' consists of the centralised recruitment and assessment of adopters within Coram on behalf of participating local authorities (LAs), with access to Coram's adoption support programmes. Participating LAs have priority access to the pool of adopters recruited by Coram in London and the East Midlands.

Each LA contributes financially to the staffing of the recruitment and assessment team in Coram, and has a pro rata share of approved adopters in return.

In order to ensure that adopters are recruited for the children waiting / in the pipeline, and that children are identified as early as possible, Coram will co-locate an adoption manager within each participating LA. This manager will support the LA by close liaison with the children's teams and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) including chairing permanency planning meetings (PPMs), attending regular permanence tracking meetings, conducting needs meetings in respect of children identified as requiring adoption placements, offering consultation on child permanence reports (CPRs) and Life Storybooks. The Coram manager will be responsible for close liaison with the Coram recruitment and assessment team, and will also advise on concurrent planning placements as appropriate.

