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| To: Local Authority Directors of Children’s Services |

 5 August 2015

**GRANT OFFER LETTER:**

**ADOPTION INTER-AGENCY FEE GRANT (Grant Reference: CSDSD5/2015)**

This Grant Offer is made between:

(1) **The Secretary of State for Education** and

(2) **Local Authorities in England**.

This letter confirms that a grant is available to local authorities in England (LAs) for the purposes of reimbursing eligible expenditure under the Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant. £30m is available in total to fund the fee. Eligible expenditure will be reimbursed for the placement of hard to place children whose plan is for adoption. Only inter-agency placements made for hard to place children or for children who have been waiting longer than 18 months for adoption during the period from 8 July 2015 to 31 July 2016 will qualify for reimbursement. This grant is subject to the Department for Education [Grant Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grant-funding-agreement-terms-and-conditions)[[1]](#footnote-1). This Grant Offer Letter, relevant annexes and the Grant Terms and Conditions together make up the Grant Funding Agreement.

Any grant paid by the Secretary of State will be paid pursuant to Section 14 of the Education Act 2002 and will accordingly be paid only in respect of approved expenditure incurred by LAs in England for the purpose of the funded activities.This letter must be read in conjunction with the relevant annexes:

**Annex A** - Acceptance of Grant Offer and effective date

**~~Annex B~~** ~~-~~~~Bank account details~~ – not appropriate

**Annex C** - Claiming Grant in Arrears

**~~Annex D~~** ~~- Claiming Grant in Advance~~ – not appropriate

**~~Annex E~~** ~~- Details of Grant Allocations~~ – not applicable

**Annex F** - List of Objectives for which the grant is being paid

**Annex G** – Statement of Grant Usage

**Annex H** - Grant Payment schedule

**~~Annex I~~** ~~- Sample Exit Plan~~ - not appropriate

 **Annex J** – Quarterly Progress Report Template

To accept this offer of funding, please sign both copies of this Grant Offer Letter (Annex A) and return a copy to Inter-agency Fee Grant Claims, Adoption Policy, Department for Education, Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Yours sincerely



**Emily Whitehead**

**Adoption Deputy Director**

**Department for Education**

Annex A - Acceptance of Grant Offer and effective date for the Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant: CSDSD5/2015

Funding will be reimbursed for eligible expenditure under the Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant. Eligible expenditure is defined in Annex F and the grant begins on 8 July 2015 and ends on 31 July 2016.

This Grant Funding Agreement is effective from the date of signing.

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| --- |
| Signed by person authorised to sign on behalf of the Secretary of State |
| Date | 30 July 2015 |
| Signature | D PEARCE |
| Name (please print) | David Pearce |
| Position in DfE | Team Leader, Adoption Reform |

As representative of the local authority I have read both the Grant Offer Letter and associated annexes, and the Department for Education Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions as contained on its website. I agree to comply with the notified conditions of the grant on which the offer is made.

|  |
| --- |
| Signed by a person authorised to sign on behalf of [insert name of the LA] |
| Date |  |
| Signature |  |
| Name (please print) |  |
| Position in organisation |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Principal contacts** | **Department** | **[name of the LA]** |
| Contact name |  |  |
| Position |  |  |
| Telephone no. |  |  |
| Email address |  |  |

Annex C - Grant claim form for local authorities

Claiming Grant in Arrears **– Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant reference: CSDSD5/2015**

This claim form should be completed by an authorised senior officer of the local authority and returned to Inter-Agency Fee Grant Claims in Adoption Policy, Department for Education, Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT, as soon as possible in the month following that for which the grant is being claimed.

Amount of claim in respect of the Inter-Agency Fee Grant:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Children** | **Number of Children** | **Amount Claimed on Placement** |
| Single Children |  |  |
| Sibling groups of 2 |  |  |
| Sibling groups of 3 |  |  |
| Sibling groups of 4 |  |  |
| Sibling groups of 5 or more |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |  |

A valid claim must be accompanied by a completed spreadsheet (attached as an excel spreadsheet) with details of each child placed.

I certify that:

* the above claim is made in accordance with the Grant Offer Letter and Terms and Conditions of the Grant Funding Agreement for the Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant;
* the claim is in respect of expenditure already incurred; and
* no claim has been made for funding in respect of these items from any other body.

|  |
| --- |
| Signed by a senior officer authorised to sign on behalf of [insert name of the LA] |
| Date |  |
| Signature |  |
| Name (please print) |  |
| Position in organisation |  |

Annex F – List of objectives for which the grant is being paid – Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant 2015

1 Background

1.1 The Government wants to remove any potential remaining financial barriers to successful adoptions and ensure that as many children as possible find the right, loving parents to support them as they grow and prosper. To do this, we have decided to introduce a scheme to cover the costs of the inter-agency fee for adoptions for one year. A cash-limited fund of £30m will be available for the placements of hard to place children during the period from 8 July 2015 to 31 July 2016.

1.2 Research by Professor Elaine Farmer in 2010 found that local authorities tend to seek to place their adopters approved ‘in-house’ before considering adopters approved by other local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies. This can result in sequential decision making which means that some children wait longer than they should to be adopted. Farmer’s investigation identified that in 30% of cases delay was associated with unwillingness to seek a family outside of a local authority’s own group of approved adopters. The DfE continues to receive feedback from some agencies stating that this sequential decision making is still a feature of practice.

1.3 LA adoption agencies should focus on finding the right adoptive parents for the children for whom adoption is the plan and this should not be limited to an agency’s own approved adopters. Using adopters approved by other agencies means that the pool of available prospective adopters is widened for every single child. This should not mean any change to the robustness of the family finding process. This is about broadening the scope of available potential parents and removing financial barriers.

**2 Objectives of the grant**

2.1The objective of this grant and purpose for which it can be used is to enable additional adoptive placements for eligible children and/or speed up placements by removing sequential decision making. The Department will be monitoring patterns in receiving and placing LA agencies and VAAs to make sure that the inter-agency fee funding claimed is valid. We are also developing plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme. Our aim will be to understand the most effective approaches to family finding for harder to place children, and to understand the extent to which removing the financial barrier that the inter-agency fee can create has changed behaviours.

**3 Eligibility criteria**

3.1 The intention is to reimburse the costs of the fee for the adoption of certain children only. These children are:

* **Children who have been waiting for 18 months** or more since coming into care at the time of placement
* **Children who are aged five or over** at the time of placement
* **Children who are in a sibling group** of two or more and placed as siblings at the time of placement
* **Children who are from a BME background** (using the same definition as per the Adoption Leadership Board data collection, SSDA903 and Children in Need census guidance[[2]](#footnote-2));
* **Children who are disabled** (see definition above).

3.2 Reimbursement of the fee for the adoption of these children will be paid in full on confirmation of placement and will be paid quarterly in arrears. Notwithstanding any other clause of this agreement, the DfE is not obliged to make a payment of eligible expenditure, unless and until the local authority provides evidence satisfactory to the DfE that the costs claimed meet the criteria in 2.1 Payment will be a maximum of:

* £27K for an adoptive family for one child
* £43K for two siblings
* £60K for three siblings
* £68K for four siblings
* £80K for five or more siblings

3.3 LAs should claim the actual cost of placement up to the maximum amount (above). Equally, LAs that have commissioned prospective adopters from the IAAM scheme should only claim the maximum noted above and not the cost of working with IAAM.

**4 Reimbursement of Funding**

4.1 Local authorities should submit claims on a quarterly basis. **The cost of the fee will be reimbursed quarterly in arrears on submitting a fully and accurately completed claim form with an accompanying completed spreadsheet.**

4.2 A total of £30m is available for this scheme from 8 July 2015 until 31 July 2016 and, once committed, no further funding will become available. If it looks like the scheme will be oversubscribed, LAs will be informed in advance how many placements will be able to be funded based on their previous pattern of placements. Reimbursement of funding above that level will not be possible.

**5 Complying with Government policies**

5.1 The grant funding is provided on the strict understanding that none of this funding is to be used for advertising, marketing, communications and consultancy, or for any costs associated with the maintenance, technical development or updating of existing websites or for the development/creation of new websites.

**Annex G – Certification of Grant Usage – Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant reference: CSDSD5/2015**

**Notes for completion:**

1. The Grant Recipient shall prepare a Certification of Grant Usage for the Grant Period 8 July 2015 – 31 March 2017.
2. This comprises three parts:
3. Certificate of Grant Usage.
4. Statement of Expenditure; and
5. Report confirming Delivery.
6. The Grant Recipient shall submit the forms to the Department no later than **28, (twenty eight) days from the end of the Grant Period**.

**a) Certificate of Grant Usage**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of organisation |  **Insert Name of Grant Recipient** |
|  |  |
| Approved Project title | **Insert Project name** |
|  |  |

* The total Grant amount of £insert figure was exclusively used for the purposes set out in the agreement between the Grant Recipient and the Department, dated insert date of our letter.
* A report on the activities funded by the Grant Funding will be submitted to the Department, confirming that the grant outputs have been delivered to a satisfactory standard and the expected benefits that have accrued or will accrue.The report will be provided within 28 days after the completion of the funding of the Inter-Agency Fee Grant.
* A final financial statement detailing the use of the Grant Funding will be provided in section b – Statement of Expenditure. This is a summary statement of all receipts and expenditures connected with the above Project. The organisation’s financial systems that recorded the income and expenditure of this Grant have provided sufficient internal control for the purposes of this certification.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature |  |
|  |
| Name |  | Date |  |
|  |
| Position |  |
|  |
| Organisation address |  |
|  |  | Postcode |
| Initialled by Organisation’s Chief Financial Officer/ Auditor |  |

**b) Statement of Expenditure**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Organisation** | **Insert Name of Grant Recipient** |
| **Name of Approved Project** | **Inter-Agency Fee Grant** |
| **Expenditure Type** | **(£)** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE** |  |
|  |
| **Paid for as follows** | **(£)** |
| Contribution from DfE |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |
| **Under spend on Grant (if applicable)** |  |

**c) Report confirming Delivery** (setting out how the funding has been applied detailing all relevant outputs.)

Please email this document to Inter-agency Fee Grant Claims and post original completed document to:

Inter-agency Fee Grant Claims

Adoption Team

Department for Education

Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

Annex H – Grant payment schedule

The Department will pay this Grant to local authorities in accordance with the following payment schedule, subject to local authorities incurring eligible expenditure and meeting the requirements of this Grant Funding Agreement.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Payment Due** | **Authority to pay** |
| Quarter 2 2015-16:08/07/2015 – 30/09/2015Claim forms will be requested on or around 1st October, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 29th October at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |
| Quarter 3 2015-16:01/10/2015 – 31/12/2015Claim forms will be requested on or around 4th January, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 1st February at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |
| Quarter 4 2015-16:01/01/2016 – 31/03/2016Claim forms will be requested on or around 1st April, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 29th April at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |
| Quarter 1 2016-17:01/04/2016 –30/06/2016Claim forms will be requested on or around 1st July, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 29th July at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |
| Quarter 2 2016-17:01/07/2016 –30/09/2016Claim forms will be requested on or around 3rd October, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 31st October at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |
| Quarter 3 2016-17:01/10/2016 –31/12/2016Claim forms will be requested on or around 2nd January, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 30th January at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |
| Quarter 4 2016-17:01/01/2017 –31/03/2017Claim forms will be requested on or around 3rd April, when the Adoption Leadership Board data return is commissioned.  We will ask for claims to be submitted by 1st May at the latest. | Within 28 days of receipt of an eligible claim form | An eligible claim form, ie accurately completed and with no questions arising |

Annex J – Quarterly Progress Report Template

Please use the attached spreadsheet for all reporting, including a narrative.

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grant-funding-agreement-terms-and-conditions [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Further guidance is available at: https://www.gov.uk/children-in-need-census [↑](#footnote-ref-2)