

The Adoption Assessment Report (AAR)

The [Adoption Assessment Report](#) (the AAR) was developed in 2020 through a collaboration of 4 adoption agencies. The development was funded by the DfE practice improvement fund with the aim to strengthen matching and improve outcomes for children waiting to be adopted.

Following a 2-year design and test process that included adoptive parents, the forms and tools created were launched in 2021. The AAR is supported by a toolkit that supports evidence-based assessments and because the AAR model includes a dynamic review process that includes services and practitioners, it is regularly updated and ensures that changes in practice can be incorporated, ensuring an up-to-date assessment framework.

A suite of forms and supporting material such as the ROI and reference templates are included if required. The framework includes practice forums for social workers using the AAR which are run every 12 weeks and focus on practice issues and the development of assessment writing skills.

The AAR and toolkit are entering the second phase of development with a new lead manager Jo-Ann Swanston -King (UK Adoption Manager and Adoption ADM for Barnardo's) and lead practitioner Anna Lubbock.

There are currently 6 VAAs (with a possible 2 more), as well as RAAs, who have embraced the AAR. The AAR has also begun to be used in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and has been adapted to meet the needs of those nations.

Background

A collaboration of 3 agencies (Adoption Focus, Barnardo's and ACE RAA) oversees the promotion, integrity, and distribution of the AAR which is a licensed product. The delivery model is not for profit and centres around Barnardo's as the licence holder and resourcing of the project team. Adoption Focus and ACE RAA act as advisors and contributors to the project.

Interested agencies can be provided with detailed information for their key decision makers and assessment teams. The AAR team has a strong focus on supporting and advising interested agencies who wish to make a transition to using the AAR.

Feedback

Feedback from adoption services, LAs, Panels and ADMs about the AAR has remained consistently positive and more than could have been expected which has been a deciding factor in the continuation of the AAR remaining on the market as an adoption assessment framework.

The feedback from LAs, Panels and ADMs is that they very much like that the content and layout make it much easier for them in their reading and decision-making and it is also more inclusive of users and practitioners with different learning styles. The AAR format encourages greater analysis around strengths and vulnerabilities, and supports a clear outline of future support, development

and learning needs for prospective adopters. The analysis is captured in one place and helps to reduce repetition. In addition, the AAR being rooted in current evidence-based practice and theory such as DDP and The Secure Base Model has been very much welcomed.

Contact

Barnardo's is happy to receive enquiries or have discussions with any VAA or RAA which might want to know more about the AAR and consider making the transition. Please contact project administrator Julie Holme Julie.holme@barnardos.org.uk or visit the Barnardo's website [here](#).