

# Expression of interest

# Evaluation of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs)

**Project reference: EOR/SBU/2017/058**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 29th September 2017**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought for an evaluation of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs).

This expression was posted on 15th September 2017.

## Background

RAAs will replace local authority adoption services with a larger regional agency covering several local authorities. RAAs will recruit adopters, match looked after children with adopters, and provide support to adopters and their children. The rationale is that RAAs, where services are delivered on a greater scale with more innovative approaches to practice, will have real potential to improve outcomes for children. The four challenges that RAAs will aim to improve are: (i) The timeliness of matching; (ii) The recruitment of adopters; (iii) Adoption support; and (iv) Inefficiencies in the system.

## Evaluation aims

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact of RAAs on improving the delivery of adoption services, with the potential to improve outcomes for children. Research shows us that delay and instability in care are detrimental to a child’s future outcomes. It also increases the likelihood of disruption in the future. Findings will be used to ensure that future investment is targeted correctly and policies are developed in the most effective way.

The overarching research questions for the evaluation are:

1. How successful are RAAs in meeting the aims of: speeding up matching; improving adopter recruitment; improving adoption support services; and reducing inefficiencies of process and timeliness?
2. How do the operating models of RAAs support the delivery of services and ensure adoptive families receive the services they need in a timely and constructive way?
3. What are the strengths, opportunities and risks of the different RAA models?
4. What are the costs for local authorities?

## Methodology

We anticipate that this research is likely to be based on a multi-method approach, and will include the following three strands to answer the research questions:

1. Longitudinal analysis of statistics collected for SFRs and Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) data to assess the short, medium and long-term performance of RAAs against the intended objectives of: reducing the time a child waits to be matched, improving adopter recruitment and the cost savings to local authorities.
2. Longitudinal qualitative research in RAAs with a range of key stakeholders to understand the relationship between RAAs and LAs, how well the process has been prepared for and implemented, identify enablers and barriers and identify early impact of the RAA.
3. Collection of cost data and management information to document the structure of the staff teams involved in RAAs, the total expenditure on these resources, and information on the spend on external adoption support services.

## Timing

We are seeking expressions of interest by 29th September 2017 and we anticipate issuing the tender to successful organisations week commencing 16th October 2017. The deadline for bids will be confirmed in the invitation to tender but is likely to be around the 3rd November 2017. It is anticipated that the evaluation will begin in January 2018 and complete in winter 2021.

* Deadline for EOIs – 5pm on Friday 29th September 2017.

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. Understanding the Department’s requirements;
2. Knowledge and experience of research in this area, for example, adoption support services, organisational mergers, and market development;
3. Experience of the methodologies to be used, including undertaking research with families. Evidence and experience of economic skills and collecting costs data;
4. Experience of working on high profile Government research projects working to tight deadlines and writing good quality reports with clear conclusions;

Each one of these criteria has equal weighting

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 750 words – anything longer will be disregarded.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 5pm Friday 29th September 2017**  **Send your EOI form to: maura.lantrua@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Research template found on the Department’s research website. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

In order to express an interest you must be registered with us and you will need your ID number. If you need to register then please do so using the online supplier registration form. If you have already registered and have forgotten your ID number, please send an email to [Enquiries.RBU@education.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries.RBU@education.gov.uk)

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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