**Recruitment Strategy Adoption East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency Updated: July 2022**


# Overall Objective

Adoption East Midlands seeks to meet the need to place the children of Derby, Nottingham, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire who have an adoption plan with adoptive families, who can meet their needs throughout childhood, including the additional needs of children who have suffered childhood trauma. The aspiration for Adoption East Midlands is that we place at least 80% of our children with Adoption East Midlands adopters. We aim to have choice for children via a pool of adopters.

# Numbers of Children

Adoption East Midlands expects to be asked to find adoptive families for approximately 140 children a year. Adoption East Midlands also expects to support these children throughout childhood, as needed.

Adoption East Midlands has a large Adoption Support team, and where possible will seek to place children within the geographical boundary of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Adoption East Midlands feels confident there is a robust support offer within the region.

# Sufficiency

It is expected that Adoption East Midlands will not provide enough adoptive families for all the children, and that for some children, the right match may not be available within Adoption East Midlands families. Then AEM will work with partner RAAs across the Midlands, and VAAs and then nationally to place children.

Adoption East Midlands aims to recruit at least 100 families per annum, which would meet 80% sufficiency and leave approximately 30 children who would be placed by other agencies.

A small number of these AEM families will take placements of children from other RAAs in the Midlands, or nationally, if the right match is not available to them within AEM.

In recruiting adopters to meet the needs of children waiting families able to offer the right placement match for AEM children will be prioritised.

50% of the children AEM place, are in sibling groups,

50% are single children, under the age of two,

8% are aged over 5 years old

17% are not white British, and of these, most children have a mixed ethnicity.

# Methods used to identify matches

* Linkmaker
* Homefinding meetings, inviting regional RAA partners
* Profile exchange with Regional Adoption Agencies; and VAAs
* Profile events offered by Coram BAAF.
* Local profile events organised by Adoption East Midlands.
* Adoption Activity Days.
* Possible use of Local activity events e.g., stay and play.
* Tracking of children to ensure sufficiency of adopters and identify any significant themes.

All Adoption East Midlands adopters are placed on Link Maker under Adoption East Midlands parameters. During assessment of adopters there is a strong and consistent message re the benefits of Adoption East Midlands adopters adopting Adoption East Midlands children, there are 140- 150 children needing adoptive homes in any one year. This number has been relatively stable for the past 3 years.

Where necessary, if adopters are waiting for specific characteristics of placement, adopters offering a broader matching criterion may be prioritised, for registration of interest, assessment and preparation.

If Adoption East Midlands has adopters waiting 3 months after approval, Adoption East Midlands will support families to identify children from other geographical areas.

# Adoption East Midlands Adopter Recruitment

* National Adopter recruitment campaign
* Annual recruitment activity plan
* Website.
* Local publicity campaigns.
* Tweets and Facebook posts.
* Media statements.

# Recruitment Principles

Adoption East Midlands will accept applications from:

* Single people, or couples, same sex or mixed.
* There is no upper age limit, but adopters must be over 21.
* Homeowners, or tenants.
* People who already have children – we will discuss the recommended age gap with you.
* People living within the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Boundary.
* People outside this boundary only where that meets the needs of waiting children.
* People in employment or unemployment.
* People with disabilities.
* People living a healthy lifestyle.

Adoption East Midlands will particularly welcome applicants who can consider:

* Black Children, and mixed heritage children.
* Brothers and sisters
* Older children.
* Children with complex health needs.
* Children with uncertainty, or development delay.

# Early Permanence

# Once applicants are approved as adopters, it is possible to place children as fostered children, thus enabling children to be placed much earlier, and have less changes of carers. AEM encourage all adopters to consider this and wish to increase the number of children placed this way, currently around 15 placements a year are made this way.

# Preparation

Adoption East Midlands offers a comprehensive preparation offer during Stage One. In addition, to support the needs of local children seminars regarding early permanence (foster for adoption) and caring for brothers and sisters are offered. We use Virtual Reality headsets as an additional resource to assist understanding of attachment trauma and for applicants who wish to adopt siblings.

We have a welcome to adoption support seminar before you have an adoption order.

We also offer a year’s membership to **CATCH - Children And Trauma Community Hub**.

In addition, we are developing our peer group, and peer support offer.

**Data**

Children currently waiting for placements are, brothers and sisters, single children over the age of four, children of mixed ethnicity, and children with developmental uncertainty or additional needs.

In April to June 2022, AEM placed,

28 brothers and sisters able to remain together

17 single children age from under one to six

24 boys

21girls

40 White British children, and 5 children of mixed ethnicity

19 children were 2 or under,

12 children were 5 or 6

Based on all the above information, AEM may prioritise applicants who are able to consider

* Sibling groups
* Boys

- children over 4 years of age

* children of mixed ethnicity

As these children wait longer for placement, however AEM also has a high need for applications from people who want a single, very young child.

**Adoption Support:**

AEM provide a range of services for adoptive families, adopted adults and birth families, designed to offer the right level of support at the right time throughout their individual adoption journey.

Many adopted children need help to navigate different points in their life, whether in their early years, at adolescence or even as young adults. Adoptive Parents may also find that at times some guidance and support is needed throughout their child’s development.

At AEM we want to make sure that families can access the right support at the right time whether that be during preparation to become adoptive parents, in the early days of becoming an adoptive parent or at key points during a child’s development as they come to terms with what it means to be adopted. Our aim therefore, is to:

* provide informed and timely support for adoptive families from the start of their adoption journey and through all stages of development post order
* deliver excellent customer service which is proportionate to the level of need and with the aim of empowering families to go on to help themselves
* support adopted adults and birth relatives with a clear service pathway

AEM ensure the right support is provided in a number of ways:

* Providing Information and advice
* Signposting to relevant and helpful groups and organisations
* Providing regular & relevant training seminars and access to peer support
* Access to therapeutic services utilising the Adoption Support Fund where necessary
* Delivering packages of therapeutic / parenting support to families

**A Tiered Approach to Support:**

It is our aim to empower adoptive parents by providing the right level of support when it is needed. It will always be our aim to support access to the services and support immediately available to families which is sustainable and will include from family and local support networks as well as universal services and community support. We recognise however that over time, the level of need experienced means that more targeted support is needed. To ensure that we offer the right level of support to as many families as possible across the Region, we offer a tiered system of support which is easy to navigate:

Tier 1: Universal support, information & Guidance
Including access to our Information Line, our on-line Information Portal, and access to a calendar of regular training seminars, including Therapeutic Parenting, Theraplay and Life Story Work.

At AEM we know from feedback from families, that often the best form of support is that which comes from others who have a shared lived experience of adoption. We are therefore committed to identifying opportunities for adoptive families to share and learn from each other and we are pleased to offer all AEM Adoptive Families a free 12-month membership to the Adopter Hub.

Tier 2: Assessment of Adoption Support Needs
A means of support in itself, an assessment of adoption support needs by a qualified adoption social worker may recommend ongoing Tier 1 support or may identify the need for Tier 2 support at that time. Tier 2 support could include access to one of our therapeutic training courses, individual /group consultation with qualified social workers, or a specialist therapeutic intervention via application to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).

Tier 3: Allocated social worker intervention & support

Following consultation and assessment (Tier 2), if more targeted support is required for a family, a referral will be reviewed by a Manager who will make the decision as to whether an adoption support social worker should be allocated to carry out a piece of work to support the family.

The allocated social worker will update the assessment of need and agree a plan of support with agreed outcomes which will be reviewed every 3 months.

Whilst we recognise that during difficult times it can be an added support having an allocated social worker, our aim is always to empower families to be able to support themselves with the right knowledge, skills and tools. We will therefore work with families to support sustainable change for families with the aim of stepping down to a lower Tier support when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

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working together

   