

**ADOPTION REFORM GRANT: PART B - GRANT DETERMINATION (2013 - 2014): No 31/2117**

**ANNEX C**

Progress Report for Q1 and Q2

<b>Organisation Name:</b> London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames	<b>Grant Ref no:</b>
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Please provide details of the ways in which the money was spent on adoption in 01 – 02:	
Item	Amount spent
South West London Adoption Consortium (SWLAC). The costs of web design, advertising and printing of leaflets etc. The invoices have been paid by Merton who will recharge consortium partners before financial year end.	£20,295
Case Progression Officer. This is a new full time post as a result of the revised Public Law Outline (PLO). The post is jointly funded with the Royal Borough of Kingston. The postholder commenced a one year secondment on 19th August 2013.	£3,015
Initial Response Team Senior Practitioner. A locum/agency Senior Practitioner is covering a vacant Social Worker post (the difference in hourly rates is being funded from the grant). A more experienced Social Worker is required to ensure PLO compliance at referral stage.	£2,512
Contribution towards the Pan London Adoption developments and supporting the business case for a shared Adoption and Permanence Service.	£5,000

**Please provide a summary of the approach taken by the local authority in spending this money, highlighting the innovative elements of this approach:**

We have set up the infrastructure for the revised Public Law Outline 2013, which includes a Case Progression Officer post and Team Manager for the Looked After Children Team. This has included practice guidance, training and mentoring support to ensure there is purposeful and prompt permanency planning at the point every child enters the system. This with the view to making timely decisions around adoption and reducing delay.

The implementation of a lifestory work project to ensure that each child has a well evidenced and produced lifestory book.

The approach taken to the Adoption Reform Grant has been to invest in an Adoption Consortium approach across four London Boroughs : Merton, Kingston, Sutton, and Richmond to pull budgets, build capacity, and create an innovative response to the Government expectations in transforming adoption. This is specifically aimed at increasing the recruitment of adopters, increasing the numbers of children placed for adoption and pooling training, support and recruitment.

The primary aim is to meet the needs of our children that need adopters. Working in partnership means we can offer a greater range of choice for children and adopters and by sharing information about waiting children and approved adopters, we can find new homes for children more effectively. This is with a view of expanding the choices available to each agency and bringing about improved outcomes.

**Please provide a summary of the impact this expenditure has had on the local authority's provision of adoption services to date:**

It has ultimately ensured that the adoption team has early indication of children where the plan is for adoption and this enables timely and appropriate matching using all available mediums.

In addition as the borough has a high number of adoptive families to which we provide support we are ensuring that we have a sufficient wide ranging appropriate support package to meet the specific needs of families.

Key developments to date have focused on preparation for our South West London Adoption Consortium launch to align with National Adoption week. This has allowed key developments to be put in place.

## **Key Developments**

1. All Preparation Groups for Future adopters are joint across all Boroughs from 30.9.13. There is one preparation group per Borough every month and planned through to June 2014. There were a minimum of 3 preparation groups prepared by each Borough. These were held each month or every 6 weeks this is now one per Borough every month.  
If there is a successful marketing campaign the preparation groups may need to increase.
2. All training across the consortium is shared and a training calendar is in place. This includes all training for staff, adopters and also post adopter support.
3. Marketing campaign and branding are in place for South West London Consortium. The total cost has been £20,000. The marketing campaign and launch is planned to coincide with National Adoption week in November 2013. The lead manager joint funded (Kingston and Richmond) to liaise with IT Kingston to ensure there is telephony and website to support the campaign.
4. Key activities:-
  - > Banners for shopping centres in each of the Boroughs during National Adoption week.
  - > Leaflets and stand at the Fertility show at Olympia Exhibition Centre
  - > Radio Jackie campaign
  - > G.P surgeries.
  - > Postcards delivered to all addresses in the 4 Boroughs to promote adoption over next 6 months.
5. The virtual team will be set up and in place for November 2013. The rota has been set and the number of assessments for each member of staff will be between 6-8 assessments at any one time with panel booked at the beginning of Stage 2 Assessment.
6. There is a disruption tracker which is being set up across the 4 Boroughs. This is to ensure there is no increase in disruptions as result of the adoption changes.

## **Efficiencies**

1. A single marketing strategy has saved each Borough developing its own different concepts. This is an immediate saving of £15,000 for each of the 4 Boroughs. There are further costs in relation to publicity personnel employed within the Boroughs, further consideration to a 4 Borough reduction in publicity staffing could be considered.
2. The increased number of assessments to be allocated per staff member is a cultural change and supports increased throughput. Currently the measuring of assessments per staff member is difficult as staff work across all the tasks in adoption including Family Finding, Permanency Planning meetings and SGO assessments. 6-8 assessments is a new target specific to social workers in the recruitment team.
3. Training across the Boroughs will support shared learning for staff. There are also increased economies of scale as all adopters can access more training throughout the year through shared post adoption training. The information and feedback about what adopters want is also informing the development of training programmes.

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Date	30/10/13