Website dos and don'ts

A handy reference guide for adoption agencies to ensure their website informs prospective adopters and encourages them to take their first steps in the adoption process.

1. **Easy to find**. If the website sits within the corporate structure use either a more friendly web address or at a minimum use www.webaddress.org/adoption

2. **Concentrate on original content** as it is great for search and make sure you update your website regularly. If you use twitter or have a Facebook page, you should feed into your website directly. This will have the added benefit of improving your search ranking as each time you make an update Google recognises this as new website content.

3. **Use more photos** and original ones if you can instead of stock photos – users like to see real people and it's better for Google search ranking. The addition of images and of people's faces will help separate it from the more functional subjects within a local authority's site. It will also give a more approachable appearance and be more encouraging for people who are embarking on their adoption journey.

4. **Shorter text more descriptive titles** Readers of a web page scan through text quickly in a hunt to find what they want to know. Using subheadings throughout a long piece of text helps (Google will index these also so think carefully about their wording). It is preferable to have short bursts of information on one page linking through to other sections. A vast sea of text is a no no.

5. **Navigation** can be very restrictive, especially in the case of LA's. If you do not have control of the website structure be sure to make the most of page titles to make them as inviting and descriptive as possible e.g. 'Facts and information' could be changed to 'Can I adopt'? to draw them in and act as a subtle call to action.

6. **Create specific AdWords content** Many agencies have applied for the Google Ad Grants allowing $10,000 per month spend. This has meant that adoption related Adwords are very expensive. This is not an issue if you have taken advantage of the grant! When using adwords make sure to direct people through to the appropriate content rather than just pushing through to the homepage of your site. If you haven't applied for the grant it will be best to avoid using Adwords and concentrate firmly on the content in your site.

7. **Link to First4Adoption** There's great content that you don't necessarily need to duplicate already on the F4A website. Link to it and avoid the job of keeping this content updated:
   http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/first-steps-intro/
   http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/the-adoption-process/

8. **Events pages/information** Include information on upcoming events and keep it up to date (as well as supplying them to us to promote via the F4A website).

9. **Need support with all this?** Contact us for more detail on any of the points raised above or if you would like us to appraise your website