



Department  
for Education

# **From adoption scorecards to RAA scorecards**

**May 2018**

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## Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

- Local authorities
- Regional adoption agencies

## Main points

In *Adoption: A vision for change* the Department for Education made a commitment to introduce Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) scorecards.

RAA Scorecards will give RAAs increased knowledge and enable them to identify where they can learn from other high performing RAAs. They will also enable the performance of LAs and RAAs to be understood and assessed.

This policy paper sets out the new indicators that will be used in Adoption Scorecards from the 2016-19 publication.

## From Adoption Scorecards to RAA Scorecards

In *Adoption: A vision for change* the Department for Education made a commitment to introduce Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) scorecards. The Department has been considering how best to deliver on this commitment and has spoken to a range of groups in order to gain views. This includes: the Adoption & Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) Chair, ASGLB Professional Advisor, Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies data lead, Association of Directors of Children's Services, RAA leaders group and DfE local authority Children in Need/ Children Looked After focus groups.

### Purpose of RAA Scorecards

RAA Scorecards will give RAAs increased knowledge and enable them to identify where they can learn from other high performing RAAs. They will also enable the performance of LAs and RAAs to be understood and assessed. RAA Scorecards will serve a variety of purposes:

**Knowledge** – gives RAAs increased knowledge of their own performance and demonstrates areas for improvement.

**Sharing best practice** – RAAs will be able to identify areas where they can learn from other high performing RAAs sharing best practice.

**Transparency** – enables Ministers, DfE, LAs, prospective adopters etc. to properly understand and assess the performance of RAAs.

**Accountability** – system in which performance is scrutinised and addressed.

This should help RAAs to continually improve their performance and provide the best possible service to our most vulnerable children, their families, and prospective adopters.

### How will we move from Adoption Scorecards to RAA Scorecards?

#### 2014-17 Scorecard

As set out in January 2018, these remain unchanged.

#### 2015-18 Scorecard

The indicators and thresholds remain the same, though we intend to include some limited RAA information. These will be published in Spring 2019.

#### 2016-19 Scorecards onwards

The first RAA Scorecards with revised indicators and presentation. These will be published in Spring 2020.

## Proposed new indicators

The table below sets out the planned new indicators for the 2016-19 Scorecards onwards. In arriving at these new indicators, we have sought to address common criticisms of the existing indicators that came up in feedback from the sector. This includes:

- Strong preference for including indicators that cover both LA and RAA performance, reflecting that this is a partnership and that RAAs are often composed of LAs with varying levels of performance;
- Desire for a single year average, rather than the current three yearly average, due to potentially being disadvantaged by previous performance. A single year average would result in high levels of data suppression so instead, we will include both single year and three yearly averages;
- Clear feedback that data needs to be timely to be useful. We are limited on this by when the SSDA903 and Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) datasets are published. We are exploring whether instead it would be possible to change the cohort counted; and
- For the overall timeliness measure, we received feedback that local authorities were penalised for outliers. It was suggested that this could be solved by switching from mean to median average, though we were concerned this could result in a lack of ambition for some children. Instead, we propose moving from the current A1 indicator to the current A10. This is the same indicator, counting the average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family but adjusts for foster carer adoptions that can typically have longer timelines.

As we move to a regionalised system the Scorecard should show how the system is performing as a whole. We have sought to do this in terms of: the children's journey; ratio of adopters to children; and the adopters journey. This is though constrained by data availability as we do not wish to add burdens by further expanding data collection. We will provide information on how the indicators will be calculated in due course.

## Table of proposed new indicators

Timeliness*	Local Authority	Matching (RAA)	Recruitment (RAA)	Support (RAA)
<p><u>LA and RAA</u> Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions. <b>(A.10)</b></p> <p><u>RAA</u> Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family. <b>(A.2)</b></p> <p><u>LA</u> Average time (in days) between entering care and placement order. <b>(New)</b> <i>* Both a single year average and a 3 yearly average.</i></p> <p><i>Propose changing the cohort counted so that it is more recent. I.e. those at a given stage at that point, rather than at that point <u>with</u> an adoption order.</i></p>	<p>Number of ADM decisions. <b>(A.15)</b></p> <p>Number of new placement orders granted. <b>(A.16)</b></p> <p>Children for whom permanence decisions has changed away from adoption. <b>(A.5)</b></p> <p>Number of children in a Fostering for Adoption / Concurrent Planning foster placement. <b>(A.17)</b></p>	<p>Total number of children not placed after placement order after 3, 6, 12, 18 months. <b>(New)</b></p> <p>Number of approved adoptive families waiting to be matched after 3, 6, 12, 18 months. <b>(New)</b></p> <p>Percentage of adoptive families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to matching decision. <b>(A.12)</b></p>	<p>Number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected). <b>(A.13)</b></p> <p>Number of adopter approvals. <b>(New)</b></p> <p>Number of applications commencing Stage 1. <b>(New)</b></p>	<p>Average time (in days) from request from adopter to assessment. <b>(New - subject to ASGLB data collection)</b></p> <p>Number of disruptions. <b>(New - subject to ASGLB data collection)</b></p>



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