



# Identifying effective marketing methods to engage potential adopters

Research for the Department for Education

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## 1. Executive summary

The Department for Education commissioned this report in order to provide a set of evidence-based recommendations that adoption agencies can use to inform adopter recruitment marketing. The ultimate aim is to increase the supply of adopters, particularly for harder to place children.

The research involved:

- Collating examples of current marketing activity being carried out by adoption agencies. This collateral was benchmarked against findings from previous research, which identified the audience groups with the highest propensity to adopt, their attitudes and motivations.
- A digital and social media audit of adopter recruitment channels to provide insight into the effectiveness of online marketing and recommendations for future planning.
- Qualitative research comprising two mini focus groups and 12 extended one-to-one interviews with people who had recently adopted or considered adoption, to understand their 'journey' and the 'communications touchpoints' (points where potential adopters interact with adoption agencies or other sources of information) throughout it.

This research has highlighted the great work of many adoption agencies in finding loving families for children who are awaiting adoption. It has also identified several recommendations for how adoption marketing can be made more effective.

We have based our findings and recommendations around six key phases in the adoption journey, as identified by respondents to the qualitative research. These phases – and the main touchpoints and recommendations at each phase – are as follows:

### **The initial inspiration/trigger**

Triggers and motivations vary from individual to individual. For potential adopters with biological children, this trigger may be the realisation that their children have 'grown up'; and for those without children, it could be the moment when they accept that they can't have biological children. Friends advocating their own positive experience of adoption can also play an important role in 'nudging' people to consider it for themselves.

At this stage, editorial content about adoption in newspapers, magazines, films, books and on TV and radio is an important touchpoint. Agencies can maximise the effectiveness of this channel through the placement of real life stories and expert spokespeople. Similarly, advertising plays a key role with many agencies using various methods including posters, press, radio and TV. Finding the appropriate mix of channels is an important factor in the success of such campaigns, as is the messaging and call to action used.

### **Fact-finding and research**

Once a person has been prompted to consider adoption, they seek out rational information on what the process involves. The research highlighted the extent to which potential adopters rely on web-based information at this stage. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of agency websites, ranging from modern, professional-looking sites with clear information and well thought-out user journeys, to out-dated and unsophisticated sites that make it difficult to explore the content. There is also evidence that paid-for search is a common method used by agencies, however organic search options may be a more cost-effective option.

### **Deeper engagement**

Once people feel they know how to adopt, they want to know what it is really going to be like. Potential adopters want first-hand testimonies that tell them about the good and the bad, and the effect adoption might have on their current lifestyle. Social media is a key channel at this stage.



There are several recommendations for how agencies can maximise the impact of this channel in facilitating deeper engagement.

### **The decision**

The decision about whether to adopt is very personal and individual to each potential adopter. At this phase, people may revisit channels and information that they have accessed at previous phases and will discuss options with family and friends. The qualitative research undertaken for this study showed that, for married heterosexual couples, women tended to be the drivers of the adoption process and often took a role in leading their partner towards a decision. Women tended to be influenced by the personal and emotional side of adoption; for example, they may have been compelled to adopt as a result of the real life experiences of other people. For married, heterosexual men, rational information was typically more important in the decision-making process – they wanted the facts about adoption and a common tipping point for them was an open day or workshop that provided them with this information.

The research found no other distinguishing characteristics for other groups.

### **The process and adoption**

The role of communications in this phase is three-fold. First of all, adopters want regular updates from their agency on how they are progressing through the process (some respondents to the qualitative study reported that they felt the process was intrusive, slow and bureaucratic so more transparent information could help to address this). Secondly, messaging at this phase needs to align with the communications adopters have received previously in order to ensure a streamlined process (agencies must fulfil the promises they make at the start of the process); and finally, adopters want emotional support from their peers.

### **After the adoption process**

This research has highlighted the key role of people who have already adopted in motivating other people to progress through the adoption journey. Agencies can utilise these powerful advocates through a range of communications touchpoints. However, in order for these advocates to be created, agencies must ensure that adopters have the best possible experience at each part of the adoption process.

## **2. Introduction**

In March 2013, Kindred was commissioned by the Department for Education to undertake research to provide deep and comprehensive insight into the barriers, triggers and motivations that exist in relation to fostering and adoption (Scott, A. and Duncan, C., 2013, 'Understanding attitudes, motivations and barriers to adoption and fostering', Kindred Agency Ltd). This research found that there could be up to 4.6million people in the UK who would say they are 'fairly likely', 'very likely' or 'certain to' consider adopting at some point in the future and that the public requires clearer, more consistent information about adoption in order to engage with services.

To be effective in breaking down barriers towards engagement, the information given to the public needs to challenge common misconceptions – namely that the adoption process is overly complex, there is a lack of financial support available and that agencies are looking for a certain 'type' of adopter – and reflect the modern reality of adoption and fostering. Emotional barriers also need to be challenged by communications, reassuring people that they will be supported throughout their journey into adoption and fostering.

To build on this work, the Department for Education has commissioned Kindred to carry out a further piece of research to identify the most effective channels and messages that should be used



when communicating with potential adopters in order to, ultimately, encourage them to adopt a child (to note, the focus of the March 2013 research was adoption and fostering whereas this report looks at adoption only). It aims to provide a firm set of evidence-based recommendations that adoption agencies can use to inform marketing and recruitment activity.

We have used the findings of Kindred's March 2013 report to provide a framework for this analysis. We have looked at the extent to which current agency marketing activity targets those groups with the highest propensity to adopt, and how the messaging used challenges the barriers faced by potential adopters and responds to their motivations.

### 3. Background

In the report, 'Adoption research priorities and questions' (March 2014), the Department for Education highlighted the excellent work being done by social workers, local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies and others in the system to support children and prospective adopters and to create loving families. There were 3,980 looked-after children adopted during the year ending 31 March 2013, an increase of 15% on the previous year and the highest level since 1992 (when the data collection started). However, there are still thousands of children awaiting adoption. The number of children waiting with a placement order at the end of March 2013 was 6,000, up 15% from 5,230 in 2012.

The Department, agencies and stakeholders are making improvements to the adoption system and process in order to place children with adoptive parents as quickly as possible. Alongside this, increasing adopter supply is crucial if the needs of all looked-after children for whom adoption is the best outcome are going to be met. It is against this backdrop that this research has been carried out.

### 4. Objectives

From a policy perspective, the ultimate aim of adoption communications is to increase the supply of potential adopters. In order to achieve this, recruitment marketing activity needs to raise awareness of what adoption entails amongst key audience groups, challenge misconceptions about the reality of adoption, and communicate the benefits of adoption through the appropriate mix of communications channels.

Based on these objectives, this report aims to analyse current agency marketing to identify best practice and provide clear recommendations that can be used to inform future communications activity. In turn, it is hoped that the implementation of these recommendations will ensure that agency marketing is as effective as possible in encouraging people to adopt.

### 5. Methodology

Our research involved three key components:

#### a) Collating examples of current activity

We contacted 49 adoption agencies to gather examples of current and previous recruitment communications activity, including marketing materials and results data. Of these agencies, 15 volunteered to share this collateral and information (including three consortia, comprising 43 agencies). The collateral and information was analysed in order to build a picture of current agency recruitment marketing, identifying best practice and recommendations.

The findings from Kindred's March 2013 research have been used to benchmark the effectiveness of marketing campaigns in reaching key audiences, tackling their barriers towards adoption and



motivating them to engage. We have considered the content of these materials, the tone of voice, how the information is presented and how it was distributed.

The findings we have used in order to assess effectiveness can be summarised as follows:

<b>Feature of groups with the highest propensity to adopt</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>What we looked at as part of the research</b>
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved in altruistic activities (i.e. have done voluntary work, are active in their local community or are currently working for a not-for-profit organisation).</li> <li>• Have previous experience of fostering or adoption (i.e. have adopted a child or know someone who has, were adopted as a child, have a brother/sister/relative/friend that was adopted, are currently a foster carer or were formerly a foster carer).</li> <li>• Aged 25 to 44 years old.</li> <li>• Married, or heterosexual and single.</li> <li>• Actively practising a religion.</li> <li>• Working in higher managerial, intermediate managerial or skilled manual work.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Does marketing activity effectively reach these people?</i></p>
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety concerning the process of becoming an adopter or foster carer.</li> <li>• Anxiety concerning the level of emotional stress that could be brought on by the experience of adoption or fostering, agency involvement in their lives, and their ability to successfully fulfil the role.</li> <li>• Anxiety concerning the potential effect an adopted or fostered child would have on their own life and/or that of any existing children they have.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Does marketing activity effectively challenge these anxieties?</i></p>
Motivations expressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearer information on what adoption and fostering agencies are looking for from potential adoptive parents and foster carers.</li> <li>• Clearer information about how the application process for adoption and fostering works.</li> <li>• Simplification of the process of becoming an adoptive parent or foster carer.</li> <li>• Better financial support for adopters and foster carers.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Does marketing activity articulate these motivations?</i></p>



## **b) Digital and social media audit**

There is little information regarding how online channels are used in adoption recruitment marketing. We have therefore carried out a focused piece of research into this area, in order to identify best practice and provide practical recommendations for agencies to implement.

To gain a true understanding of potential adopters' use of digital and social media, it is important to identify where they are present and active online. To achieve relevant insights, we sourced data from a number of recent research documents and studies to build a clear picture of the potential adopter's online journey. We also analysed adoption agencies' current behaviour on social media to gain an understanding of key performance indicators, including engagement levels and social reach. This involved selecting a cross-section of 16 agencies and analysing the effectiveness of their social media activity.

We used a suite of social media monitoring and analytics tools in order to gather this information. These can be found in Appendix 2.

The final element of this component of our research involved analysing key web search data, including the use of Google Adwords, paid-for search options and keywords.

## **c) Qualitative research**

Qualitative research aimed to understand the journey towards adoption and the role of communications touchpoints throughout this journey. It involved a total of 20 respondents who had either adopted in the past two years or who had considered adoption in the past two years. Some of these respondents had either adopted, or considered adopting, hard to place children. The respondents were a mix of:

- Men and women
- Couples and single people
- People in their 30s, 40s and 50s
- Social grades
- Ethnicity
- Religious variance

Qualitative research comprised two formats:

- 12 extended one-to-one interviews conducted in March 2014, each lasting 60 minutes, carried out in Manchester and London.
- Two 'mini groups' of four people per group conducted in March 2014, each lasting 90 minutes (one group was carried out in London and one was carried out in Manchester).

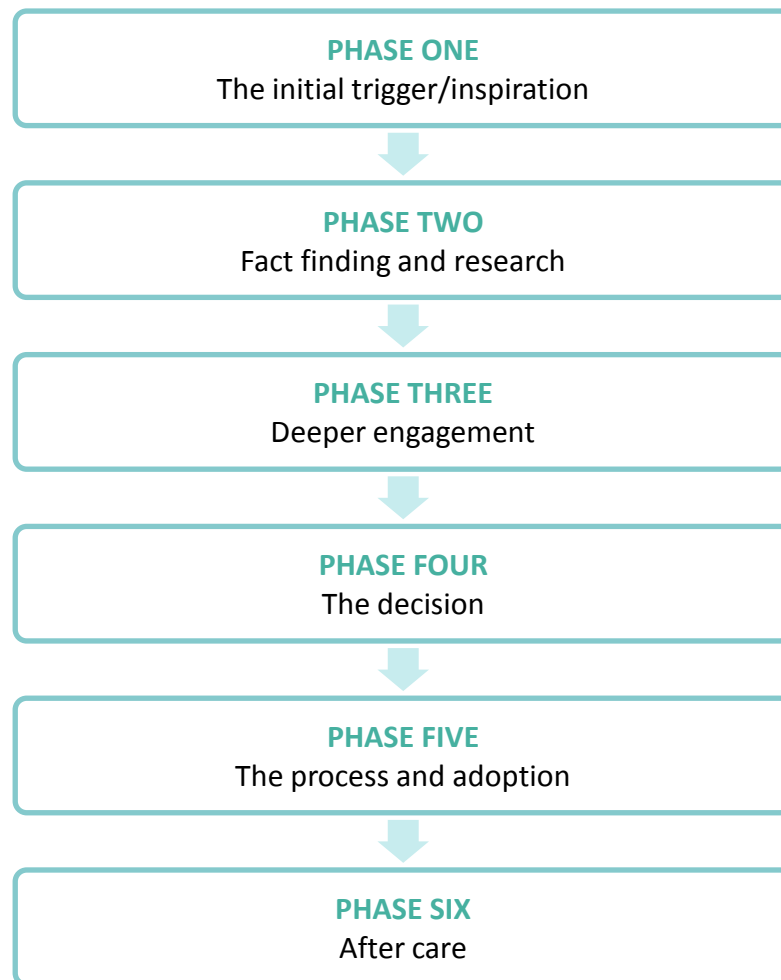
This mix of group interviews and one-to-ones enabled both the in-depth exploration of issues and themes, and group discussion in order to debate points and areas of interest.

## **6. Findings**

We have structured the findings of our research in line with the phases in a potential adopter's 'adoption journey', as identified by respondents in the qualitative study. We have looked at the touchpoints – the communications that the potential adopter receives – in each phase and how effective these communications are in facilitating and motivating people to move onto the next journey phase and, ultimately, adopt a child or children.



The journey phases we have mapped these touchpoints against are as follows:



This report predominantly focuses on the first three phases, as these are where effective marketing and communications make the biggest difference in terms of attracting people into the process and motivating them to proceed through it.

It is important to consider these phases when planning communications activity, as effective communications at each touchpoint can help move potential adopters from one phase to the next.

#### **PHASE ONE: The initial trigger/inspiration**

Triggers and motivations vary from individual to individual. The qualitative research found that a common motivation for people who have biological children is the realisation that their children have ‘grown up’ (when the children are aged 11+). For those without children or who are unable to have children, a ‘doctor’s letter’ moment, when they accept they can’t have biological children, is often the key trigger (failed IVF is a common theme).

Another important insight from the qualitative research is the importance of friends in ‘nudging’ people towards adoption – a potential adopter’s initial trigger can be a friend talking about their positive experience of adoption. As such, agencies should ensure that, throughout an adoption process, they are giving adopters the best possible service and experience, thus creating advocates who may then trigger someone else to start their adoption journey.



The communications touchpoints at this stage, as reported by participants in the qualitative research, are typically advertising and editorial content (as opposed to advertising, which has been paid for), for example TV programmes, radio programmes, books, newspaper and magazine articles and films. With regards to the placement of advertising, as well as mainstream media channels, participants in the qualitative research highlighted the opportunities presented by sensitive communications in doctors' surgeries and other places where people may go when exploring their options for having a child.

#### **a) Editorial content**

Many adoption agencies are effectively using the placement of editorial content (such as magazine articles and newspaper features) as a channel through which to motivate potential adopters. The placement of case studies (stories of people who have adopted) have proved to be of particular interest to local and regional media; as have expert spokespeople who can provide information about adoption in the local area, making the content relevant.

As the placement of editorial content does not require agencies to purchase expensive media space, we recommend that the use of this channel is maximised as much as possible. Agencies should build relationships with local journalists – perhaps taking them out for coffee to discuss the stories they have available and the need to engage potential adopters – asking them what content and information would be of interest to them.

In the qualitative research, it was suggested that a campaign or campaigns headed by a celebrity who has adopted would be well-received, as it would generate greater publicity for the issue and aid myth-busting by showing that children who are up for adoption are not 'lost causes'.

#### **b) Advertising**

Several advertising methods are used by adoption agencies. Below, we have detailed the channels commonly used by the agencies who participated in this research. It should be noted that several projects were still live at the time of writing, meaning that results data was not available in all cases:

##### **i. Radio advertising**

Local and regional radio advertising is often used by agencies, but with mixed outcomes. Some agencies reported an increase in enquiries as a result, whereas others reported no enquiries at all. We believe there are two main reasons behind this disparity: area targeting and the wider marketing mix. One of the radio ads that was reported as successful ensured that the station used had a reach that closely matched the agency's target area, meaning the advert was relevant to listeners and minimising wastage. Another agency that saw particular success had a call-to-action to visit the campaign website, which saw a significant uplift in enquiries; in the two months since the campaign began, enquiries via the website had risen by 147%. This agency used radio alongside other channels – press adverts, outdoor billboard ads and local events.

##### **ii. Poster campaigns**

Poster campaigns are a popular choice with agencies, as they are relatively cheap to implement, with posters often placed in local libraries, community centres and other areas with a community focus. There is evidence that posters are a successful way to target specific segments. One consortium ran a poster campaign targeting specific audiences including LGBT adopters and those willing to adopt sibling groups and children with disabilities. This tied in with LGBT adoption and fostering week and the consortium saw an uplift in same sex couples attending information evenings as a result.





In terms of art direction, we tested various styles and types of poster with respondents in the qualitative research. It was clear that images of happy families and children work well (it sums up what potential adopters are seeking from adoption). Photography was more positively received than illustration – a cartoon execution we showed as part of the research was polarising, with some respondents seeing it as ‘friendly’ and others viewing it as ‘childish’.

iii. Press advertising

Many agencies use similar, if not the same, creative artwork for their press advertising and poster campaigns. Where press advertising works best, it is in the context of a wider marketing and advertising campaign; for example, one agency ran a press advertising campaign in local newspapers and lifestyle magazines. A radio and digital advertising campaign ran alongside this; all contributing to a 65% increase in enquiries on same period in the previous year.

Agencies have reported that they have struggled to evaluate the effectiveness of press campaigns and have found it difficult to pinpoint where enquiries are being referred from. We would therefore suggest considering the inclusion of unique URLs in press advertising in order to aid evaluation – agencies would then be better-able to track the source of enquiries by analysing how many visits they have had to the unique URL.

iv. Direct mail/leafleting

Direct mail and leafletting have proved effective for several adoption agencies, with one agency reporting a 30% increase in enquires as a result of using this method. This marketing channel can be particularly effective when working with minimal budgets as materials can be distributed for free or at a low-cost through local sites such as libraries, sports centres, cultural venues, Post Offices and doctors’ surgeries. This method also enables the low-cost targeting of those segments with a particular propensity to consider adoption; for example, leaflets can be given to religious or community groups for distribution amongst their networks.

Where this method has worked well, it tends to be supported by wider marketing activity, including other low-cost methods such as the placement of editorial content and social media.

v. TV advertising

Three of the agencies/consortia that participated in this research carried out local TV advertising. Two of these campaigns were still live at the time of writing. One of these live campaigns has seen 537 initial web enquiries during the first two weeks of the campaign, with one in eight people who saw the advert contacting the service to enquire about adoption.

Another consortium used TV advertising as one part of a wider marketing initiative. This initiative was designed to increase the quality and quantity of adoption applicants across the region and drive the placement of sibling groups, children over the age of five, BME children, and children with learning difficulties. Alongside TV advertising, the campaign comprised outdoor advertising, press advertising, radio advertising, PR and social media. The entire campaign resulted in an increase in both enquiries and web traffic – with a 500% increase in web hits, 7,048 unique users and 96 web enquiries in the first six weeks. This evidence shows that TV advertising can be an effective channel in driving enquiries; however agencies should carefully consider the cost of using this expensive medium versus the number of quality leads resulting from it compared to other channels.

**c) Messaging**

i. Addressing anxieties and motivations

A large majority of the ‘trigger’ collateral provided by adoption agencies as part of this research focused on busting myths in relation to the types of people who can adopt; for example, several



agencies produced a suite of marketing materials with different executions to demonstrate that gay and lesbian people, single people and older people could adopt. Similarly, many agencies sought to demonstrate the type of children that were available for adoption, highlighting that sibling groups, older children, children with special needs and children from a range of backgrounds are awaiting adoption. These are important messages; however they do not address some of the key barriers and motivations that potential adopters reported as part of the 2013 study (Scott, A. and Duncan, C. (2013), 'Understanding attitudes, motivations and barriers to adoption and fostering', Kindred Agency Ltd).

Very few phase one touchpoints analysed as part of this research included information to address the anxieties of potential adopters (anxiety concerning the process of becoming an adopter, anxiety concerning the level of emotional stress that could be brought on by the experience of adoption and anxiety concerning the potential effect an adopted child would have on their own life and/or that of any existing children they have), or clear information on what the adoption process might involve. Although we appreciate that potential adopters seek to find out more about the process once they have been inspired to consider adoption, agencies should aim to tackle anxieties head-on and provide an understanding of what is involved up front as these are factors that will prompt many people to start the adoption journey and move onto the next phase.

Furthermore, we recommend that more focus is given to the different types of motivations for adoption. Our research highlighted that these motivations sit in two broad categories: inner-directed/personal motivations and outer-directed motivations. Inner-directed motivations are the perceived benefit of adoption for the individual adopter, for example "I want more children", "I want to be a parent", "somebody is going to love me", "I want a new challenge", "I want to rewrite my own difficult childhood", "I want to enrich my life by having a family". Outer-directed motivations are the perceived benefits of adoption for the child or society as a whole and are often altruistic in nature, for example "I want to take a child out of the care system", "I've got resources to spare", "I have been through the care system myself – I can empathise", "lots of children in the world need a home". The majority of people who are interested in adoption or who have adopted cite a combination of these motivators. Generally, for those who had no children, motivations tended to be more inner-directed/personal and, for those who had biological children, motivations were more outer-directed.

Based on the above, agencies should ensure that the messaging used in marketing campaigns reflects both inner and outer-directed motivations. First4Adoption captures this balance well. It uses quotes from adopters in its leaflets that explain why people decided to adopt; for example "Being able to give a loving home to someone who wouldn't have one otherwise is a fantastic thing, but we did this for ourselves, so that we could have a wonderful family".

#### ii. The call to action

Bearing in mind the findings relating to phase two of the adoption journey, as detailed below (fact-finding is largely driven by web-based research and information), the main call to action when triggering the start of the adoption journey should, where possible, be a call to visit a web address. That said, we recognise that many agencies face restrictions in terms of the type of content they can host on their websites and that paramount to any call to action should be the user journey – how can the place that potential adopters are directed to as a result of marketing activity encourage them to enter the next stage of the journey? Agencies facing website restrictions should direct people to their agency page on First4Adoption.

One agency used a QR (Quick Response) code (a small black and white code which can be scanned using a mobile device and takes the user to further web-based information) on its marketing



materials in order to provide a simple way for people to access further information. However, the effectiveness of QR codes in prompting an action is limited and they should be used with caution. Many people find them an annoyance to use and it is important that any content the QR code leads to is mobile-optimised in order to create a positive user experience.

Some respondents to the qualitative research did express an interest in a phone line and there is some evidence that including a phone number on marketing materials prompts telephone enquiries. However, in order to ensure an effective transition through the adoption journey, agencies must ensure that any phone line is manned by experts who can actually answer questions, as opposed to signposting to other sources of information.

Agencies should consider ways to capture the details of potential adopters who respond to the call to action. Not all potential adopters will want to give out personal information at this stage, but some will and this provides an opportunity to follow up with people who are interested and help to move them on through subsequent journey phases – for example, inviting them to a fact-finding event or introducing them to a successful adopter to facilitate deeper engagement.

#### **KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR CAMPAIGN PLANNING**

##### **Base plans on insight and research, mapping activity against journey phases**

We strongly recommend that agencies do their research and gather as much information as possible when planning their campaigns. The most effective agency marketing we have seen when compiling this report has been based on insight and research. Agencies have used the Kindred March 2013 research findings to target specific demographics, and their own data on local resident profiles and the children awaiting adoption. This combination of national research and local data has enabled agencies to focus their efforts on the people and areas where they can be expected to have the most impact, thus ensuring value for money.

One consortium that has implemented this approach spent time mapping audiences and segments, analysing influencers and compiling research in order to develop its strategy. This consortium also developed an evaluation framework upfront, which helped to ensure that subsequent activity was focused on meeting objectives. The result of this was a well-planned campaign that resulted in 96 enquiries during the first six weeks alone (the campaign was still live at the time of writing).

In addition to using research and data to plan channels and messages, we recommend that, where possible, agencies test creative approaches with the target audience. We found that some of the imagery used by agencies is polarising – particularly cartoon styles – and that phraseology doesn't always resonate. For example, one agency referred to only outer-directed motivations on its posters (transform a child's future by adopting), which was disliked by many respondents to the qualitative research. Conversations with the target audience at the development stage can help to ensure that the creative is as effective as it can be before the campaign goes live. This does not need to be an expensive focus group process. Agency staff could invite members of the target audience to view sample marketing materials and ask them what they would think, feel and do, should they see them. If the time or expertise to do this is not available, simple one-on-one conversations would also work well.

Furthermore, agencies should map messaging and the channels used against the phases in the adopters' journey. Planning marketing in this way means that potential adopters will receive the messaging that is most likely to motivate them to continue to the next phase in the journey through the touchpoints they are exposed to at each phase; for example, agencies should ensure that their websites contain comprehensive information on the adoption process to account for the fact that



potential adopters look online when seeking information about the rational basics as part of the fact-finding phase.

Also with regards to this point, the most effective agency marketing campaigns have incorporated a mix of different channels and mediums. Agencies should consider the most appropriate marketing mix in their planning. This will ensure that potential adopters are engaged at their different touchpoints and that messaging resonates as a result of being 'heard' on multiple occasions.

### **PHASE TWO: Fact-finding and research**

The qualitative research highlighted the extent to which potential adopters rely on web-based information in order to find out the facts and information they need in the second phase of their journey – once they are prompted to consider adoption, they need information in order to 'qualify' this interest and convert it into action. At this stage, they want the rational basics – how do I do it? What are the details of the process? Who do I need to speak to? - and soak up as much information as they can online.

In addition to web research, events were cited as a key channel for fact-finding, and adoption agencies have reported success with regards to generating formal enquiries as a result of such events.

Information packs are another important channel. They are highly regarded by most people and are an important 'retrigger' for potential adopters who move in and out of the consideration phase, as people tend to keep them and go back to them at a later date. However, respondents to the qualitative research felt that the packs could be more friendly and down-to-earth in tone.

#### **a) The importance of a good agency website**

The reliance on web-based research in the fact-finding phase means it is important for agencies to ensure that their websites are as effective as possible in providing people with the information they need.

Our research found significant disparities in terms of the quality of agency sites. Some websites were very unsophisticated and featured out-dated, corporate designs and user journeys that did not make it easy or appealing for people to explore the content. At the other end of the spectrum, agencies had clearly spent time and effort creating strong, professional-looking websites with modern design and responsive layouts. These sites had well thought-out user journeys that would make it easier for people to find out more about the adoption process.

One agency that took part in the research carried out a redesign of its web pages (this had to be done within the restrictions of the council website it sat within) and has received positive feedback from users on the short, straight-to-the point information it contains. Furthermore, it has found that the quality of enquiries through the website has improved, with around 45% of all enquirers going on to attend an information evening.

#### **b) Paid-for search**

Paid-for search (often referred to as Pay Per Click or Cost Per Click advertising) is a marketing method used by several adoption agencies. Although this may be seen as positive due to the reliance on web-based research in fact-finding, caution must be exercised in the use of this tactic.

We carried out a key word analysis using Google AdWords to identify the words and phrases that are most-commonly searched for and what the competition is for these words. On the whole, the market for searches relating to adoption is relatively small. For example, the most searched for



adoption-related terms at the time of writing were 'adoption UK', with an average of 22,200 searches per month and 'adoption' with an average of 12,100 per month. Other adoption-related searches have a significantly lower volume. The third-ranking term was 'adopting a child' with an average of 1,900 searches per month followed by 'adoption agencies' with 1,600. Many terms receive incredibly low search volumes such as 'adoption services' with an average of 90 searches per month and 'adoption info' with an average of just 10 searches per month.

Competition for these key words is very high in comparison to search volumes. Google rates competition on a scale from 0-1. Anything above 0.75 is considered highly competitive. There is evidence that several parties are bidding for key words relating to adoption, which will in turn drive the price up. For example, at the time of writing, the term 'I want to adopt a child UK' received an average of 40 searches per month, yet its competition rate was 0.86 and the suggested cost per click bidding price was \$3.24 (to note, Google prices are given in US Dollars). 'Adopting a toddler' received an average of 20 searches per month and had a competition rate of 0.75 and a cost per click bidding price of \$4.03, and 'UK child adoption' received just 10 searches yet had a competition rate of 0.87 and a cost per click of \$2.75.

We also analysed the seasonality of key words. Searches relating to adoption are relatively consistent month-on-month, however, one statistically significant spike can be found in January. In January, searches around the phrase 'how to adopt' are twice as high than in other months. This pattern is reflected on social media, with January and February contributing 87% of the total Twitter mentions containing 'how to adopt' search terms. This leads to the assumption that potential adopters may consider taking the first steps towards adoption at the start of the year.

We also analysed November 2013 to look for spikes in activity around National Adoption Week. There was no evidence of an increase with regards to search, however there was a peak in Twitter mentions with 21,575 mentions of 'adoption' in November, compared to an average of 10,689 per month over the rest of the year.

#### KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR WEB-BASED SEARCH

##### Utilise organic search options

Based on the evidence relating to search volumes and competition, we recommend that agencies give strong consideration to their use of paid-for search and that they make more use of organic search methods. They must carefully weigh up the cost per click through to their website with the value of that click in terms of conversion into an enquiry – how likely is it that a person who clicks through a particular agency's website goes onto make a formal enquiry or registration to become an adopter? Of course, the answer to this question is reliant just as much on the website content as it is on the quality of the click-through. Agencies must ensure their landing pages are as effective as possible in encouraging people to find out more.

For most agencies, organic search methods will be a cheaper and more effective option than paid-for search. Suggestions for how effective organic search can be achieved are as follows:

- Optimise agency websites with terms that people may search for – Include different phraseology where possible to cover the different terms that people may search for; for example, rather than solely using the phrase 'adopting a child', alternate this with 'child adoption', 'adopting a child in the UK' or 'adopting children'.
- Generate content in the form of blogs – Where website functionality allows, agencies should post regular blogs that reference key search terms. Links to this content should be shared as widely as possible in order to drive web traffic which, in turn, results in the site receiving a higher search ranking. One way of doing this would be to invite stakeholders and advocates (e.g. people who have already adopted a child) to write a post and link to it from their social media networks.



- Use original imagery – Websites that use original photography appear higher on search rankings than those that use stock shots.

### PHASE THREE: Deeper engagement

Once people feel they know how to adopt (as a result of the fact-finding carried out in phase two), they want to know what adopting is really going to be like. Our qualitative research found that this is the case for women in particular, who stated that they tend to seek out the personal and emotional side of real life adoption stories. At this phase, potential adopters are hungry for first-hand testimonies that will tell them about the good and the bad, and the effect that adoption might have on their current lifestyle (partner, family, work and other children). Agencies should aim to facilitate the sharing of these stories to move potential adopters on through their journey.

This is the phase when social media is a key channel. Potential adopters visit social media sites and discussion forums to post questions and find out about other people's experience of adoption. From our research, it is evident that adoption agencies' use of social media is an area where key improvements can be made in order to drive deeper engagement. Council agencies that use council channels to share adoption information (many tend to do this) face particular challenges. These social channels may be well-followed and have strong channel management, but councils often fail to use them to promote adoption messages, with some showing no evidence of using social media to communicate messages about adoption at any point within the past 12 months, despite high levels of activity on other topics. Agencies that do have their own dedicated social media channels often have a very small following and there is little engagement on posts.

Website content is also important here. Agency sites need to bring to life the adoption process through people who have experienced it and, where possible, facilitate online conversations and mentoring to truly deepen engagement. We recognise that there may be restrictions surrounding the information that can be shared around specific cases - agencies may wish to develop guidance on how this sharing of experiences can be managed within child protection policy.

#### a) The use of social media channels in driving deeper engagement

It should be noted that in the qualitative research, most respondents disregarded Twitter, viewing it more as a casual news service than a serious channel for adoption conversations. Therefore, although we have referred to Twitter and made some recommendations with regards to its use, we suggest that Facebook is the channel that should be most utilised by adoption agencies with regards to social media.

##### i. Regular content is key

There were examples of agencies that delivered appropriate content, for example, posts using imagery to convey messages or posing questions to users, on their social channels, but this was not done regularly enough to build a strong relationship with the target audience and encourage the interaction needed to help facilitate deeper engagement. Long periods of silence on social channels mean the audience loses interest.

Regular content is absolutely key for any adoption agency wanting to use social media effectively. It helps heighten the user's experience with the agency, solicit positive interactions and instil a sense of trust. Agencies should note that not all followers will see every post on newsfeeds, therefore they need to encourage people to come to them by building a reputation for posting regular, high-quality content. Although we appreciate that many potential adopters may visit a social media channel to get the information they need and may not necessarily continue to follow it, having up-to-date content is much more likely to engage users.



On Facebook and Twitter, there is no recommended number of posts to issue, as it depends entirely on the agency and what works for its community. However, typically, if an agency posts fewer than two posts a week on Facebook, it risks not being able to engage its audience enough for them to maintain social connection. If an organisation issues more than two Facebook posts per day, it will have a similar effect and lead to a loss in engagement. On Twitter, alongside planned posts, agencies should seek to post content that contributes to other online conversations or the wider news agenda.

ii. Community management

Agencies' social media channels must be proactive and reactive if they are to be effective in encouraging potential adopters to access real life stories and engage with other people who have adopted or who are considering adoption. To be proactive, agencies must create bespoke, engaging content for the community. From the moment a post or tweet is issued, the person managing that community must be flexible and be ready to react in order to facilitate and guide conversations. Agencies must also be prepared to be reactive regarding negative comments, ensuring that any negative viewpoints are responded to. This is even more critical given the sensitive nature of adoption. We have included a template escalation procedure in the appendix to provide guidance for agencies on when and how to respond to negative comments (Appendix 1).

There were differences in the effectiveness of community management across the agency channels analysed as part of this research, ranging from appropriate and timely responses to user questions going unanswered.

iii. Understanding existing conversations relating to adoption

The most used adoption-related hashtags over the past 12 months on social media in the UK are:

- #adoption (208,000 mentions)
- #familylaw (50,900 mentions)
- #adoptionprocess (35,600 mentions)
- #adoptionawareness (12,000 mentions)
- #nationaladoptionweek (3,500 mentions)

Agencies should consider how they can provide information through social channels that reflects these topics, encouraging people to interact with it and driving further conversation. To achieve this, monitoring of social channels becomes integral, with a 'real time' awareness of related conversations producing further opportunities for engagement. For example, a user tweeting the question 'What's the best #adoption agency to use in Brighton?' represents a perfect opportunity for an appropriate agency to respond directly. We have provided a list of free and low-cost social media monitoring tools as an appendix to this report (Appendix 2).

iv. YouTube can provide a platform through which to share real life stories

Real life testimonies can be filmed and posted to YouTube at a relatively low cost, providing an important channel through which to facilitate deeper engagement. Linking to such videos through other social channels also provides wider content – for example, if a person that has been through the adoption process features in a YouTube film, that person could take part in a tweetchat to answer any questions raised by potential adopters.

Furthermore, YouTube can have a key role to play at the fact-finding stage. One of the most commonly searched terms on YouTube is 'how to' and many potential adopters will search the channel in order to find easy to digest information about the adoption process.



Some agencies are using content created for other channels on YouTube; for example, one agency uploaded a TV ad, expanding the number of people who could view this content and giving it longevity to maximise return on investment.

v. Cross-platform promotion

As mentioned above, YouTube videos provide ideal content for promotion on other platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and Google+. This is just one example of the benefits of cross-platform promotion for adoption agencies wanting to enhance their social media activity. In addition, agencies should ensure that links to their social media channels (known as plugins) appear on their websites, directing people to the other platforms where they can move from fact-finding to deeper engagement. Of the agencies included in this audit, 65% cross-promoted social plugins and these organisations boasted the largest social communities.

vi. Using Pinterest

Pinterest aims to create interactions through images and can therefore be used to facilitate deeper engagement. It generates interest and presents a great opportunity for content to be shared virally amongst members. Presenting adoption facts and stories through interesting and engaging mood boards will give potential adopters a different perspective on information presented on other channels.

At present, Pinterest's significant engagement opportunities are not being exploited by adoption agencies, with none of the agencies that formed part of this analysis having adoption-specific profiles or boards. In 2013, Pinterest drove more traffic to websites and blogs than Twitter and LinkedIn combined (in December 2013, Pinterest accounted for 3.6% of referral traffic, up from 0.17% six months earlier, compared to 1.05% of referral traffic contributed by Twitter and 0.22% by LinkedIn), further highlighting the potential benefits to agencies that embrace this channel.

**b) Understanding online behaviour**

When aiming to build a social media community, agencies should consider the online behaviour of different parts of the target audience. Research shows that age plays the biggest role in how people interact and engage online. We have therefore provided an overview of social media use amongst key age groups for adoption communications.

i. 25-34 year olds

25-34 year olds have the largest presence of any demographic on Facebook, accounting for 21.8% of all UK users, according to comScore data. The same age group trails only 15-24 year olds in terms of Twitter usage, making up 21.2% of UK users.

This audience is also highly engaged on LinkedIn, as people reach an age where their career goals are becoming clearer and they wish to make professional connections. There are over 2m 25-34 year olds on LinkedIn in the UK, more than any other age group.

25-34 year olds spend an average of 10.7 hours per month on social networking sites, showing just how big a part of their routine it has become. Nielson and NM Incite's Social Media Report 2012 showed that more than half of people aged 25-34 who engage on social media do so 'during the day from a smartphone'. This figure is more than any other age group. It indicates that 25-34 year old users of social networking sites are more likely to engage with adoption agencies on social media and share content with their peers during the day. This is the optimum time to build relationships and schedule editorial content that will resonate with this audience.





ii. 35-44 year olds

According to comScore's demographic profile, the 35-44 year old age group has the second highest presence on LinkedIn behind 24-34 year olds, accounting for 20% of the total number of people using the platform. This is most definitely their preferred platform, as they become increasingly career-focussed at this time in their lives. With that in mind, agencies should consider ways in which to use LinkedIn to engage potential adopters. One way would be to utilise LinkedIn's Groups function, which enables users to establish and build communities of users interested in the subject of adoption. Larger organisations could also use the platform as a means to engage internal staff whilst encouraging employees to share content on their personal LinkedIn channels.

The age group has the fourth largest presence on Facebook, ahead of 45-54 year olds but behind 55+, and accounts for just 17% of the overall Twitter audience. It represents the joint second fastest growing segment in social networking alongside those aged 45-54, showing that individuals are being increasingly comfortable with social networking.

Research also shows that 35-44s are most likely to engage with social media in the evenings, with a key point for discussion being television advertising and programmes. Creating content to coincide with programming would therefore be an effective method of engaging this group.

iii. 45-54 year olds

The 45-54 age group has the lowest online presence out of all the age groups analysed in this section of the research – over two million behind the 55+ age group. For this reason, the age group also has the least amount of available data on its online behaviour.

Although presence online is low, there are still 5.5 million Facebook users and 1.8 million Twitter users in this age group, which indicates that it is still very much an audience that can be targeted online and agencies should therefore consider how content can be tailored for it.

iv. 55+

According to comScore's most recent data, people aged 55+ are the dominant online group in the UK, with more than 9m unique online visitors during 2012. This figure is 1m more than the second highest - the 25-34 age bracket.

As a proportion of the overall UK internet audience, people over the age of 55 now account for more than 20% of internet users. This reflects a growth of 11% during 2012 and time spent online rose by 25%.

Facebook is this age group's platform of choice, accounting for 20% of UK Facebook users. Its presence is considerably less prominent on Twitter, sitting ahead of only 45-54 year olds in terms of community size. Adoption of mobile technologies among older users is also making significant ground. Overall, 30% of UK mobile users are now aged 55+. Even among smartphone users, the 55+ age group matches that of the 35-44 year olds at 19% and is not far behind the 22% accounted for by 25-34 year olds.

Although over 55s are not a key audience segment for adoption communications, their prevalence online means that agencies should consider how they can be used as a communications channel when facilitating deeper engagement. How can over 55s who have adopted themselves be used as advocates? And how can they be motivated to share information with their online networks or children who may be interested in adoption themselves?

**c) The use of online forums**



Online forums enable potential and current adopters to interact with each other by exchanging tips and discussing topics related to the subject. Forums save information posted for other people to see at any time, which creates a discussion environment – benefiting would-be adopters in search of real life stories and experiences.

The most active UK forums discussing adoption over the past year are:

- Adoption UK
- Adoption.com
- Babycentre.co.uk
- Mumsnet
- Netmums

It should be noted that many discussion threads on these sites focus on post-adoption issues, with posters seeking advice from other adopters who have experienced the same problems as they have; for example, unforeseen issues with children with complex needs. Such content could of course create negative perceptions of adoption for people at the deeper engagement phase. Agencies should therefore be aware of these discussion threads and be prepared to respond to common issues through their own communications touchpoints at this phase.

Excluding topics related to post-adoption issues, the most prevalent adoption-related phrases used within forum titles were:

- ‘Thinking of adoption’
- ‘Adoption process’
- ‘Children adopting’
- ‘Adoption law’
- ‘Interested in adoption’

With this in mind, adoption agencies should look at how the content on their channels reflects and responds to these topics.

What is truly unique about the use of forums is the personal quality of the discussions and the ease at which posters share their stories. Where Facebook and Twitter are considered to be ‘public forums’, discussion boards attract only those interested in a particular subject, promoting an ‘inner circle’ environment and a greater sense of community. Unlike other social media channels, users will regularly return to read previous discussion topics or engage in existing threads.

#### KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

##### Implement a few simple techniques

Agencies should use the following techniques in order to build and strengthen their social media communities and encourage deeper engagement:

- **Plan** – To build their communities, agencies should understand what is currently working on their social media channels and feed this into future planning.
- **Find future community members** – Researching other adoption agency Facebook pages, following popular hashtags on Twitter and exploring favoured blogs and forums will open the door to a wealth of potential community members for adoption agencies. Agencies should analyse what these people are interested in online to identify the best way to reach them.
- **Be personable** – Agencies must ensure that they use the right tone of voice. Ask questions. Be interested and users will find you more interesting.
- **Be unique** – With agencies and other organisations vying for fans and followers on social media, it is important to stand out. One way for agencies to do this is by becoming a source of



information. Forums and blogs attract visits because readers know and trust the information they provide and this effect can be created on agency channels too.

- **Be active** – As outlined above, the importance of consistent posting and engagement is fundamental to social media success, both in growing communities and maintaining them. Agencies should create monthly editorial calendars to provide a holistic view of content plans and develop a strategic approach to message promotion.
- **Make it easier to connect** – For councils, establishing separate social media channels dedicated to their adoption services will allow potential users to connect more easily with adoption conversations and provide a space for related discussions.
- **Ask people to share content** – Agencies should ask social media communities to share their content to extend the visibility of it, without the need for advertising spend.
- **Encourage conversations** – Agencies should ask questions and share tips to generate discussions that will connect other users and strengthen the community.
- **Find out what people want** – The easiest way to develop content that will engage a community is to ask fans and followers what they would like to see and provide them with it.

#### PHASE FOUR: The decision

The decision about whether or not to adopt is very personal and individual to each potential adopter. At this phase, potential adopters access few – if any – ‘new’ communications. They may revisit channels and information accessed in the fact-finding and deeper engagement phases and will discuss options with friends and relatives.

The qualitative research undertaken as a part of this study showed that, for married heterosexual couples, women tended to be the drivers of the adoption process and often took a role in leading their partner towards a decision. While we know this is not the case for all couples, heterosexual or gay/lesbian, it is important to note that women tend to be influenced by the personal and emotional side of adoption, for example they may be compelled to adopt as a result of the real life experiences of other people. For men, rational information is typically more important in the decision-making process – they want the facts about adoption and a common tipping point for them is an open day or workshop that provides them with this information.

#### KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR ENCOURAGING A POSITIVE ADOPTION DECISION

##### **Communicate both the rational and emotional motivations for adoption**

The role of communications in the decision phase is largely focused on reinforcement – people will revisit information for reassurance and to consolidate their views on whether or not adoption is for them. Bearing in mind that some people (typically women) are influenced by emotional stories and some people (typically men) are influenced by rational information, agencies should ensure that both of these elements have been fed into communications touchpoints in the earlier journey phases. Doing so will give as wide a base of people as possible the ‘tools’ necessary to make a decision about adoption.

‘Keeping in touch’ communications tools such as newsletters or email lists might work here. It is important that agencies are building and then maintaining a relationship with potential adopters. Regularly updating digital and social media content content (as advised in phase three) is an important part of this – it will bring people back and then make them more likely to progress to the next phase.

#### PHASE FIVE: The process and adoption

Our research has shown that the role of communications at this phase in the adoption journey is three-fold:



### **a) Regular updates**

Once people have committed to adoption, they want regular, consistent updates from their agency. Many worry that, because they haven't been contacted, they have been lost in the system. Research respondents suggested that an online tracking system, showing their progress through the process, would provide reassurance and give them a more positive experience.

### **b) Consistent messaging**

Several respondents to the qualitative research reported that many of the questions they were asked, and information they were told once they had entered the formal adoption process, were contrary to what they had been told at the initial phases of the journey. Specifically, the 'myth-busting' around who can adopt was not always followed through; for example, people were told that they could only adopt a child from the same ethnic background as themselves.

### **c) Emotional support**

Many potential adopters continue to visit forums at this phase in order to seek emotional support from peers. Adoption agencies should consider how they can facilitate this emotional support at this phase; for example, by providing mentoring or online chats with people who have been through the process. Agencies should also be honest and open about what the process involves and provide information about positive outcomes to maintain adopters' motivation.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR ENSURING A STREAMLINED PROCESS**

### **Make sure messaging is aligned throughout**

Agencies should view communications as an ongoing process throughout a person's adoption journey. In particular, agencies need to align messaging at every phase to ensure the journey is as seamless as possible, meet expectations and ensure that potential adopters maintain trust in the process. Agencies must fulfil the promise communicated in messages that are disseminated at the early phases in the journey.

A key part of making this a reality is effective internal communications. Agencies should ensure that every person in their organisation is aware of marketing activity and messages, perhaps by creating a core script on the campaign or delivering staff presentations.

## **PHASE SIX: After care**

Once an adoption has taken place, there is an opportunity for adoption agencies to create advocates that can be used to encourage other people to adopt. As we have seen throughout this report, at each point in the adoption journey there is a role for the stories and experience of people who have already been through the process.

In order to create advocates, agencies must ensure that adopters have the best possible experience at each part of the adoption process, including after care. Some respondents to the qualitative research reported feeling as if they were "on their own" after adopting and that, at best, they felt that "intrusive" social workers were "checking up" on them. Where adopters feel let down by the after care they receive, they are less likely to advocate adoption to others, and the information they give people who seek it as part of any fact-finding may not be as positive as it could be.

Adopters did express a willingness to mentor other people that are going through the process and they are passionate about making the experience of adoption better for others. They would welcome the opportunity to feed back on their experiences, perhaps through an 'exit interview' once the adoption has been completed.



### KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR CREATING ADVOCACY

#### Use the stories and experiences of successful adopters

The stories and experiences of people who have successfully adopted are a powerful tool that agencies should use throughout the journey touchpoints:

- Initial trigger/motivation – Editorial coverage is a key touchpoint. Agencies should place adopter stories in the media.
- Fact-finding and research – Agencies should use adopters to communicate details of the adoption process from their perspective.
- Deeper engagement – Agencies should seek ways to facilitate potential adopters’ access to real life stories of people who have adopted.
- The process and adoption – Potential adopters look for emotional support at this stage and want to share their thoughts and feelings with peers who understand the process. Agencies should look to facilitate this, perhaps through mentoring schemes or online Q&As.
- After care – Agencies need to ensure that they are creating advocates that can be used in future communications. Providing good customer service throughout the adoption process is crucial if this is to be achieved.

## 7. Journey phase summary

The journey phases and touchpoints detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

Role of marketing/communications	Key channels
<b>PHASE ONE: Initial trigger/motivation</b>	
Raise awareness to prompt consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editorial coverage</li> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Friends and family</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE TWO: Fact-finding and research</b>	
Inform potential adopters about the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Online search</li> <li>• Information packs</li> <li>• Information events</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE THREE: Deeper engagement</b>	
Provide information about the realities of adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Online forums</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE FOUR: The decision</b>	
Reinforce a positive decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May revisit channels and information accessed previously</li> <li>• ‘Keeping in touch’ channels e.g. newsletters</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE FIVE: The process and adoption</b>	
Keep updated and provide emotional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency channels</li> <li>• Peers</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE SIX: After care</b>	
Create advocates for use in future communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor schemes</li> <li>• Networking opportunities</li> </ul>

## 8. Suggested next steps

It is recommended that this report is disseminated to adoption agencies, in order for them to feed the findings and recommendations into their future activity. The inconsistencies and disparities in agencies’ activity also leads us to recommend that the Department for Education provides agencies with a set of guidance – perhaps a toolkit of resources and materials – that are based on best practice.



As every agency is different in terms of budget, target demographics and the needs of its children, it is not possible to provide a definitive plan for marketing that all agencies should follow. However, there are ten steps that we recommend all agencies take when devising campaigns:

- Step one: Understand organisational objectives – agencies should have a clear view of what their organisation wants to achieve and by when. Communications objectives should follow on from this.
- Step two: Gather information and insight – agencies should gather all of the information they can into the target audience and their thoughts, feelings and behaviour with regards to adoption.
- Step three: Set key performance indicators for the campaign – agencies should be clear up front about what they need the campaign to achieve. Where possible, benchmarks should be identified that the campaign can be measured against, for example, the current number of website visits and enquiries.
- Step four: Identify a proposition – agencies should identify the single most important thing that they want potential adopters to take out of the marketing campaign. All marketing activity should be built around this.
- Step five: Develop messages – messages for the campaign should come out of the proposition. They should explain the benefits of adoption for the target audience.
- Step six: Produce channel plan – agencies should decide on the mix of channels to use based on the campaign budget, data about how the target audience behaves and consumes information and the messages to be communicated.
- Step seven: Develop the creative – this is the step at which agencies should use the outputs from the previous steps in order to develop a creative for the campaign. This can take several forms depending on the channels selected, such as a name, strapline or visual. Agencies should share the creative they have developed with members of the target audience. Messages can also be tested here, if there hasn't been the opportunity to do this at an earlier stage.
- Step eight: Hone and finalise the creative and produce the necessary campaign collateral (e.g. leaflets, press release, social media content) – feed in outputs from the testing session.
- Step nine: Campaign launch.
- Step ten: Evaluation – evaluate the campaign against the key performance indicators set in step three.

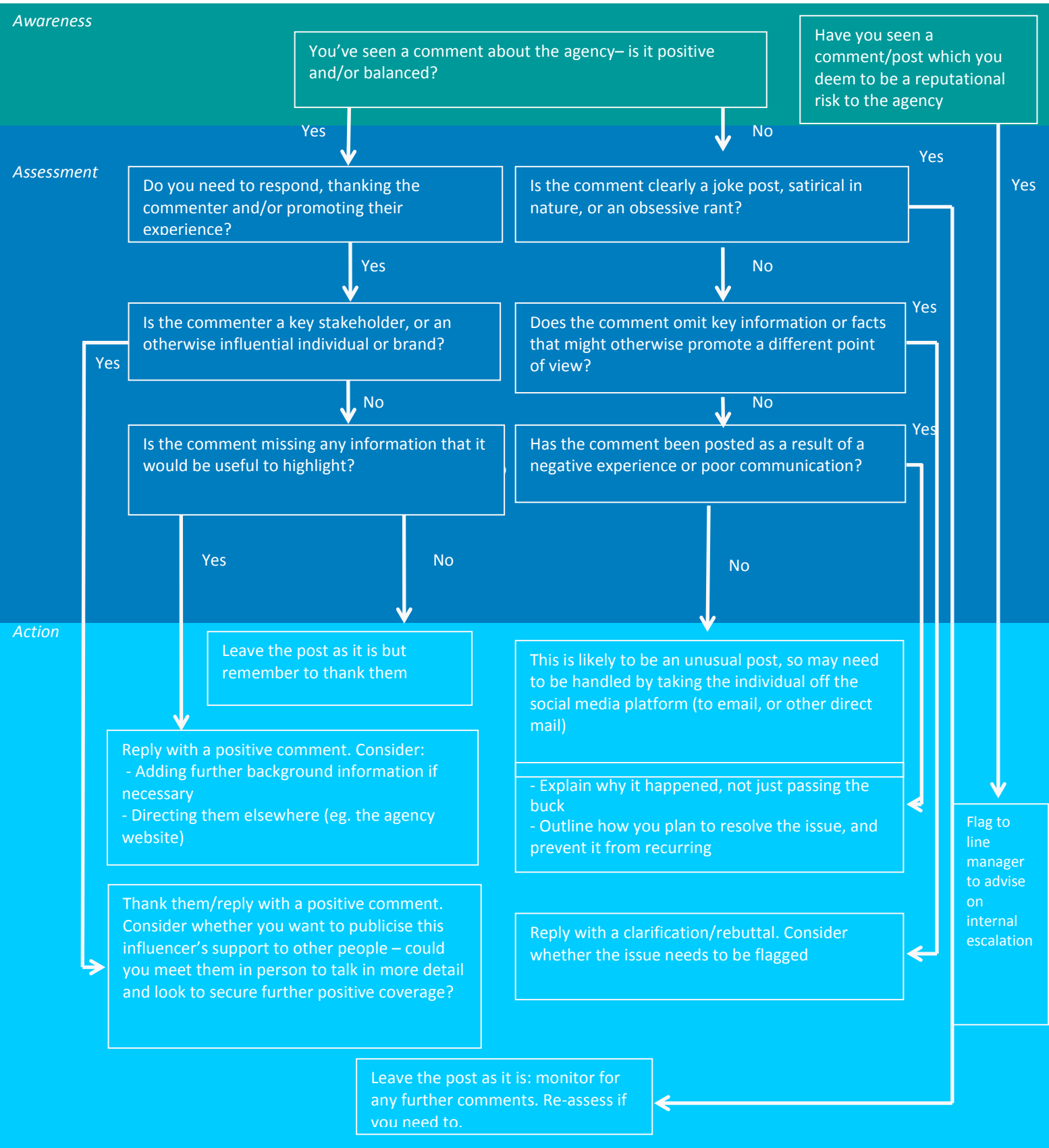


# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX 1

### Social media escalation process

To ensure efficient management of social media channels, community managers should be made aware of agency escalation policies. An example of this process has been mapped out below.





## APPENDIX TWO

### **Social media monitoring tools**

The tools used in our research were: Sysomos MAP, used to generate Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google+ data relating to user engagement and audience analysis; Twitonomy, used to generate comprehensive data scores relating to Twitter channels; TweetReach, used to measure the total user reach of Twitter activities; Klout, used to establish influence or authority scores; and Pinpuff, used to gather data relating to Pinterest activities.

There are numerous free and low cost tools that can be used to measure social media activity. The following tools allow users to track specific mentions and online conversations; monitor the growth rate of an online community; react to negative comments in real-time; and obtain statistics on reach and engagement.

#### Hootsuite

Hootsuite is a web-based dashboard that allows people to monitor multiple social networks in one place. Users can collaborate with fellow employees, schedule messages, and assign tasks to teams.

#### Klout

Klout provides an influencer score based on an organisation or person's social media activity. The Klout score is determined using over 400 variables. It enables users to monitor their progress by monitoring for improvements in their Klout score.

#### TweetReach

TweetReach is a social analytics tool that enables users to capture data on who is reading their tweets, how they are being shared and the impact of them.

#### TwentyFeet

TwentyFeet aggregates activity from various social media platforms so users can get the full picture of their online presence and can determine which activities are most valuable.

#### Facebook Insights

This dashboard gives users all of the analytics data related to their Facebook page so they can track growth and impact. These insights can be used to better understand followers and reach the right audience.

#### SocialMention

SocialMention pulls data from hundreds of social media services to enable users to track and measure who is talking about a particular issue, product, company or topic.

#### SocialBro

SocialBro is a tool that provides detailed information about the user's Twitter community to enable better interaction with followers.

#### Engag.io

This is a tool to managing conversations on social networks. It provides insights into the people the user is talking to via social media and enables them to track whether or not they've responded to conversations.

#### Kred





Similar to Klout, Kred mines social data to provide a Kred score. The score is a combination of the user's influence and outreach activity. Kred measures how often the user tweets or posts, how people interact with them, and the growth of their audience. Kred provides a detailed breakdown of the score so users know exactly where they can improve.

#### Google Analytics Social Reports

Social Reports are integrated in Google Analytics and help measure how social traffic is directly influencing web traffic.