

# ASGSF Pilots

Improving adoption and special guardianship support through the national adoption commissioning and multi-disciplinary work



regional adoption agencies working together

# 5 new pilots for 25/26

To test whether the following benefits can be realised through devolving the ASGSF:

1. Children and families access support quicker.
2. Practitioners spend more time directly supporting families because they are spending less time applying for funding.
3. Agencies and regions are better equipped to strategically plan and commission services, ensure quality and provide value for money.



# How the pilots will run alongside the ASGSF

- Total funding of £2.3m is taken from the central ASGSF and as such must meet the ASGSF scope and eligibility criteria and will follow the same Terms and Conditions.
- Any unspent funds will be returned to the central ASGSF.
- If a family access a therapeutic service via the pilot, the RAA must ensure that the cost is within the recipients Fair Access Limit as per the ASGSF terms and conditions.
- Children and families will continue to receive therapeutic support through their Local authority or RAA either via the ASGSF or through the pilot or both.

# Background

A request to test this approach was made in May 2024 & formal agreement to pilot a new approach was agreed in late April 2025 by the Department for Education

The pilots build on the **development of multidisciplinary approaches**. The pilots will allow RAA teams to develop partnerships with health partners, adoption support agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) and independent providers with the aim of improving pathways for children and young people to access support and improve the quality, availability and timeliness of specialist assessments.

They also build on the **national commissioning programme** to improve collective understanding of need and explore the benefits of pan-regional commissioning, which most of the RAAs view as a direction of travel to achieve sustainability, consistency and quality of adoption support services.

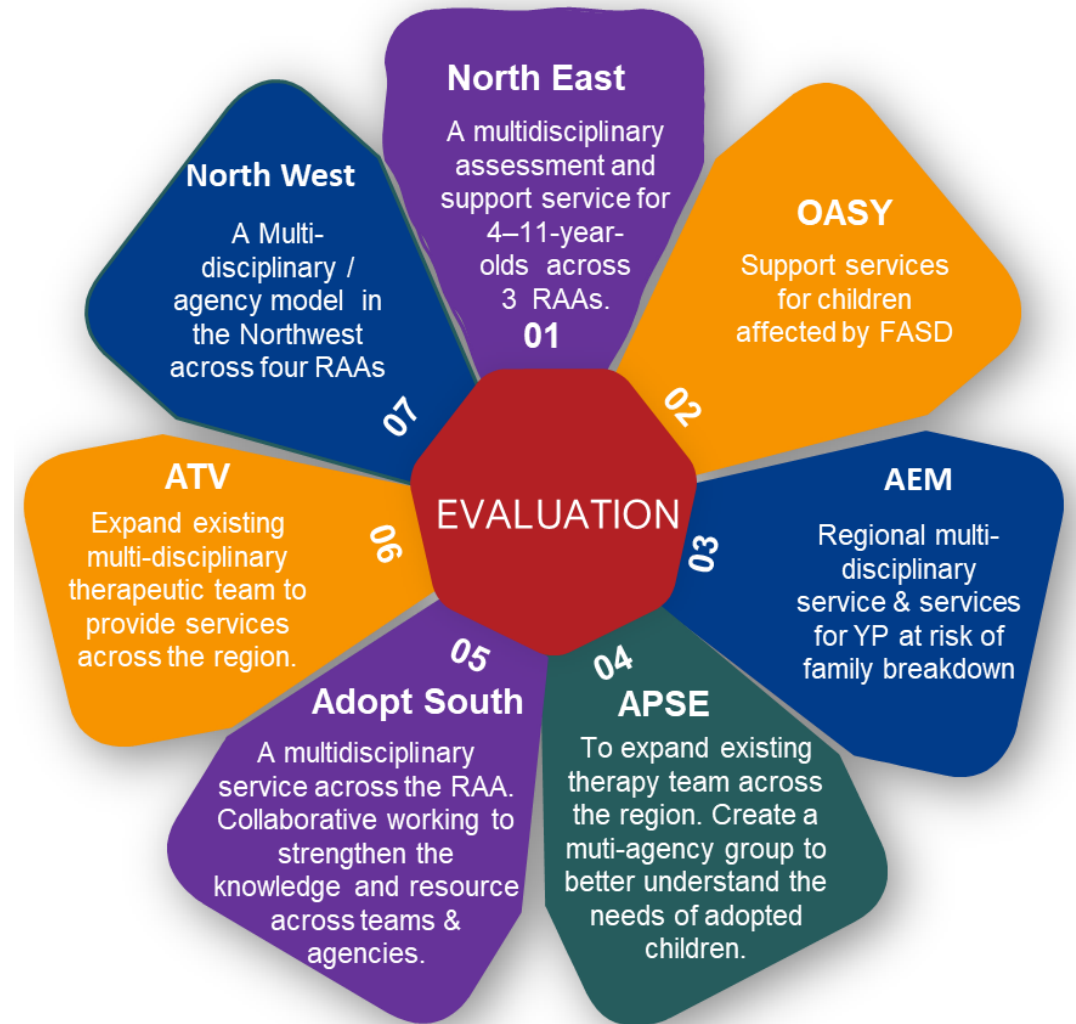




# Background development work - Developing Multidisciplinary Approaches

Between 2023 – 25 DfE provided funding to develop multidisciplinary / multiagency teams (MDT) to improve services for adopted children and families and to explore and secure permanent, sustainable funding arrangements in partnership with local authorities, Virtual Schools and health commissioners.

The funding enabled 7 new projects to be set up. Adoption England commissioned an evaluation to assess the impact, benefits and challenges of the projects. Two more established MDTs were included in the evaluation.



# National Adoption Commissioning Programme

## CHALLENGES

Increased demand and spend

Varied processes

Gaps in provision

Families experience delays



**'Commissioning is the process for deciding how to use the total resource available for families in order to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.'**

*web: [www.commissioningsupport.org.uk](http://www.commissioningsupport.org.uk)*

## OUTCOMES FOR RAAs AND FAMILIES

Increased RAAs buying power to secure value for money

Better understanding and dissemination of what works

Eliminating postcode lottery for adoptive families nationally

More capacity to provide timely support to families

# ASGSF – Pilot 1

Funding devolved to pan-regions to develop and deliver a core offer and early support provision in their region to adoptive parents (and special guardians).



## **Eastern pan-region:**

*Adopt East (lead agency), Adoption Connects, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough*

The aim of the Eastern pan-region pilot is to bridge the gap in services for adolescents and their families. The pilot will integrate Creative Therapies, Targeted Parenting Programme and Engagement Initiation and involves both existing and new initiatives that are being co-designed with young people and provided inhouse and with external providers.

The pilot will address gaps for adolescents and geographically. Based on the findings of their Strategic Commissioning Needs Assessment for adoption support, the pilot will use outcomes driven commissioning to develop a mixed market of provision and tiered approach to shift towards more early intervention and prevention.

They will incorporate collaboration with VAAs in training opportunities and include them in the regional development group, ensuring their voices and perspectives inform the ongoing development and implementation of services.

## **Yorkshire and Humber pan-region:**

*One Adoption West Yorkshire (lead agency), One Adoption South Yorkshire, One Adoption North and Humber*

The Yorkshire and Humber pan-regional pilot will utilise their existing pan-regional Approved Provider List to engage a provider to deliver a new group based **Therapeutic Parenting Programme** for adopters and special guardians caring for children aged 8-12 years old. This model is based on early; proactive support aimed at meeting low level need and has been commissioned in West Yorkshire previously. By expanding this out across the pan-region, this model will reduce the average unit cost for this therapeutic intervention significantly providing economies of scale.

The project aims to evidence that with a clear early support offer in place, families wait less time for support and are less likely to reach the point of crisis.

# ASGSF – Pilot 2

Funding devolved to existing in-house MDTs by RAA or Pan-region to undertake specialist assessments, support the delivery of an in-house core offer of therapeutic support, skilling up staff and providing consultations around formulation and placement advice. *(continued)*



## Adoption Partnership South-East (APSE)

The APSE pilot aims to strengthen preventative and earlier intervention of adoption support. The pilot's hypothesis is that by reinforcing the early support offer they will see less demand on the ASGSF; if specialist support is needed it's likely to be timely and increasing clinical supervision across the MDT strengthens the therapeutic social work support offer.

The pilot will deliver **Specialist Assessments, Therapeutic Parenting courses, Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) based programmes, Therapeutic Parents and Family Therapy.**

Any adopters which APSE source through VAAs will continue to be able to access a range of services including peer support groups, learning and development workshops and resources. One of the pilot aims will be to improve engagement and relationships with the advantage of more efficient processes.

## Coram Ambitious for Adoption (MDT Adoption Support Gateway)

The Coram Ambitious for Adoption pilot is based around their Parenting and Creative Therapies Team, which is led by Clinical Psychologists, with a Family Therapist, Music/Art/Drama therapists and a Child MH practitioner.

The pilot will seek to achieve deeper integration with the nine Local Authorities through colocation and development of a shared language for delivery.

The pilot will include Specialist Assessments; Music, Art or Drama therapy; DDP informed therapy, Family Therapy, Therapeutic Parenting, EMDR; Non-violent Resistance (NVR) groups; and Foundations for Attachment Parenting Groups.



# ASGSF – Pilot 2

Funding devolved to existing in-house MDTs by RAA or Pan-region to undertake specialist assessments, support the delivery of an in-house core offer of therapeutic support, skilling up staff and providing consultations around formulation and placement advice.



## North East pan-region:

*Adopt North East (lead agency), Adopt Coast to Coast, Adoption Tees Valley*

The North East pilot aims to provide more tailored and appropriate **Specialist Assessments** and deliver Core and Targeted Therapies. A proportion of support currently delivered by external providers will be delivered by trained and accredited staff from the three partner RAAs and the pan-regional MDT. A concurrent commissioning project is focused on commissioning services externally that are more effective and better value.

The pilot seeks to intentionally increase use of **Attachment-Based Parent Training Courses, Therapeutic Life Story Work and Theraplay** because of the belief that earlier use by families will have a positive impact on outcomes for children, with the potential to reduce the overall long-term use of the Fund.

The region will use their well-established network with Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) to ensure the pilot benefits children and families supported by VAAs through clear notification, referral and communication pathways.