

North Yorkshire Council

Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

North Yorkshire Council Adoption Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of North Yorkshire Council's approach to adoption and adoption support. This includes information and aspects of One Adoption North and Humber Regional Adoption Agency, as North Yorkshire is one of five Local Authorities (City of York Council, Hull City Council, North East Lincolnshire and East Riding of Yorkshire Council) working within this partnership.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 This report outlines the current practice within North Yorkshire's adoption support and sets out a series of strategic developments and practice innovations aimed at enhancing our adoption support across both North Yorkshire and One Adoption North and Humber, to continue to deliver targeted programmes, improve contact planning and remain embedding a consistent, child-centred approach to permanency.

2.2 Adoption Support is a significant provision within our service delivery and can be relevant at various stages throughout the life of the child and their adoptive parents.

Between April 2024 and March 2025:

- 67 new support contacts were received (up from 53 the previous year).
- 155 children were receiving adoption support (an increase of 30).
- North Yorkshire accounted for 42% of all Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) assessments, reflecting its commitment to long-term support for adoptive families.

2.3 Since the establishment of One Adoption North and Humber, North Yorkshire has consistently seen high levels of adoption support when compared to the partner agencies within the regional adoption agency.

2.4 Over the past 3.5 years, North Yorkshire has accounted for an average of 42% of assessments for adoption support across the regional adoption agency. This ties into North Yorkshire's commitment to support permanency for children and families well beyond the initial placement to ensure the best possible outcomes and in upholding our commitment to the adoption community.

2.5 The number of open cases involving children receiving adoption support across One Adoption North and Humber has risen to 300, up from 277 at the end of the 2024/25 reporting period. Notably, North Yorkshire accounts for more than half of these cases, highlighting the significant demand for support services within our part of the region.

2.6 The service can report on data for Quarter 1 (April, May, June) of 2025. The performance figures for each service area are outlined below, providing a clear overview during and up to the end of this period.

Children

- Adoption Orders granted in Q1:0
- Placement Orders granted in Q1: 4 children
- Adoption plans agreed by Agency Decision Maker in Q1: 11 children (*includes 2 sibling groups of 2*)
- Not yet matched or placed: 13 children (*includes 3 sibling groups of 2*)

Adopters

- Approved adopters in Q1: 3 families
- Approved, not yet matched: 10 families

Adoption Support

- Children open to adoption support at the end of Q1: 168 children

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 North Yorkshire partnered with City of York Council, Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire to form One Adoption North and Humber Regional Adoption Agency on 01 April 2018. The Regional Adoption Agency is hosted by City of York Council. A Head of Agency was appointed alongside the commencement of the partnership.

3.2 North Yorkshire retains responsibility for their children who come into Local Authority care and for any child whose plan becomes that of adoption, until the making of the Adoption Order, granted by the Court. North Yorkshire also retains responsibility for all adoption support children and families and continue to hold a statutory duty to assess any child and their family at the request of an adoption support needs assessment.

3.3 Each partner within One Adoption North and Humber delegates to the Host Authority (City of York Council) to perform the statutory functions relating to the approval of potential adopters in regulation 30B of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.

3.4 One Adoption North and Humber, work alongside One Adoption West Yorkshire in the delivery of the marketing strategy for adopter recruitment.

3.5 North Yorkshire, in collaboration with One Adoption North and Humber, delivers high-quality pre-approval training to all prospective adopters. This training is a mandatory component of the adoption process and is undertaken prior to formal approval. The programme is designed to ensure that individuals are well-prepared and informed before progressing further in their adoption journey (see Appendix A).

4.0 PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

4.1 The North Yorkshire offer for adoption support is clear, dependable, and well received by families which in turn means that referral intake and requests for support remains high, as the service prides itself on being a service that is visible, available and consistent.

4.2 From 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 North Yorkshire received 67 new contacts for support compared to 53 in 2023/2024. At the end of 2024/25, 155 children were in receipt of Adoption Support, this is an increase of (n=125) 30 compared to the same point last year. To provide further context, the number open to the RAA has also increased to 300 cases compared to 277 at the end of 2024/25. As often seen in adoption support, this number can fluctuate somewhat, with some children exiting the service and new contacts received.

4.3 Over the past 3.5 years, North Yorkshire has accounted for an average of 42% of assessments for adoption support across the RAA. This ties into North Yorkshire's and the RAA's

commitment to support permanency for children and families well beyond the initial placement to ensure the best possible outcomes and in upholding our commitment to the adoption community.

4.4 North Yorkshire and the wider regional agency is committed to promoting opportunities for the workforce to continue to develop their practice in accordance with good practice and meeting regulatory requirements.

- Workers recently attended Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) training which has allowed for consistency of understanding across the teams and how assessment and support provided to prospective adopters and established adoptive families can be delivered.
- Workers attended various briefings and workshops delivered by Adoption England, and external providers with whom we share good working relationships, i.e. Adoption UK, PAC UK, CoramBAAF, New Family Social and across our pan regional Voluntary Adoption Alliance (VAA).

4.5 Below is a table of the support available to all adopters within North Yorkshire. In Appendix B is more detailed information around the support offer.

<p>Core Support Services</p>	<p>Support Groups Families are invited to join the One Adoption mailing list. Events include summer picnics, Easter crafts, and Christmas parties. Drop-in sessions offer both child-focused and adult-focused support.</p> <p>Workshops Delivered by North Yorkshire virtually and open to all: Supporting Education Therapeutic Parenting Techniques Contact and Identity Parenting Adopted Teens (Pan-regional)</p> <p>Peer Mentor Service Delivered via Adoption UK Provides mentoring to adopters at all stages. Recent changes include the end of the adoption passport and a shift to volunteer-led support on training.</p> <p>Youth Engagement – The Bridge Project Funded by John Lewis, delivered by Adoption UK. Supports adopted youth (14–17) with self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. Youth-led activities include training resource creation and engagement with professionals.</p>
<p>Specialist Programmes</p>	<p>Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Support New workshops in development with FASD Network. Aims to raise awareness and provide early intervention. Recognises the prevalence of FASD among adopted children.</p> <p>Safe and Meaningful Contact Guidelines Based on the PLWG Report on Adoption 2025. Emphasises child-centred contact planning and lifelong support. Training supports identity, stability, and adoptive parent empowerment.</p> <p>Staff Development Training includes gender diversity, emotional capacity assessment Staff attend briefings from national and regional partners.</p> <p>Enhancing Adoptive Parenting (EAP) A 10-week, evidence-based programme delivered in-home. Focuses on behaviour management, trauma understanding, and relationship building.</p> <p>Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) Addresses harmful behaviours using peaceful resistance principles. Delivered in groups or individually; 5 groups have supported 24 families since 2023.</p> <p>Theraplay Enhances attachment and emotional connection through structured play. Delivered individually at various stages of adoption.</p>

Pilot Projects	<p>Pilot 1: Stronger Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early support for adopters (and special guardians) of children aged 8–12. • Aims to reduce crisis interventions and build peer support networks. <p>Pilot 2: Pan-Regional Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on co-production with adopted youth and adults. • Activities include advisory groups, digital engagement, and resource development.
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4.6 As part of a wider commitment to improving outcomes for adoptive families across One Adoption North and Humber, two pan-regional pilot programmes have been developed in collaboration with One Adoption West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. These pilots aim to strengthen early support and enhance lived experience engagement. By pooling resources and expertise across regions, the pilots offer a more consistent and family-focused approach to adoption support. They reflect a shared vision of delivering timely, evidence-based interventions that meet the evolving needs of children, young people, and families throughout their adoption journey.

Pilot 1: Early Support – Stronger Families Programme

In collaboration with One Adoption West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, funding has been devolved to develop *Stronger Families*, an early support initiative for adoptive parents and special guardians. The programme will be delivered by an independent provider from the Yorkshire and Humber Approved Provider List, offering therapeutic parenting groups for carers of children aged 8–12 across the pan-region.

This pilot aims to:

- Provide timely access to support, reducing delays and pressure on wider services.
- Address low-level needs early, preventing escalation to high-cost interventions.
- Promote proactive engagement with support services, reducing crisis-driven referrals.
- Foster informal peer networks through group delivery, complementing formal peer support offers.

Implementation is planned for Autumn 2025.

Pilot 2: Pan-Regional Collaboration and Innovation

This pilot pools funding to strengthen regional working and drive innovation in adoption support. Key priorities include:

1. Tailored support for adopted people and their families.
2. Ensuring lived experience informs service design and delivery.
3. Supporting adopted people to maintain important relationships and understand their adoption journey.

Activities will focus on co-production with adopted young people and adults (18–25), including:

- Developing training and resources for adopters and adopted individuals.
- Enhancing digital engagement and accessibility.
- Establishing an Adopted Persons Advisory Group to shape strategic direction.

Together, these pilots demonstrate the value of pan-regional collaboration in delivering consistent, responsive, and family-focused adoption support services.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1 North Yorkshire’s Strength in Relationships Practice Model is firmly rooted in a strengths-based, family-first approach, with a strong emphasis on keeping children safely within their birth families wherever possible. The practice model builds around the principles of systemic practice, which takes a relationship-based approach, delivering change through a relational way of working that aims to bring out, share and respect the stories and strengths of all involved to enable a positive way forward.

5.2 As a result, we continue to see lower numbers of children progressing with plans of adoption compared to other regions. This reflects a deliberate and thoughtful strategy that prioritises early intervention, family support, and permanence through kinship care or reunification where appropriate. While adoption remains a vital pathway for children who cannot remain with their birth families, the model ensures that it is pursued only when all other safe and sustainable options have been fully explored.

6.0 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 The Public Law Working Group (PLWG) Report on Adoption 2025 focuses on improving adoption practice, with a strong emphasis on modernising approaches to contact, enhancing lifelong support, and ensuring adoption processes are centred around the needs and rights of children and families.

6.2 The PLWG Report highlights a shift towards greater openness in adoption, with a strong emphasis on maintaining meaningful connections between adopted children and their birth families where appropriate. It calls for enhanced, child-centred contact planning, stronger post-adoption support, and increased judicial scrutiny to ensure contact arrangements are well-evidenced and flexible over time.

6.3 In response, the *Safe and Meaningful Contact* training equips practitioners with tools to make informed, evidence-based decisions about contact for children in care or permanent arrangements. It supports ensuring that the child's needs are paramount and focuses on identifying how contact can be safely managed to benefit their emotional wellbeing. This approach strengthens permanency planning by supporting lifelong identity needs, reducing placement disruption risks, and empowering adoptive families. It also encourages positive engagement from birth relatives and ensures contact plans are adaptable as children grow.

6.4 To embed this practice, each local authority aims to develop contact champions within care planning and adoption teams. These champions promote consistency, share expert knowledge, advocate for children's needs, and encourage collaboration across services, ensuring contact planning remains child-focused, safe, and meaningful.

7.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

7.1 North Yorkshire's comprehensive adoption support offer has a significant and positive impact on a range of services and partner organisations across the region and beyond. The collaborative and integrated nature of the support model strengthens multi-agency working and enhances outcomes for children and families. There is close working between the different services in the Children's directorate.

7.2 North Yorkshire's high engagement with adoption support services contributes to the overall performance and strategic direction of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). The county consistently accounts for a substantial proportion of adoption support assessments, influencing regional priorities and resource allocation.

7.3 Partnerships with organisations such as Adoption UK, the FASD Network, and the John Lewis-funded Bridge Project enable the delivery of specialised programmes and peer-led initiatives. These collaborations expand the reach and diversity of support available to families, while also promoting innovation and co-production.

7.4 Workshops on supporting education and therapeutic parenting techniques help bridge the gap between adoptive families and schools, promoting trauma-informed practices and inclusive learning environments.

7.5 The Bridge Project has fostered strong relationships with youth services, virtual schools, and local authority teams. These connections enhance the support available to adopted young people and ensure their voices are heard in service development and policy discussions.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The funding for the adoption support comes from the existing North Yorkshire budget and also from One Adoption North and Humber.

8.2 The adoption allowance budget continues to be managed well with a strong focus on sustainability, equity, and responsiveness to need. Careful oversight ensures that financial support is targeted appropriately, prioritising families with the greatest need while maintaining fairness across the local authority. Regular reviews and robust decision-making processes help to ensure that allowances are allocated in line with policy criteria, supporting placement stability and enabling families to access the resources required to meet their children's needs. This approach not only maximises the impact of available funding but also contributes to the long-term success of adoptive placements.

8.3 Although not a direct financial implication for North Yorkshire, it is worth noting the government has recently announced that whilst the total funding for the ASGSF for 2025-26 remains effectively the same as last year (£50 million), changes to the 2025-26 fund include:

- The fair access limit (FAL) for therapy has been reduced from £5,000 to £3,000 per child per year.
- The limit for specialist assessments remains at £2,500. There is no longer a separate FAL for this, any specialist assessment would be funded using the FAL or £3,000, any remaining funds could then be used for therapy.
- Additional match-funded support for exceptional cases is no longer available.

8.4 This will have a significant impact on children and families, and we continue to work in collaboration with regional adoption agencies and Adoption England, to explore delivery models that seek to support families. Collectively we acknowledge that this has been a very challenging time for many families across the region and the service will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the service provides the best possible service.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The workforce regularly undergo compulsory information security and data protection training.

9.2 An information sharing agreement is in place between partner agencies and One Adoption North and Humber.

9.3 North Yorkshire's adoption support services operate within the framework of UK adoption law, including the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which mandates the provision of post-adoption support. The increase in referrals and support cases reflects the authority's commitment to fulfilling its statutory duties.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The adoption team play a necessary role in enabling North Yorkshire to effectively meet the needs of adoptive children and families through the services delivered both directly within North Yorkshire and across the Regional Adoption Agency.

10.2 Currently there is a shortage of prospective adopters both locally and nationally, which continues to present a significant challenge for the timely placement of children. Despite ongoing recruitment efforts, the number of approved adopters remains insufficient to meet the needs of

children waiting for adoption, particularly those with more complex needs, children who are part of sibling groups and those being placed through early permanence arrangements. The shortage presents a significant challenge to achieving timely and stable placements and highlights the need for on-going recruitment strategies and support for prospective adopters willing to consider these types of placements.

10.3 North Yorkshire's adoption support services are designed to be accessible to all adoptive families, regardless of background, location, or stage in the adoption journey. The virtual delivery of workshops and individualised support (e.g. EAP, Theraplay, NVR) ensures that families in rural or remote areas, or those with mobility or time constraints, are not disadvantaged.

10.4 North Yorkshire's adoption support offer demonstrates a strong commitment to equality through inclusive service design, targeted support for diverse needs, and active engagement with service users. Continued attention to accessibility, cultural competence, and lived experience will be essential to maintaining and enhancing equitable outcomes across the region.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Pan-regional collaboration and shared delivery models (pilots with One Adoption West and South Yorkshire) promote efficient use of resources. This reduces duplication and supports a more sustainable approach to service planning and delivery.

11.2 Where in-person services are required (e.g. Theraplay, NVR, Bridge groups), they are often delivered locally or regionally. This minimises long-distance travel and encourages the use of community venues, which can reduce the environmental footprint compared to centralised service models.

11.3 The use of digital communication (e.g. mailing lists, online resources, and virtual training) contributes to a reduction in paper consumption and travel. This aligns with broader sustainability goals and supports environmentally responsible practice.

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

12.1 North Yorkshire's adoption service offer demonstrates a robust, responsive, and evolving commitment to children and families throughout the adoption journey. From comprehensive pre-approval training to post-placement support, the service provides a continuum of care that is both evidence-informed and rooted in lived experience.

12.2 The training programme equips prospective adopters with essential knowledge and reflective tools, preparing them for the realities of adoptive parenting. Specialist modules, such as sibling adoption, Early Permanence Placements (EPP), and Connected People training, ensure that adopters and their support networks are well-informed and confident in their roles.

12.3 Post-approval, North Yorkshire continues to lead in adoption support across the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), offering a wide range of services including therapeutic parenting programmes, support groups, and targeted interventions such as Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) and Theraplay. The service's visibility and consistency have contributed to high engagement levels and positive outcomes for families.

12.4 Innovative projects such as the Bridge programme and pan-regional pilots reflect a forward-thinking approach, placing lived experience and co-production at the heart of service development. These initiatives not only empower adopted young people but also shape future practice and policy.

12.5 North Yorkshire remains committed to delivering high-quality, accessible, and meaningful adoption support. Through collaboration, adaptability, and a strong focus on permanency and identity,

the service continues to uphold its mission: to ensure every adopted child and family receives the support they need to thrive.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress of the Adoption Support Services provided to adopted children and their families in North Yorkshire.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Adoption preparation training

Appendix B – Adoption support offer

Sir Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director – Children and Young Peoples Services
County Hall
Northallerton
12 August 2025

Report Author – Claire Dimmey, Adoption Service Manager
Presenter of Report – Rosie Appleby, Head of Placement Support

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Appendix A

Pre-Approval Training for Prospective Adopters (Pre-approval and prior to a child being placed)

Pre-Approval Prospective Adopter Preparation Training Overview

The pre-approval training programme for prospective adopters is delivered over three structured days. The day's focus on key themes essential to understanding the adoption journey and preparing adopters for the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting. Each day is structured to build understanding, promote reflection, and equip participants with practical tools and insights. An experienced adopter is part of this training programme to offer their own personal perspectives and experiences.

Day 1: Understanding the Adoption Journey

- **The Adoption Process**

An overview of the stages involved in becoming an adopter, including assessment and approval. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their motivations and readiness for adoption.

- **Legal Framework**

A detailed explanation of the legal processes underpinning adoption, including court proceedings and parental responsibility.

- **A Child's Journey Through Adoption**

Exploration of the child's experience from entry into care to placement, highlighting emotional and developmental impacts.

Day 2: Child Development and Therapeutic Approaches

- **Attachment and Trauma**

Examines how early trauma affects attachment and the long-term implications for a child's emotional wellbeing, including pre-birth trauma, on child development and the implications for adoptive parenting.

- **Interactive Activities** to illustrate the hidden emotional and behavioural layers beneath a child's outward behaviour, and to demonstrate the barriers children may build as a result of trauma and loss

- **Therapeutic Parenting**

Introduction to therapeutic parenting strategies designed to support healing and build secure relationships.

Day 3: Identity, Contact, and the Role of Play

- **Identity and Loss**

Participants explore the cumulative losses experienced by children in care and the impact of separation, loss, and identity formation for adopted children.

- **Contact After Adoption**

Overview of different types of post-adoption contact and considerations for early permanence placements.

- **The Importance of Play**

Practical session demonstrating play-based techniques, including Theraplay, to support attachment and emotional regulation.

Exploring adopting a sibling group

This training programme is designed to support prospective adopters in considering the unique dynamics and implications of sibling adoption. The aim is to enable applicants to reflect on their individual circumstances and how these may influence their matching criteria.

Key Objectives

- **Personal Reflection and Matching Criteria**

Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their own circumstances, capacities, and support networks to inform decisions around matching, particularly in relation to sibling groups.

- **Exploring the Positives and Challenges of Adopting Siblings**
Provides a balanced overview of the benefits and complexities associated with sibling placements, including emotional bonds, behavioural dynamics, and long-term outcomes.
- **Support Packages for Sibling Adopters**
An outline of the support available to adopters matched with sibling groups is provided, including therapeutic services, and ongoing professional guidance.

Early Permanence Placements (EPP) Preparation

This training is designed to support prospective adopters in understanding Early Permanence Placements (EPP) and evaluating whether this route aligns with their personal circumstances and adoption journey.

Aims

- **To prepare adopters for EPP**
Adopters are given detailed information on the EPP process, including its legal, emotional, and practical implications. It aims to equip adopters with the knowledge and confidence needed to consider this pathway.
- **To support decision-making around EPP suitability**
Adopters are encouraged to reflect on their readiness and capacity to engage with EPP, considering the potential uncertainties and responsibilities involved. The session facilitates informed decision-making about whether EPP is the right route for them.

Connected People Training: Supporting Family and Friends in the Adoption Journey

Overview

In North Yorkshire the Connected People training is delivered in two parts and is designed to support the wider network of prospective adopters—including family and friends—by increasing their understanding of the adoption process and the needs of adopted children. The training aims to equip support networks with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide informed, empathetic, and consistent support throughout the adoption journey.

Part 1: General Awareness and Preparation

This session is open to any family members or friends identified by the adopters as part of their support network.

Key Topics Covered:

- The Adoption Process
- Understanding the Adopter's Journey
- Attachment and Child Development
- Brief overview of Therapeutic Parenting
- Trauma Awareness
- Support Promises - Family and friends are invited to reflect on and articulate the support they can offer now and in the future.

Part 2: Child-Specific Preparation

This session is delivered once a specific child/ren have been identified. It may involve the same or additional family and friends.

Key Topics Covered:

- Process Mapping and Next Steps
- Child Overview - a brief introduction to the child, including information to help the support network understand their needs.
- Introductions and Meeting Family Members
- Legal Process
- Emphasis on Self-Care in the Early Days
- Revisiting Attachment
- Secondary Trauma and Post-Adoption Depression
- Contact After Adoption
- Confidentiality, maintaining the child's privacy and being mindful of their story, social media

Appendix B

North Yorkshire Adoption Support (Post approval and post a child being placed in the care of adopters)

Support groups

Within the assessment stage, all prospective and established adoptive families are invited to join the One Adoption mailing list. As part of this mailing list, all individuals are welcomed to join our range of annual social events that happen across the RAA, these include summer picnics, Easter crafts and Christmas parties. Together with this there are several drop-in sessions offering support that take place across the RAA, with a mix of stay and play groups and adult focused groups.

Workshops

North Yorkshire adoption team provide several workshop groups that happen throughout the year, these take place virtually and therefore all are welcome to join. The themes of these workshops are

- Supporting Education
- Therapeutic Parenting Techniques
- Contact and Identity
- Parenting Adopted Teens (Pan Regional offer – open to One Adoption West Yorkshire and One Adoption South Yorkshire adoptive families)

Therapeutic Parenting Techniques

Enhancing Adoptive Parenting (EAP) is research driven and an evidence-based parenting programme for use with new adopters. The programme has cognitive behavioural aspects, and the aim is to support the stability of the adoptive placement; to reduce the level of child difficulties; to enhance parenting skills and understanding; and to improve relationships. It is a 10-week parenting programme in which the sessions take place within the home with the parents. The parents are also expected put into practice, and reflect, on the elements of each session and then bring reflections to the next session. The sessions combine practical parenting advice as well as help in understanding the child. The programme covers topics such as advice on

- managing challenging behaviour and setting limits
- promoting increased reflection on the child's prior experience and possible links with current behaviour and needs
- helping adopters to maintain empathy and warmth and resist withdrawal
- promoting calm and sensitive responding and encourages adopters to examine their own emotional responses to challenging behaviour

NYC has trained workers to deliver EAP, they do this on an individual basis and at different stages of a child's life stage, for example either before or after the making of an adoption order.

Non-Violence Resistance (NVR) Managing Conflict

Non-violent resistance addresses destructive and harmful behaviours in children and adolescents. The methods and ideas of non-violent direct action and resistance from Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks are used in community and family settings to help parents and carers with their parenting. NVR can help parents and carers overcome their sense of helplessness. It can help develop a support network that will stop violent and destructive behaviours both in and out of the home. It can improve relationships between family members and the outside world. Key concepts of non-violent resistance in parenting include:

- de-escalating conflicts
- increasing parental presence
- taking a firm stand against any acts of violence done by yourself and your child or adolescent announcing this commitment to your child or adolescent
- arranging sit-ins
- breaking the cycle of shame and silence
- recruiting and utilising supporters

- creating reconciliation gestures that are not linked to the young person's behaviour but increase positive interactions between parents and young people

North Yorkshire have workers within the team who are trained to deliver this on either a one-to-one basis or within a group setting and since 2023 have delivered five groups to date, reaching 24 families within NYC to date.

Theraplay

Theraplay is a child and family treatment for enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of healthy interaction between parent and child, and is personal, physical and fun.

Theraplay interactions focus on four essential qualities found in parent–child relationships: Structure, Engagement, Nurture and Challenge.

Theraplay sessions create an active and emotional connection between the child and parents, resulting in a changed view of the child as worthy and lovable and of relationships as positive and rewarding. In treatment, the Theraplay practitioner carefully guides the parent and child through playful, fun games, developmentally challenging activities, and tender, nurturing activities. The very act of engaging each other in this way helps the parent regulate the child's behaviour and communicate love, joy, and safety to the child. This in turn will help the child feel secure, cared for, connected and worthy. With Theraplay, family interaction patterns have improved positive changes have been reported in children's behaviour, self-esteem, and connections with others.

Theraplay can help children who have experienced trauma begin to heal, can help children with developmental disorders feel more comfortable with social interaction, and can help families to experience happiness and connection.

In NYC we have trained workers to deliver Theraplay, they do this on an individual basis and at different stages of a child's life stage, for example either before or after the making of an adoption order.

Peer Mentor Service

The Peer Mentoring Service in One Adoption North and Humber (contracted via Adoption UK) remains consistent and stable, with a cohort of adopter peer mentors who provide a mentoring service to prospective adopters, approved adopters waiting for a match, and adopters with children placed.

There have been some recent developments with this agreement, Adoption UK have ceased providing the adoption passport, the membership which was offered to adopters within their first 12 months of approval has ceased. The co-delivery of adopter preparation training is now being set up through the RAA on a volunteer scheme, this is in the planning stages.

The Bridge Project (delivered by Adoption UK and funded by the company John Lewis)

The Bridge is a welcoming and friendly group project for adopted young people aged 14-17, in the North and Humber region. It offers a space for young people to work together to develop skills such as self-esteem, confidence, and the ability to engage with other people while having some fun along the way. The project also aims to help young people make connections, learn skills and explore their next steps into training and work.

There are now 5 local Bridge groups meeting one evening every fortnight. There has been contact with over 50 young people and their families. Out of this number, there are approximately 30 young people who regularly participate in these groups. These young people have established significant and genuine relationships with the dedicated adults and staff managing Bridge groups.

Bridge has been successful in developing partnerships with other agencies, both within Local Authority's, Youth Service, Youth Voice and Virtual Schools, as well as within the charity sector. Adoption UK currently have 3 volunteers and are open to bringing new people on board.

Without doubt the biggest success has been young people taking responsibility and ownership of "their" group. Various guests, including senior leaders from across the regional Local Authorities and RAA have come and had discussions with the young people attending the groups. There has also been attendance at the groups from other services including the Police Service placed within the Youth Justice Service and people who have come to share their own lived experiences of being adopted.

Some prospective adoptive families have attended a group to meet with the young people, to hear their views and advice. This has been an empowering experience for the young people, in a way that enables them to feel valued and listened to and that they are contributing to not only the lives of others, but to the culture of practice within our regional agency.

At the end of last year Bridge members went to London and had a 90-minute meeting with Janet Daby MP, Minister for Children and Families at the Department of Education, sharing their lived experiences. Janet kindly wrote a heartfelt letter back to the young people thanking them for their contributions.

Young people from across Bridge groups attended a One Adoption North and Humber all staff development day, meeting the staff from across the agency and talking about their lived experiences with the assembled audience. One young person wrote some poems and songs, and these are now being used in the training of prospective adopters. Also, the young people produced a game from an adopted teenager's perspective to be used within the assessment and training process for prospective adopters across the region.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – offering support to our adoptive families and prospective adopters

One Adoption North and Humber are currently developing new workshop modules with a specific focus on (FASD). This is in collaboration with the FASD Network, with the aim of raising awareness and promoting early intervention strategies for families, along with support and guidance for established adoptive families.

Nationally there has been an increase in FASD for children who are placed for adoption, although it is not often diagnosed at the point of a child moving in with their adoptive family. Research studies have found that between 54% and 70% of mothers whose children were adopted from care misused drugs and/or alcohol during pregnancy, (Placing Children with Disabilities with Adoptive Families, scoping report, Brown & Selwyn 2023).

In addition, we are looking to enhance our early placement support, recognising the critical role that guidance, connection, and therapeutic input can have in achieving family stability and belonging for children, at the earliest stages of family life. Supporting adopters comprehensively is essential to the stability and success of adoptive families.

Adoption brings both joy and challenge, and when adopters feel informed, supported, and connected, they are better able to provide the nurturing, resilient care that children need and deserve. Our holistic model of preparation, ongoing support, and community connection ensures that no adopter feels alone, and every child has the best possible chance to thrive.