

Agenda for a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held remotely on Monday, 20 July 2020 at 4.30 pm

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE – COUNCILLORS

Conservative	Labour	The Liberal Democrat and Independent Group
D Smith	C A Thirkill (Ch)	S Knox
	A S Farley (DCh)	
	A Tait	
<i>Alternates</i>	<i>Alternates</i>	<i>Alternates</i>
<i>M Pollard</i>	<i>N Mohammed</i>	<i>B Stubbs</i>
	<i>S Nazir</i>	
	<i>M Shafiq</i>	

Notes:

- A webcast of the meeting will be available to view live on the Council's website at <https://bradford.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> and later as a recording
- Approximately 15 minutes before the start time of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting the Governance Officer will set up the electronic conference arrangements initially in private and bring into the conference facility the Members of the Panel. The officers presenting the reports at the meeting of the Panel will have been advised by the Governance Officer of their participation and will be brought into the electronic meeting at the appropriate time.
- If any further information is required about any item on this agenda, please contact the officer named at the foot of that agenda item.

From:
Parveen Akhtar
City Solicitor

To:

Agenda Contact: Asad Shah
Phone: 01274 432280
E-Mail: asad.shah@bradford.gov.uk

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

The City Solicitor will report the names of alternate Members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed Members.

(Asad Shah – 01274 432280)

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

(Members Code of Conduct - Part 4A of the Constitution)

To receive disclosures of interests from members and co-opted members on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

Notes:

- (1) Members may remain in the meeting and take part fully in discussion and voting unless the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or an interest which the Member feels would call into question their compliance with the wider principles set out in the Code of Conduct. Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.*
- (2) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*
- (3) Members are also welcome to disclose interests which are not disclosable pecuniary interests but which they consider should be made in the interest of clarity.*
- (4) Officers must disclose interests in accordance with Council Standing Order 44.*

(Asad Shah – 01274 432280)

3. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

(Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 3B of the Constitution)

Reports and background papers for agenda items may be inspected by contacting the person shown after each agenda item. Certain reports and background papers may be restricted.

Any request to remove the restriction on a report or background paper should be made to the relevant Strategic Director or Assistant Director whose name is shown on the front page of the report.

If that request is refused, there is a right of appeal to this meeting.

Please contact the officer shown below in advance of the meeting if you wish to appeal.

(Asad Shah – 01274 432280)

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

4. EU SETTLED STATUS AND CITIZENSHIP FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS 1 - 6

The report of the Deputy Director, Children’s Social Care (**Document “H”**) provides information regarding the issues regarding addressing EU Settled Status for Children in Care and Care Leavers and issues regarding application for passports and citizenship.

Recommended –

That the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note this report.

(Rachel Curtis – 01274 435779)

5. ONE ADOPTION WEST YORKSHIRE ANNUAL REPORT 7 - 70

The report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (**Document “I”**) provides an overview of the adoption service activity from April 2019 to March 2020.

Recommended –

That the Corporate Parenting Panel receives this report and continues to support the work of One Adoption West Yorkshire and the local authority to ensure our adopted children and families receive the best possible support.

(Michelle Rawlings – 0113 535 0913)

6. WORK PLAN 2020/2021 71 - 76

The Corporate Parenting Panel’s Work Plan for 2020/2021 is submitted

for the Panel's consideration (**Document "J"**).

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER



Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 20 July 2020

H

Subject: EU Settled Status and Citizenship for Children in Care and Care Leavers

Summary statement:

This report provides information regarding the issues regarding addressing EU Settled Status for Children in Care and Care Leavers and issues regarding application for passports and citizenship.

Deputy Director
(Children's Social Care)

Portfolio:

Children & Families

Report Contact: Rachel Curtis
Phone: (01274) 435779
E-mail: Rachel.curtis@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children & Families

1. SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the work that is required, and progress in addressing this, to ensure the children in our care and care leavers who are EU Citizens have gained EU Settled Status by June 2021, and have the appropriate identity documentation to allow them to travel.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In Bradford today there are 1279 in care. Of these children a number are not UK citizens, with a small number being asylum seekers or refugees, and another group of children who are EU Nationals. Many of the children who are in care who are EU Nationals are born in the UK to EU National parents. There is sometimes the mistaken assumption that these children are British Citizens but this is not the case. Due to the nature of the lives that the parents have led, which means that they are unable to care for their children, the families often do not have copies of the necessary ID documents to confirm their identity and citizenship. We are currently caring for 85 children in care who are EU Nationals and 8 Care Leavers. For last years report we had 59 EU Nationals in our care out of 1211 children in care.
- 2.2 We have 10 children in care or care leavers who are now British Citizens following a successful application, but who are from Eastern European families. We have been successful in applying for Settled Status (or pre-Settled Status) for just 2 children in care and 2 of our current care leavers.
- 2.3 As part of the Brexit arrangements the government introduced EU Settled Status for which all EU citizens living in the UK should apply to be allowed to continue to live and work in the UK. The EU Settled Status scheme opened for applications in March 2019. The deadline for applications under this scheme is June 2021. The Home Office introduced guidance regarding the need for local authorities to apply for Settled Status for children in care in 2019, and new guidance has recently been published in April 2020. Much concern has been expressed nationally about how few children in care have achieved Settled Status.
- 2.4 In Bradford, despite significant focus it has proved difficult to progress Settled Status applications for the children in our care. To apply for EU Settled Status it is necessary to provide copies of up to date ID documents (plus evidence of time living in the UK) but the majority of our children in care do not have up to date ID documents. There is a route to apply for EUSS where there are no documents but the guidance has been very clear that this should be used only when unable to access the documents.
- 2.5 In Bradford we have been working on the principal up to now of applying for the ID documents from the Consulate or Embassy and then applying for EUSS but this has proved exceptionally time consuming, complicated and costly. The majority of the children we are caring for are either Slovakian or Polish children, but there are also Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Romanian and Czech children in our care. Each embassy has quite different processes. We have made some connection with the Slovakian Embassy but still have to follow their complex processes. We are also building links with the Polish Consulate. It is much more complex for the Local

- Authority to apply for a child's citizenship/ birth certificate and passport than it is for the child's parents to do this, as the legal basis that they are in care (usually a care order) needs to be authenticated and translated, and birth families ID documents are needed.
- 2.6 The Home Office guidance published in April 2020 places an expectation on Local Authorities to "identify adequately trained resource to manage and make applications", identify eligible children (including children in need), ensure signposting arrangements are in place, and "to determine, for each child the local authority has parental responsibility for, whether you will be applying online and whether you can use the EU Exit: ID Document Check app or will be posting their identity document to the Home Office to be checked and returned", to keep a record of all applications made (including memorable questions etc) and to record plans for monitoring the child's status (including ensuring if a child has pre-settled status applications are made for Settled Status at the appropriate time).
 - 2.7 The guidance identifies that local authorities should be ensuring they have the necessary documents and states that this should be a 'familiar process' for Local Authorities. I think it is important to state that this is not a familiar process and as I have stated above is complex and time consuming and differs depending on the country you are working with.
 - 2.8 The guidance identifies that if there are significant issues in obtaining ID documents it is possible to make an application for EUSS via the paper resolution route.
 - 2.9 To address this area of our work and responsibility a number of new steps are now being taken in Bradford Children's Social Care.
 - 2.9.1 We have appointed a Business Support Officer whose sole role is to support and coordinate applications for EU Settled Status and applications for ID documents.
 - 2.9.2 She is tracking all EU children in care and will ensure all the requirements from the Home Office guidance are recorded within this.
 - 2.9.3 She will work with children's social workers to make applications for EUSS both using the online route with documents, and make applications where we do not have documents.
 - 2.9.4 Step by step guidance of what is needed regarding applying to specific embassies is being developed and social workers will be supported through this.
 - 2.9.5 Linking in with relevant local VCS organisations and with other local authorities to develop and share practice and learning.
 - 2.10 In trying to progress the issues regarding applying for EU settled Status for Children in Care, as a department we have regularly raised the issue of the difficulties in getting the necessary documentation for our children in care with the Home Office and in regional forums, to then be able to apply for EUSS. One South Yorkshire Local Authority has set up a project of applying for EU Settled Status for their children where they have no documents by using the paper route, on the basis that at least the children will have Settled Status, even if getting the children's ID documents takes longer. We plan to make more applications in Bradford in this way as it takes so long to apply for ID documents, and monitor how this progresses.

- 2.11 I understand that the Department for Education are also following up this issue and have identified links with local authorities but as yet have not shared any further information.
- 2.12 The recently published Home Office guidance identifies that Local Authorities should also consider if an application for British Citizenship is appropriate for children in their care. As identified in 2.2 we have 10 children in our care or care leavers where we have successfully applied for children to become British Citizens. We also have a number of citizenship applications pending. An application for the child to become a British Citizen may be appropriate if the child is in a long term/permanent foster placement with very limited links to their birth family. Such an application must be made in full agreement with the child, though it is possible for a child to be a dual citizen. In such circumstances independent legal advice is sought. The local authority has to pay for £1,300 for an application for British Citizenship for a child in their care, though legal aid is available for the legal costs.
- 2.13 The Covid-19 Pandemic has had some impact on this area of work. It has been more difficult to chase up paperwork and information due to limited face to face work. Links have been made with embassies regarding progressing applications without the need for face to face interviews in London.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This report focuses on the issue of EU Settled Status for Children in Care. As identified the Home Office guidance published in April 2020 identifies the need for the Local Authority to signpost families and children with whom we are working to appropriate supports to ensure they have applied for and achieved Settled Status. We will continue to highlight this issue for those working with children who are subject to child protection plans and children in need and share information about organisations in the Bradford district that can support children and their families in applying for EU Settled Status.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 This area of work is time consuming and complicated and is out of the normal work of social workers for children in care. Some limited new burdens funding has been made to local authorities to support this area of work. We have now recruited a Business Support Officer to support this area of work and will monitor how this progresses.
- Significant costs can also be incurred through the need for children and carers to travel to embassies in London for passports and birth certificates, and there are costs in getting legal documents authenticated to allow for applications for passports and birth certificates from the relevant embassy.
- The cost of British citizenship applications are £1,300 per child.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

This report evidences the increased diversity of the children that we are caring for and the service is developing to meet the needs of Eastern European children.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Not applicable.

7.6 TRADE UNION

Not applicable.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Not applicable.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Corporate parents will need to continue to be updated regarding the issues relating to EU children in care as a result of Brexit, any issues relating to applying for Settled Status for these children and ensuring that EU children in care are supported to enjoy and achieve positive outcomes in our care.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Not applicable.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

Not applicable.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note this report.

11. APPENDICES

None

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-guidance>



Report of One Adoption West Yorkshire to the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 20 July 2020

Subject:

One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report

Summary statement:

1. This report provides an overview of the adoption service activity from April 2019 to March 2020.

Sarah Johal
Head Of Service
One Adoption West Yorkshire

Portfolio:

Adoption

Report Contact: Michelle Rawlings
Service Delivery Manager
Phone: 0113 535 0913
E-mail:

michelle.rawlings@oneadoptionwy.leeds.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Adoption

1. SUMMARY

That the Corporate Parenting Board receive this annual report and continues to support the work of One Adoption West Yorkshire to ensure our children in need of adoption and those adopted, receive the best possible outcomes and support.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield adoption functions as specified in the partnership agreement were delegated on the 1st April 2017 to Leeds City Council & One Adoption West Yorkshire formally opened on this date.
- 2.2 Adoption remains a key priority for the government and there are now 24 regional adoption agencies (RAA's) up and running covering 115 local authorities. A further 30 local authorities are involved in 8 projects to develop RAAs and 2 local authorities have plans to join an existing RAA. There are only 4 local authorities remaining that are not currently involved in an RAA project.
- 2.3 There continues to be a gap between children waiting and adopters available and an increase in the number of children waiting with a placement order for 18 months or more and the government have invested £645k to the adoption sector to improve the recruitment of adopters, with a key focus on attracting more adopters from the black and minority ethnic communities. A national campaign was due to commence in March but was postponed due to the coronavirus crisis.
- 2.7 The future of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) remains still remains uncertain although a cross party all parliamentary group fully supports the continuation of the fund and the fund is committed to continue until July 2021. The next Spending Review will hopefully clarify the longer term plans for the adoption support fund.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 COVID-19

3.1.1 OAWY response

The coronavirus has impacted on the whole service and although it emerged towards the latter end of the year it is important to address this issue before going onto review the progress over the year.

Our whole team have been working from home since the 18th of March. The team have adapted well and have found creative ways to ensure that families are supported and children's plans progressed as far as possible. We have been very aware of the impact on staff wellbeing as a large number of staff have been juggling caring for children at home as well as continuing to work. We have aimed to support staff with a range of materials and tips for self-care in these difficult times, and have advocated flexible working.

Despite Covid19 we have continued to receive enquiries from people interested in adopting and have quickly had to adapt how we carry out our recruitment and assessment of adopters. We have created a new online information film, complemented with regular live Facebook question and answer sessions, to replace our information events. And, whilst we are unable to carry out initial home visits and assessment sessions in person, we have put in place mechanisms for these to take place virtually for the most part.

With many GPs currently unable to offer appointments for medical assessments, we have implemented a self-declaration form for adopters in stage one of the process which will allow many applicants to proceed into the next stage of the process without the usual health check. However, further discussions are ongoing about this issue with health services as we cannot approve adopters until a health check has been fully completed.

Virtual Adoption Panels have quickly become the norm across the region and despite the length of panels being reduced, these have continued to progress with minimal delays. The lockdown has required us to put a lot of thought into how we move children on from foster care to adoption. Utilising technology to support the "getting to know you" phase of introductions has enabled us to move some children from foster care to adoption during this time. However, we approach these on a case by case basis, looking at the risks, so it has not been possible for all children, and unfortunately some plans have been delayed.

We continue to provide a social work service to 800 children via WhatsApp, Skype and telephone calls, and have been able to connect with our teen support group through video conferencing. Although our support groups, workshops and training are currently suspended, we are already exploring how we might deliver some of these differently, given the different audiences and modes of delivery available, taking into account security, ease of use and information governance.

Maintaining the letterbox service has been particularly important to us so we are encouraging families to use electronic means wherever possible, although we have been able to maintain a reduced service for hardcopy mail as well.

This is particularly anxious and uncertain time for birth families, with increased concerns about their children's wellbeing. Therefore we are working closely with our commissioned service, PAC/UK, to ensure support is available for families in our region.

Communication with staff and key stakeholders has been key and OAWY website and social media platforms are updated regularly to provide updates; all adopters on the OAWY mailing list have been emailed directly and the Duty line is still up and running with staff working from home and connecting via Enterprise Voice; Letterbox and internal mail is actioned by business support staff from each of the regional offices on a fortnightly rota.

The impact of the pandemic will be long lasting and the service is actively considering the longer term implications and adaptations required to ensure that we can maintain social distancing and provide a good quality service for children and families moving forward.

3.2 Use of Resources

3.2.1 Staffing

Staffing generally remains stable, although there are a few vacancies across the service due to the retirement of staff and staff being promoted within the service. Recruitment to posts was temporarily put on hold whilst we prioritised other areas of work with the current issues around COVID-19. However, recruitment activity has now started again.

One of our long standing service managers retired this year due to ill health and a temporary appointment was made to cover the position initially and is in the process of being made a permanent replacement. We have also had some changes with the team manager cohort during the year with two managers going on maternity leave and one manager leaving due to a change in personal circumstances. This has provided opportunities for internal staff to progress their career within the service.

During the course of the year there have also been a number of people leaving within the business support team and this had significant pressure on the service. However, four new staff have been recently appointed, increasing the capacity to better meet the needs of the service with two more members of staff recently recruited and awaiting start dates. There are a range of development opportunities within business support and some staff have taken up apprenticeships and we continue to look closely at staff retention in this area of the service. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays to both training and bringing in new staff and the team are looking at alternative ways to deliver induction and training for staff. All of the staff are currently working from home and have risen to the challenge incredibly well.

3.2.2 Duty System

Following on from an increase in the number of teams based at Kernel House last year a further evaluation of the duty system took place in the summer last year and changes were implemented in September 2019, which saw a 7 week

rota introduced with the Leeds office undertaking 3/7 weeks on the rota and Huddersfield and Bradford offices 2/7 weeks each.

There were 5,119 calls to the duty line during 2019/20. Due to COVID-19 the Duty line is being run by staff working from home and connecting via Enterprise Voice. During the lockdown the number of calls to the duty line is lower than usual, however the families that are calling in are tending to require longer and more in-depth support from the duty worker than typical calls.

3.2.3 Accommodation & service delivery

Work completed last summer moving from 5 office bases to 3 main office bases- with desk space remaining in Halifax and Wakefield. These moves have enabled three teams across recruitment and assessment, family finding and adoption support to be co-located with one service manager.

The increase in teams at Kernel House in Leeds is causing pressure on space and is causing difficulties for staff. Constructive discussions are underway with asset management to address this issue. However, COVID-19 has forced different ways of working. All staff are now working from home and making better use of the technology we have available. When things return to normal, some of these ways of working may be adopted permanently which may then ease pressure on office space and we will keep this under review.

3.2.4 Information Technology

The Bradford, Calderdale and Wakefield portals are now up and running effectively. This has proved to be essential as all staff are now working from home. Further work with Kirklees still needs to be progressed and discussed as some staff are still using two computers.

3.3 Partnership working

3.3.1 Operational leads meetings

The operational leads group continues to meet quarterly to discuss practice issues and have discussed a range of issues during the year from foster carer adoptions, adoption support, and access to records and most recently discussed transitions and moving children onto adoption. The coronavirus has created some clear difficulties moving children on and we are taking a case by case approach with a risk assessed decision being made and a guidance document has been provided for staff.

3.3.2 Centre of Excellence Project- adoption support

The Centre of Excellence project team came to an end at the end of March

2020. The local authorities and the clinical commissioning groups within health have agreed to fund a 3 year extension of the project to implement a multi- disciplinary team within OAWY working across the region. The team will consist of 12 staff with a Team Manager, 2 Therapeutic social workers, 2 Education workers, 1 Early Years Practitioner plus 1.5 Clinical Psychologists and an Assistant Psychologist, 1.2 Occupational Therapists and a Speech and Language Therapist. In addition the team will have access to consultancy support from Educational Psychologist, Paediatrician and Psychiatrist, and will 1.5 business support staff to support this work. We are working closely with Leeds Community Health Trust to recruit the health staff and there are some delays in taking this forward as health providers focus on the response to the COVID19 crisis.

During the course of the year the team has continued to work with the management team in OAWY providing support and training to embed the new assessment framework as part of the standard practices. The basic framework training has been completed in the Yorkshire and the Humber region, with over 150 professionals partaking in the two day training.

3.3.3 Agency Medical Advisors

The agency continues to communicate regularly with Medical Advisors across the region where there is a need to discuss practice issues. The medical advisor protocol remains in place and there have been some improvements in the availability of medical appointments across the region more recently.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted upon the capacity of medical advisors to offer medical advice in relation to children, adopters and to the Adoption Panels and for GP's to carry out medical assessments regarding prospective adopters. There has been a commitment across the region to continue providing medical advice in order to achieve permanence for children wherever possible and discussions with commissioners and providers have been progressed to ensure that this remains a key focus to prevent delay for children in moving to their permanent family. There will however, inevitably be some delay for children during this time.

3.3.4 Virtual school heads (VSH)

OAWY and the VSH continue to meet on a termly basis to share information around the issues that are currently impacting on adopted children and their families. It is an opportunity to build and develop the skills and knowledge in the region and promote a shared knowledge base for those who are living or working with these children. The Adoption Education Duty line continues to be used by parent's social workers and schools across the region and informs the VSH of the current challenges people are facing. Virtual Schools have

embraced the Secure Base Model – resulting in one authority effectively using parts of this model within their Personal Education Planning. It has been reported that the Virtual School representatives value this opportunity to come together to focus on this particular cohort of children and think about their needs. Information from the Schools’ Survey (which has been carried out twice across the region) will be a strong measure of the impact of the work and also identify areas where the group needs to focus next. Linking this meeting with grandparents plus project workers who support special guardians has been positive and further discussion is required to support this work moving forward.

3.3.5 Special Guardianship

The Grandparents plus contract has now being extended for a 2 year period. They have adapted their work since the restrictions came into play and this has been working well to date. The regional work around the policy development and financial support for special guardians has progressed well this year and a support plan template is currently being piloted in two local authorities. The management board have looked at a regional approach to financial support, with a refreshed financial assessment tool in the process of development and a revised policy framework. There have been some challenges around adopting a regional approach however there is a clear consensus on the aspiration to have a streamlined approach and this work is progressing well with decisions progressing through local governance arrangements for agreement.

3.4 Performance Management

3.4.1 The agency provides quarterly reports to the management board. This data provided has developed over the last 3 years and is gathered to ensure that we are aware of how much work is undertaken, how well was it undertaken and if anyone is any better off.

A) Sufficiency: Are enough of the right kind of adopters being recruited and approved to meet the needs of the children waiting:

3.4.2 The children with a plan for adoption during 2019/20

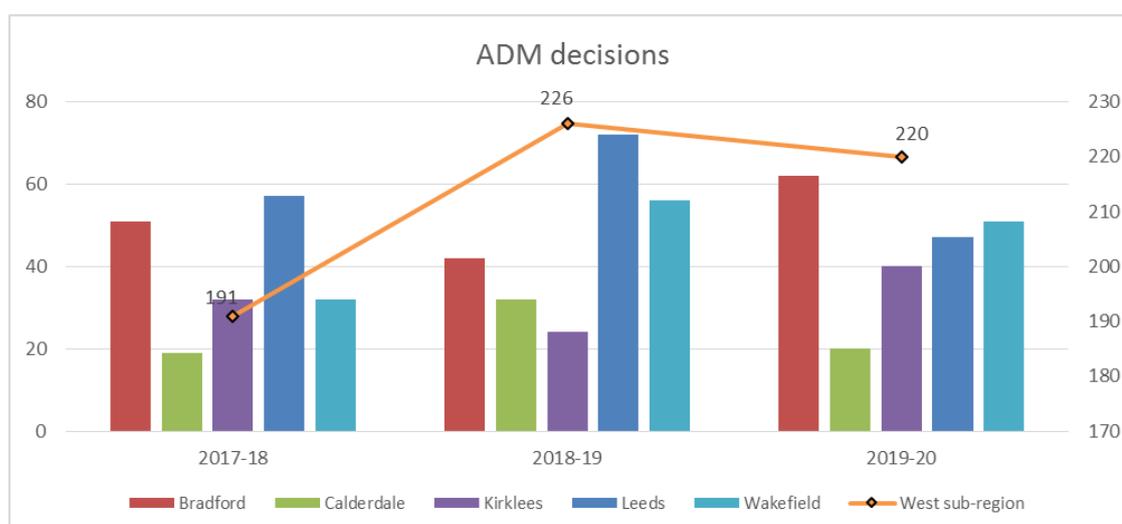
Between April 2019 and March 2020, 220 children had a plan for adoption ratified by the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities Agency Decision Makers. Of the 220 children with a plan for adoption, there were 109 female and 111 male children. In total, this is a minor change from last year's full year figure of 226 children from across the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities.

3.4.3 Ethnicity

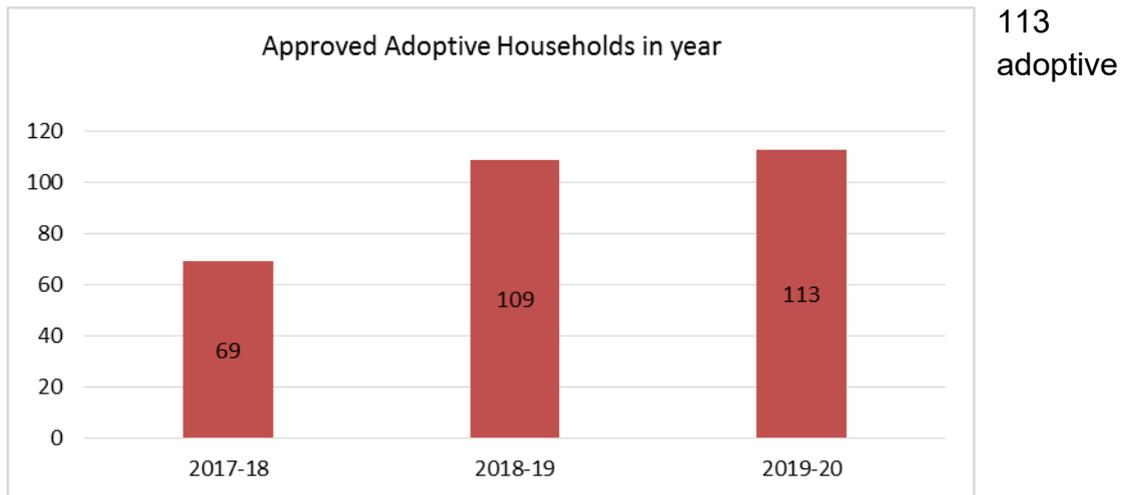
Of the 220 children with a plan for adoption ratified this year, 174 (79%) children were from white British backgrounds (including information not obtained) and 42 children (19%) were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, including children from eastern European, Gypsy Roma, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds.

3.4.4 Placement with Siblings

As a general principle, siblings will be placed together; however, due to the individual needs of children, this is not always appropriate and cannot always be achieved. It is essential that sibling assessments are carried out to ensure good quality decision making and support plans are evidence based if children are placed together or apart. Of the 71 individual siblings placed during the year, 23 individual children were placed apart, for which 22 the plan was to be placed apart.



3.4.5 Adopter recruitment



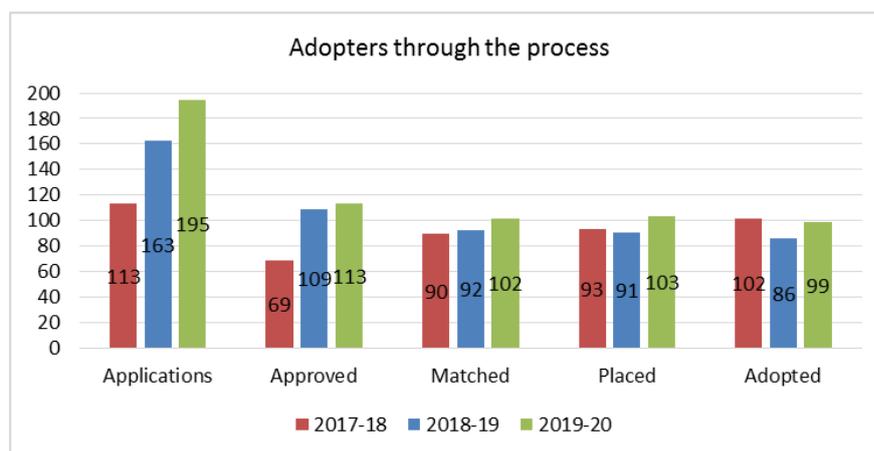
households were approved during the year and you will note from the table below that this is another increase from year-end 2017-18 and year end 2018-19.

Within the 113 households, 219 individuals were approved throughout 2019-20. Of these, 21 (10%) are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds (last year it was 11%). We need to improve our percentage of BME carers and keep a focus on ensuring that we approve a full range of adoptive families to meet the range of children requiring placement, while at the same time not relying on matching children with regard to ethnic identity as an overriding factor. We are undertaking some key focussed with My Adoption Family to increase the diverse range of adopters. Households approved for sibling groups decreased slightly this year with 16 households approved for sibling groups, 14 for 2 children; 2 approved for a sibling group of 3 and 34 households open to an Early Permanence Placements. There is still more to do around recruiting adopters for sibling groups and a new training programme was due to be implemented in April and due to Covid19 is now being adapted for an online course so implementation has been delayed.

3.4.6 Children currently with an adoption plan

As of the end of March 2020 there are 162 children with a plan for adoption and have a placement order, from the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities not currently placed and requiring adopters. 91 children out of the 162 are 0 - 2 years, 42 are between 2 and 4 years and 29 children are 5 years of age or older.

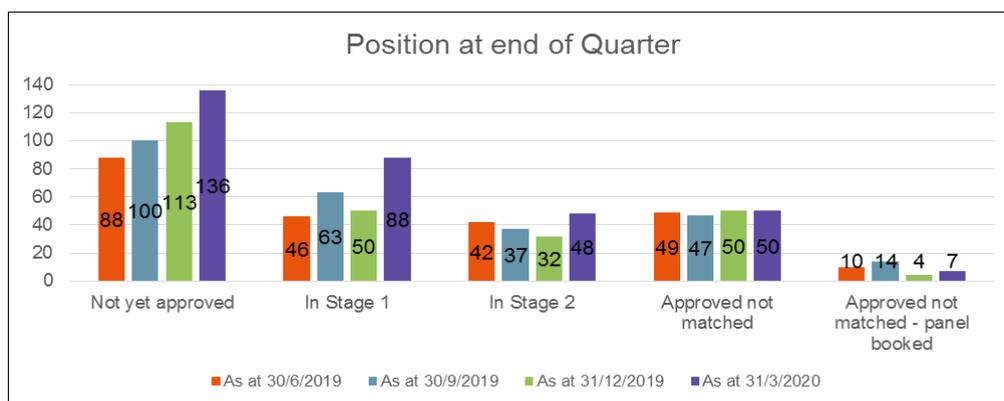
From the children waiting for a placement there are 110 girls and 116 boys, and 22% are children from BME backgrounds (including children from eastern European, Gypsy Roma, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds). 61 children are from sibling groups. The plans for these children are actively reviewed with the local authorities with clear monitoring and tracking systems to understand the range of family finding activity going on for these children and whether adoption remains the right plan for each child. The delays for these children are related primarily to the needs of the children; the need to place siblings together, the age of the children or their particular special needs or



complexity.

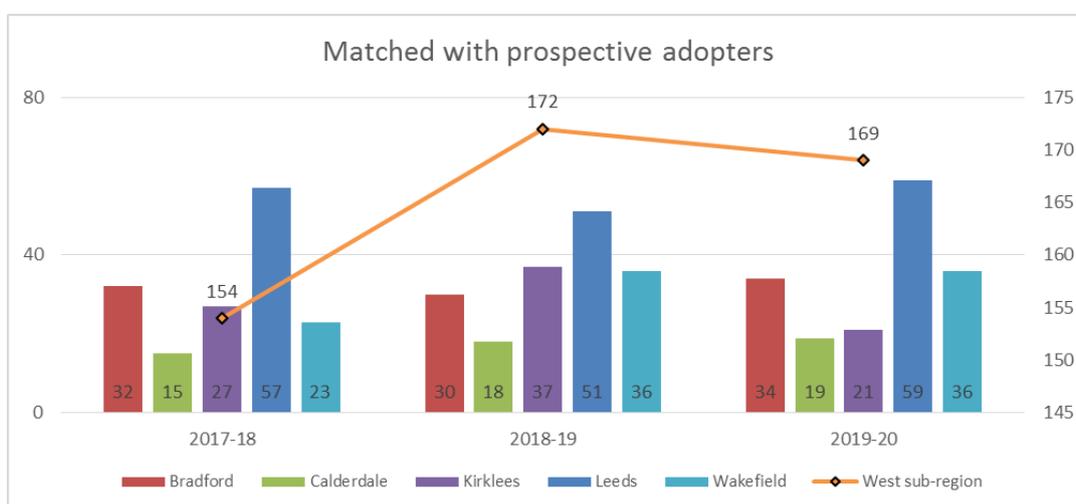
3.4.7 Adopters available

As of the end of March 2020, there are 50 approved adoptive households that have not been matched and 43 are in the process of looking and are in discussions about considering placements and 7 have a panel date booked.



On the

31st March 2020 113 adopters are in the process of assessment (in stage 1 or 2) although these will take a number of months to become approved. There is a steady increase in those within the assessment process overall.



B) Timeliness: Are children being matched and placed without delay including those children who wait longer?

3.4.8 Children matched in the year for adoption

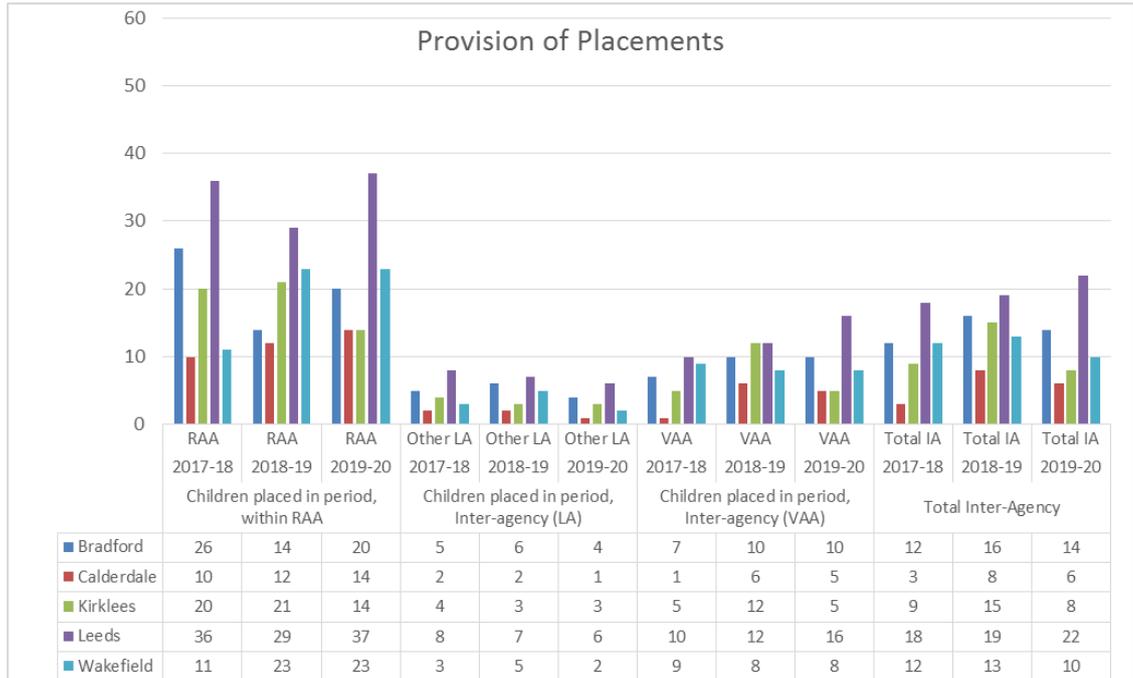
Between April 2019 and March 2020, 169 children from the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities were matched with families at adoption panels; this is a slight decrease of 3 children matched between April 2018 and March 2019 from across the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities. From April 2019 to March 2020, 25% (42) of the children matched were from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and this is extremely positive news as these children often wait longer to be placed.

- 130 of the children matched were 0 to 2 years old;
- 31 children matched were 2 to 4 years old;
- 8 children were aged 5 years or older;
- 72 children were part of a sibling group (of the 169 matched);
- 64 children (of the 169 matched) were placed who are part of a sibling group of which 23 were placed apart, 22 had a plan to place apart due to their individual needs;
- 14 children (of the 169 matched) had been previously placed in early permanence placements (8 during the year) of which 7 of these 14 children have been adopted in the year. This is a very positive step in reducing the number of moves for children before they reach their permanent family.

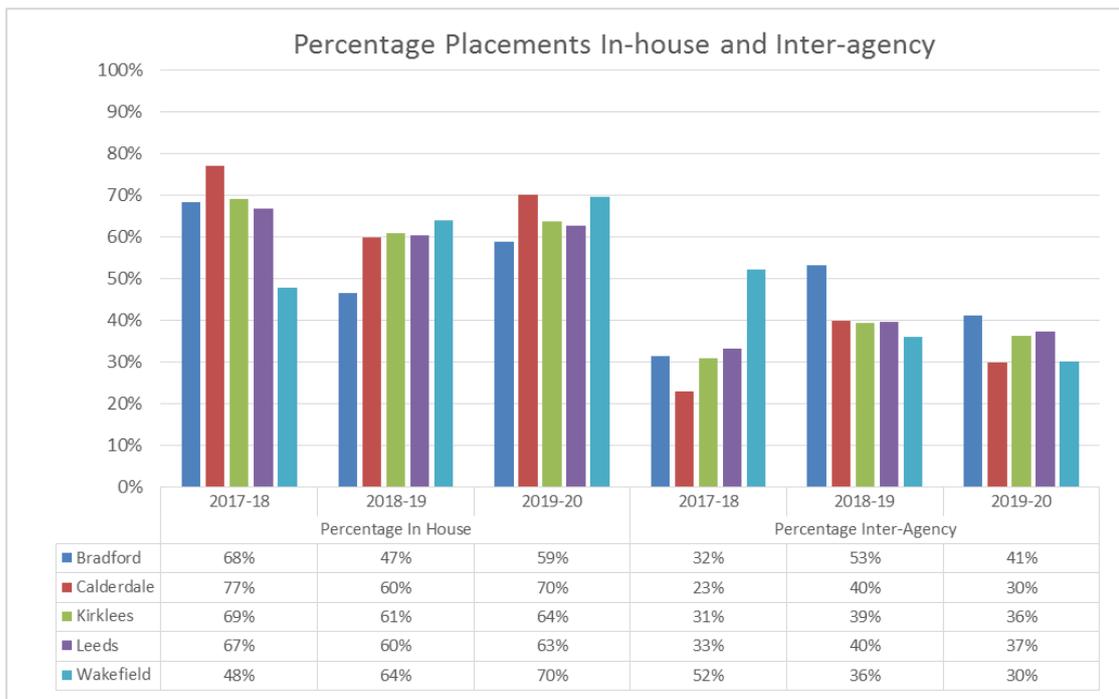
3.4.9 Provision of Placements

We placed 168 children this year. The percentage of placements provided in-house within the region has increased significantly this year.

- 108 children within OAWY;
- 16 children with other local authorities or other Regional agencies;
- 44 children with Voluntary Adoption Agencies



The percentage this year was 64% in house and 36% interagency. Last year it was 59% in house and 41% interagency. It is clear from the table below that the trends for LA's in the use of interagency placements has changed with all LA's increasing last year on the previous year but decreasing again this year.



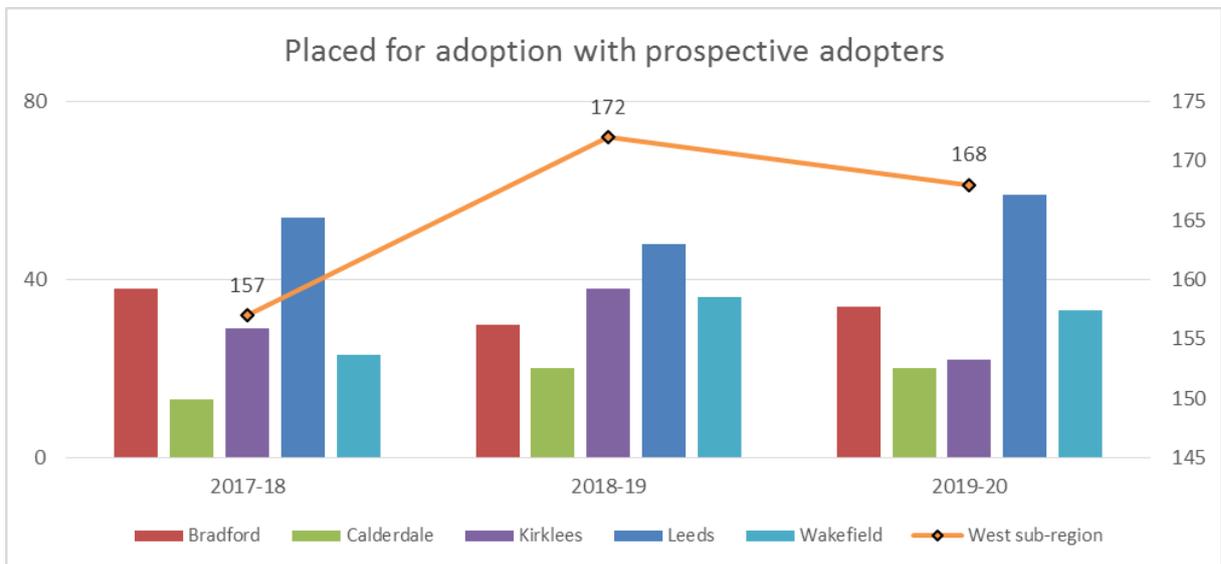
The following children were placed with adopters in the year. A number of

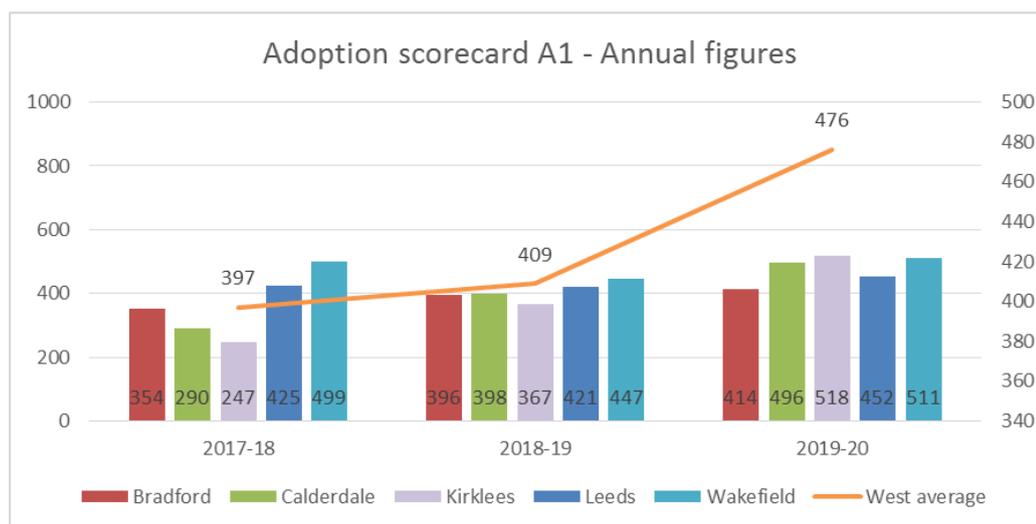
children expected to be placed before the end of the year had their placements delayed due to Covid 19 and their plans for moving in with their family are regularly reviewed and will take place as soon as is possible.

3.4.10 Adoption Scorecards

A1 indicator

The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (indicator A1) for children in West Yorkshire is 476 days, the National Indicator target is 426 days and the England 3 Year Average is 486). Whilst this is above the national target, it is below the England 3 year average and is based upon children adopted in the period.





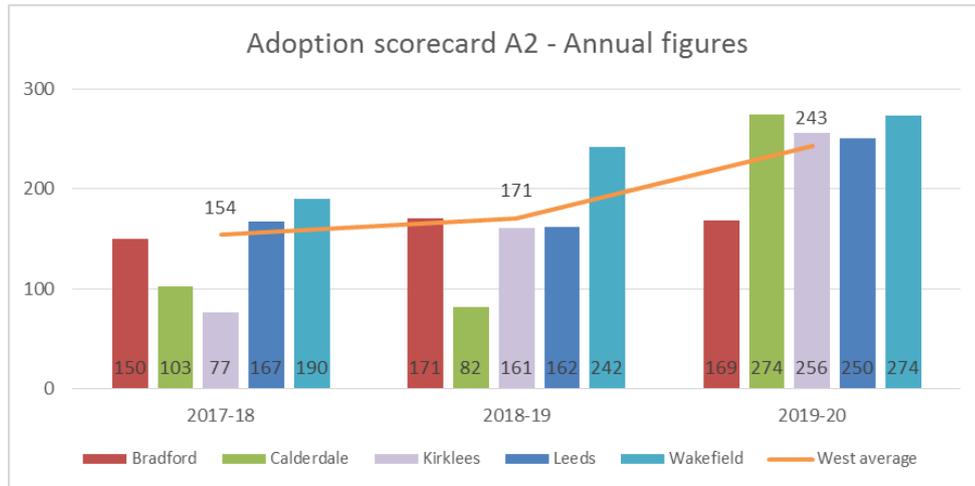
- 42 of the 174 children adopted entered care more than 3 years ago;
- 91 of the 174 children adopted were hard to place children;
- 67 of the 174 children adopted took more than 500 days between entering care and being placed,
- Of the 67 children that took more than 500 days 49 of the 67 were hard to place children with 22 having 2 or more characteristics

It is clear that there are some children where there have been some issues regarding drift in care planning and there are also some of the children being older and with more complex needs resulting in adoption taking longer to achieve. It is important to look at the individual local authorities but on the whole most of the children will have actually been placed in the last 3 years and formally adopted more recently, reflecting a number of years of local authority practice and care planning from a number of years ago.

A2 indicator

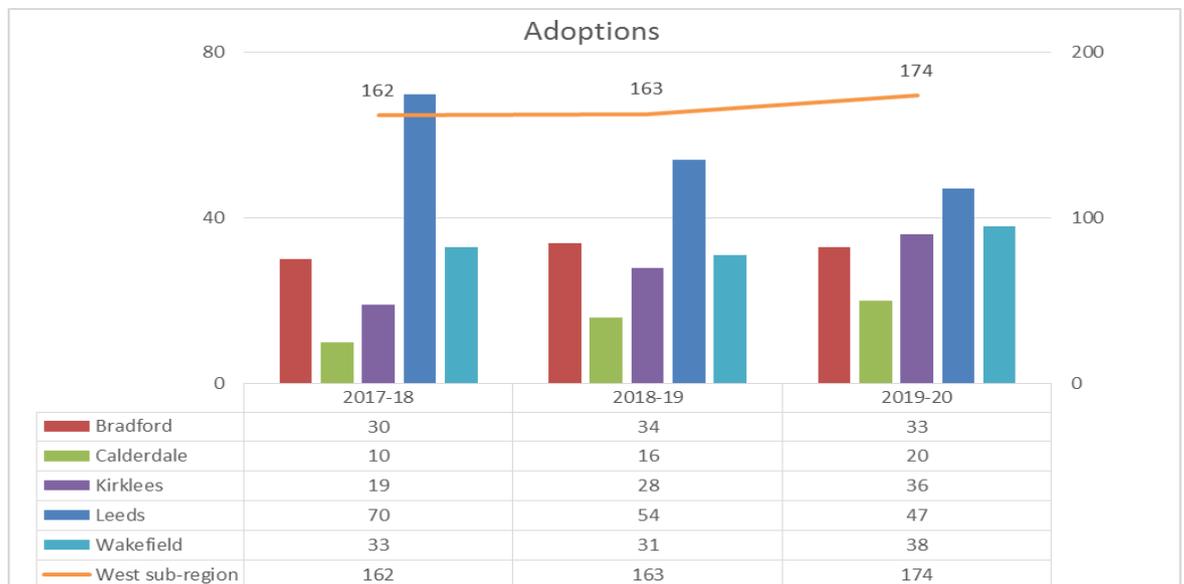
The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (Indicator A2) for children in West Yorkshire has increased to 243 days, the National indicator target is 121 days and the England three year average is

201. This is above the national indicator and reflects an issue of a national decline in the number of adopters available and the complexity of children waiting for adoption.



3.4.11 Children adopted from care

The number of children who have been formally adopted has increased by 11 (174) with 13% of children leaving care being adopted across the region. The National average is 12%.



3.5 Practice, quality of provision and management oversight

3.5.1 Recruitment and Assessment

In May 2019 Coram Baaf awarded OAWY the quality mark for Early Permanence Placements. This will assist us in attracting adopters and is a partnership approach with the five local authorities, giving confidence in the

court arena that adopters are fully prepared for this task and that support is available for all parties involved in these arrangements.

The use of Virtual Reality is now well embedded in our preparation and assessment of prospective adopters. We have trained an additional cohort of staff in the use of the VR headsets, in particular focusing on adoption support staff as there are new films soon to be available which will be relevant to adoption support work with content such as knife crime, county lines etc. We had training planned regarding the new content, which has been postponed due to COVID19. However, we have had 2D versions of the existing films made available for use in preparing prospective adopters in the interim.

The adopter preparation training has been fully reviewed and a new programme developed. This was due for implementation from April 2020. However, in response to COVID19 this is being reviewed further and an online preparation training program is currently being devised. Here are some comments from those attending the adopter preparation training:

- *Was great again having the adoptive parent there! Was great at answering any questions and it felt very real!*
- *Personable, patient, honest and realistic whilst still being positive;*
- *Excellent training and brilliant for preparing us as parents;*
- *I feel like I gained a lot of insight, knowledge and confidence from the training.*

The adopting sibling training programme has been developed, however, we have been unable to implement this as planned. We are currently exploring how this, and the EPP training, can be delivered virtually to prospective adopters. Here are some comments from those who have attended the EPP training:

- *Great training. Very honest and realistic;*
- *We were pretty sure we wanted to do EPP but the training confirmed we definitely do;*
- *The key learning for me was being able to listen to and ask questions to someone who has gone through the process and ask her opinions and thoughts;*

The review of the website has been ongoing. Proposals for the content and layout were shared with prospective adopters for their feedback. This will now be moved forward with the web developers. We hope to extend the online functions available to adopters, such as booking training, following the success of the online submission forms for visit requests and the Registration of Interest.

The impact of Covid19 on the pipeline of adopters coming through is not clear as yet. We had to cease the information event for a period of five weeks during the first phase of lockdown and given that we had a backlog of enquiries to deal with once we got the information event online this suggests we may not have an issue in due course. However, the impact of not being able to approve adopters due to the lack of medical assessment and advice is one we need to keep a close eye on in the coming months.

3.5.2 Adoption Panels

A review of adoption panels was undertaken throughout January and February 2020. It found that despite there being 7 panels taking place on a monthly basis, with three chairs and a varied membership, there is a high degree of consistency in the implementation of panel protocols. Recent recruitment to Business Support vacancies has improved the efficiency of panels, for example in relation to outcome letters being distributed in a timelier manner.

In response to COVID-19 Adoption Panels are now taking place virtually, with members joining the meeting via video or conference call. Despite some small technical issues, overall panels are going well and positive feedback has been received. Prospective adopters are not currently routinely 'attending' panel; this is something we will continue to review as panel members and attendees become increasingly confident with the technology. We have reduced the number of items on each panel due to the new way of working, but have capacity to provide additional panels, should they be required.

3.5.3 Family Finding

Agreement was reached that a research informed practice model developed by the University of East Anglia for moving children from foster care to adoption be adopted in the region and implemented in Leeds and Calderdale in the first instance and discussions have taken place to support services with this, including training for foster carers and there have been a number of introductions that have taken place utilising this model. In the other areas where full implementation has yet not been possible, elements of this model have been used, such as a greater use of video calls to familiarise children with their new families in the getting to know you stage.

Due to the current restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic introductions have more widely utilised technology and whilst a number of transitions have taken place some have been delayed due to a range of issues relating to the health needs of children, adopters and foster carers, the distance and logistics in being able to undertake transitions. Where plans have been delayed these are

kept under regular review.

The children's profiling events continued to take place with the last event being in January, inviting adoptive families from across the region and beyond to consider a selection of children awaiting adoption who were featured with high quality photos, DVDs and personalised displays. 22 families attended and we featured 34 profiles totalling 49 children, resulting in 17 expressions of interest. 2 of these expressions of interest have led to linking visits and 1 is being explored further.

Fun Days were piloted in 2019/20 with 2 being held resulting in 4 children being matched. The 3rd Fun Day, scheduled for March, was cancelled due to COVID-19. The Fun Days were very well received by those attending. Comments from the adopters who attended stated *"A really great experience. Well worth it;"* and *"it was great to talk to the foster carers about the children and to meet the children"*.

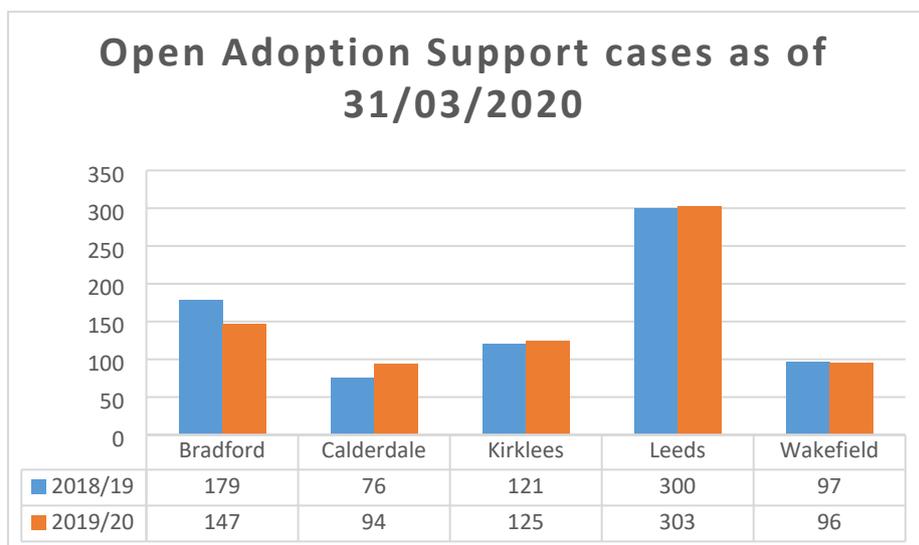
We are exploring undertaking profiling events virtually so that these can continue during this period of uncertainty, the profiling events have had a positive impact in raising the understanding of adopters of the needs of children with a plan of adoption and have led to a number of matches.

We have progressed with commissioning 30 placements from the Voluntary agencies alliance in order for children to move into families within the region. This faltered slightly with the impact of Covid-19 but the contract was awarded on the 28st May.

3.5. 4 Adoption Support

a) **Adoption support:** Do children and families have timely access to high quality support services?

The service has continued to provide a direct social work service to almost 800 children. There continues to be a number of families waiting for allocation for an assessment of their support needs not on the allocated list below, however this number is reducing following some increased capacity and different processes put in place to manage new enquiries from families. Workers have successfully applied for £1.78m funding from the Adoption Support Fund for therapy services for children and their families.



Since the introduction of restrictions as result of Covid-19 Social workers have been maintaining contact with families via virtual means, this has meant we have had to consider the way we work with families and how we deliver of our core offer of support.

Through most of the year we have continued to provide a number of events and support groups for adoptive families across the region including non-violent resistance, Foundations for Attachment, Therapeutic Playgroup, and Sensory Integration programmes. We have put on workshops across the region for parents on Brain Based Parenting, Education, and Therapeutic Parenting. However, these are all currently suspended and we are currently exploring how we might deliver some of these via more virtual platforms in light of the current restrictions.

We are very mindful about the difficulties COVID-19 places upon families and we have provided updated information about the service with links to a range of online resources for people to access.

The letterbox service has continued to facilitate over 5,000 exchanges across the region. Work is nearing completion in creating electronic records for children who have an arrangement. Since the Covid-19 restrictions we have continued to scan and email letters wherever possible.

Through our contract with PAC/UK they have been able to amend their offer to remote working to continue to offer their existing service. They have also been working with us particularly to ensure that birth families are supported as this can be a very anxious time for both birth families anxious about the welfare of their children.

3.5.5 Peer Mentoring – PAC-UK/ Adoption UK

There are now 27 active peer mentors (Bradford 4, Calderdale 1, Kirklees 3,

Leeds 17 and Wakefield 2) supporting 56 families across the region. The table below shows the number of referrals received and the number that have gone on to access the service broken down by area.

No. referrals 19/20	Brad	Cald	Kirkls	Leeds	Wkfld	Total
Received	19	3	11	37	9	79
Accepted Support	15	3	9	25	8	60

Here are some comments from those accessing the mentoring service:

- *We would highly recommend the mentoring service. We have a very close knit support group with our family and friends however they don't all fully understand what we are always going through so having the mentoring service available has been invaluable to us;*
- *It was an outstanding experience, having somebody who was able to listen and discuss different aspects of the adoption process with.*
- *The mentoring scheme has allowed me to ask questions throughout the process as they come to mind, it is reassuring to have someone there to chat to 'as and when' I need to.*

3.5.5 Non Agency Adoption

One Adoption West Yorkshire undertakes non-agency adoption on behalf of Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield councils, Bradford and Leeds councils undertake their own.

Over the last 12 months there were a total of 38 enquiries received for non-agency adoption. 61% of enquiries were from families living in Wakefield, 21% were from families living in Calderdale and 18% were from families living in Kirklees.

Over the past 12 months we received 24 Notifications of intention to apply for an order we received with 38% from families living in Kirklees, 33% were from families living in Wakefield and 29% were from families living in Calderdale.

Over the past 12 months there were 14 non-agency adoption orders granted, 43% were for families from Calderdale, 36% were for families from Wakefield and 21% were for families from Kirklees.

3.5.7 Disruptions

There were 7 disruptions of adoption placements (pre adoption order) during 2019/20 which relate to 6 placements (2 children were part of a sibling group). This is an increase from last year of 4 disruptions. The children's ages at

disruption ranged from 11 months old to 10 years, the length of placement ranged from 9 days to 5 months. Of the 6 placements, 1 of these was an in-house placement and 5 external (RAA, LA and VAA) placements. Some of the themes from the review of these are as follows:

- The majority of placements were at distance;
- In 2 cases there were risks identified in progressing to adoption, one being the age of the child (who was 9 at the time of placement) and one where it was recognised that there would be a high need for therapeutic support;
- Access to local service provision where placements are at a distance is at times challenging;
- Presenting behaviour of the child in placement and adoptive parents ability to cope with the level of need;
- Experiences of children in early life;
- Initial preference for approval age for 2 sets of adopters was lower than the age of the child placed with them;
- Lack of connection developed between the adoptive parent and child (2 cases).

A detailed review of the themes emerging from disruptions is been undertaken and will be used to share learning with partner agencies.

3.5.8 Quality Assurance

One Adoption West Yorkshire has developed a practice improvement framework and is committed to an improvement culture of learning. The principal sources of feedback are:

- Views of Children and Families: The views and experiences of children & young adults;
- Performance Data: Any statistical data that helps us judge the quality and effectiveness of our professional practice;
- Practice Wisdom & Knowledge: The practice wisdom of those staff who work with children, young people and families, adoption panels and learning from disruptions;
- The findings of external and internal inspections, audits and evaluations of our practice.

A Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism for panel work is used as a matter of course and has found that the majority of prospective adopter reports (PARS) were of a good or outstanding standard (8% outstanding, 74% good, 2% satisfactory, 8% requiring improvement and 8% not recorded). This is an improvement on last year's figure. The Child Permanence Reports (CPR's) provided by local authority social workers over half were considered good or

outstanding (3% outstanding, 54% good, 12% satisfactory, 29% requiring improvement and 2% not recorded) - this is a slight improvement on last year. OAWY continue to work with the 5 local authorities to raise the quality of CPR's and support them with training and development work more detailed feedback is provided for each local authority.

With regard to feedback from service users at adoption panels; an online survey was introduced this year and return rates have been low. However, we will be working to improve the return rate. 7 questionnaires were received from attendees at panel who could rate the overall experience as either very good, good, neither good nor poor, poor or very poor. All responses rated the experience as very good or good.

- 6 (85.7%) respondents rated the experience as very good;
- 1 (14.3%) respondents rated the experience as good.

There were 23 complaints made regarding the Adoption Service during 2019/20. Eleven complaints related to post-adoption support or payments, four focused on letter box contact issues, four were unhappy with the assessment process, three were about staff attitude/customer service and one for delays in the adoption process. 21 complaints were resolved at stage one and of the stage one responses three were inconclusive or locally resolved, four were not upheld, eleven were partially upheld and three were fully upheld. Each year we look at any themes arising from complaints to ensure that we can learn from these and feedback into practice improvement.

3.5.9 Case File Audits

Dip sampling case file audits was undertaken with three Local authorities to look at family finding activity for those children waiting (Leeds, Wakefield and Kirklees). The Head of Service, Service managers and team managers also complete audits to look at the quality of work and the preparation of adopters, adoption support work and planning for the children which is generally of a good quality. An audit schedule has been agreed for 2020/21 and results are reported quarterly into OAWY SLT.

3.5.10 Voice and Influence of Children, Young People and Adopters

Appendix 1 provides the Voice and Influence of Children, Young People and Adopters report card. This highlights examples of work undertaken to capture the views of service users to help develop and shape the service.

3.6 **Continuous Professional and Service Development**

3.6.1 Staff development and support

All of the staff receive regular monthly supervision and have an appraisal. This is an opportunity for staff to ensure that there is reflection regarding their work and addresses their own personal and professional development and practice.

3.6.2 Training

During 2019/20 a range of training has been delivered across the teams. Here are some highlights:

- Post-commencement training for Adoption Support Managers;
- Non Violent Resistance - Level 1 and Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) - Level 1 for Adoption Support workers;
- Attachment Style Interview training for recruitment workers;
- Virtual Reality training;
- Transitions – delivered by Professor Beth Neil at an all staff event;
- Introduction to Theraplay, Parenting with PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) and Neuroscience & Trauma at a Recruitment & Assessment and Family Finding development day.

A skills gap analysis for social work staff was completed in 2019/20 which is directing a staff development plan. Training workshops on trauma and home inventory scheduled for delivery in April and May '20 had to be cancelled but will be re-booked when possible. Plans are also in place to source training for DDP level 1 and 2 as well as Theraplay level 1 and 2 during 2020/21.

The Business support team has worked together to agree a core competency framework which will link to annual appraisals and feed into the further development of bespoke training for business support staff. A number of training opportunities are available and a number of staff have taken up apprenticeships.

The family finding teams across West Yorkshire provide regular clinics to local authority social workers within the region to provide information, advice and support regarding individual cases and processes in adoption. Workshops are also provided across the region focussed on key themes, i.e. child permanence reports, early permanence placements and direct work with children. OAWY also contribute to newly qualified social work programmes, legal training in some areas of the region as well as supporting foster carer groups and contributing to sessions focussed on adoption.

OAWY delivered a conference at the end of January regarding Adoption & Contact –valuing relationships and identity. This was well received with 185 social work practitioners present from across England. The feedback was

24

excellent. There is a real appetite for change and progressing practice around this area of work and we are looking at a follow up workshop with adopters, birth parents and social workers to explore the issues further.

3.6.3 Strategic issues and forward plans

OAWY's plan on a page, Appendix 2, outlines the vision, mission, outcomes and priorities up to 2020/21. Activities linked to the delivery of the plan are tracked through the OAWY Service Improvement Plan. Work will commence this year with a forward three year plan to be ready for the end of 20/21.

4.3 Resources and value for money

4.3.1 The 2019/20 final outturn position of OAWY was £5k underspend.

There were some pressures on the 2019/20 budget specifically the shortfall of Inter Agency Income £247k and Commissioned Services of £109k, however, these was mitigated by Staffing savings of £139k, Inter Agency expenditure savings of £22k and a combination of additional income (£195k) and running cost savings of £5k.

5. Conclusions

5.1 We continue to see the increase in adopters coming into the process which is positive and children who generally wait longer for adoption are moving in with their adoptive families. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many challenges for the service and we have adapted quickly to the new "norm". We are now starting to reflect and think about how we operate moving forward with social distancing likely to be in place for a long period of time. There are many things that we have started that we will continue to do in the future and we have kept a learning log to help us understand what has worked well and what has not worked well to inform future planning. The staff in the agency are extremely committed and passionate about improving outcomes for children in the region and to being part of a developing a flagship adoption service that promotes and develops best practice.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

It is a regulatory requirement on the Local Authority that this report is prepared and presented to the Corporate Parenting Board of the Council. The report is linked to the corporate risk on Safeguarding Children.

7. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are no legal issues arising.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

OAWY completed a full Equality Impact Assessment in 2018 and is an appendix to the annual report. This will be reviewed in the coming year. The current assessment can be found at Appendix 3.

8.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

8.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

The reduction in travel for staff across the region supports the greenhouse gas emissions impact in reducing the carbon footprint associated with car travel. At a staff event in October 2019 ideas were collated to reduce the environmental impact of the agency. Since March 2020 all staff have been working from home, significantly reducing the carbon footprint associated with car travel. Exploration with staff is ongoing regarding the future work of the agency and how travel can be maintained at an essential level.

8.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no community safety implications in this report.

8.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no issues relating to human rights

8.6 TRADE UNION

Consultation with Trade Unions takes place when required.

8.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no ward implications

8.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Not applicable

8.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Bradford local authority have a corporate parenting responsibility for children

where there is plan to place a child for adoption and the annual report is presented to the board to ensure that elected members have oversight of the work of the local authority and the regional adoption agency .

8.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

There are no issues in this regard.

9. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

10. OPTIONS

This report is for information and for the panel to note the report and continue to support the work the local authority and OAWY regarding adoptive families.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Corporate Parenting Panel receives this report and continues to support the work of One Adoption West Yorkshire and the local authority to ensure our adopted children and families receive the best possible support.

12. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Voice and Influence of Children and adopters
- Appendix 2 3 year plan on a page
- Appendix 3 Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment
- Appendix 4 Bradford Highlight Report 2019/20



**Voice and Influence of Adopters, Children & Young People report
Card
April 2019 to March 2020**

Outcome: Children and adoptive families to have an influence over decisions affecting their families' lives and the services we provide.

Best ideas - what has worked?

Prospective adopters wanted more opportunities for adopter led matching

Profiling Events

The Profiling events give prospective adopters information about children waiting for adoption in the region.

OAWY have delivered 5 events this year which have resulted in 8 matches so far:

- April event; 2 matches (2 children);
- July event; 1 match (1 child);
- Sept' event; 2 matches (2 children);
- Nov' event; 1 match (2 children);
- Jan' event; 2 matches (2 children) with 2 further links being explored



Here is some of the positive feedback from those who attended the events:

- *Very friendly and welcoming staff;*

- *Informative and questions answered;*
- *Welcoming and fully explained;*
- *Very approachable and professional.*

OAWY Fun Days!



OAWY held its first Fun Day in June 2019 and its second in October 2019. This was in response to prospective adopters getting a better understanding of the children waiting for adoption in the region. The Fun Day is a chance for adopters (OAWY & external) to meet some of the children who are waiting to be adopted, allowing them to interact with the children in an enjoyable environment. The children who attended these events were those who would typically wait longer to be adopted. There is careful preparation for these events with children, their foster carers and adopters.

The June and October events resulted in 4 matches for 4 children (2 internal and 2 external) and 27 expressions of interest overall. Here are some of the comments from the adopters who attended:

- *Really great experience. Well worth it;*
- *It was so useful to meet the children and their carers, it was invaluable;*
- *...it was great to talk to the foster carers about the children and to meet the children..;*
- *Thank you. It was a really nice event, I enjoyed it;*
- *We loved the day. Thank you;*
- *Very friendly atmosphere made welcome.*

A further event had been scheduled for March but this had to be postponed. Due to the success of the first 2 events more will be scheduled when it is safe to do so.



10 Out of 15 Adopteens Youth Council members are from West Yorkshire. Here is some of the work Adopteens have completed or been involved in this year:

- Youth council session held in January – ARC adoption came to discuss their digital life story work and gather young people’s views. Also completed work around the One Adoption (OA) questions on letterbox, life story and contact;
- Activity day has been held – a photography workshop based at the Hepworth. Great workshop, positive feedback;
- A young person presented at the OA conference on Contact at end of February;
- Have been running a series of song writing workshops in association with Sea glass collective. 7 members of Adopteens have attended these workshops – a series of 3 workshops with a gig at the end of it where musicians will perform some of the songs that the young people have written;
- 2 x Young people sat on interview panel for Service delivery manager.

Adopteens Timeline Animation

- <https://youtu.be/ZA-5DCCK-8E> This animation completed by young people in the Adopteens group as they reflect on important stages in their lives, sharing their thoughts and feelings about the various support they have received providing important messages for professionals and parents and carers. This is a useful learning tool for anyone professionally and/or personally linked to adoption and has been shared with corporate parenting boards and at conferences. Please share widely.

Adopter Voice

Adopter Voice continue to influence and help us improve the adoption service. Here are some highlights:



- A Facebook group for adopters in Yorkshire and Humber is in place with 530 members. Over 200 of these members are from West Yorkshire. This fantastic online community helps adopters to support each other and they offer views and opinions from questions posed about practice and to test ideas with.
- Adopter feedback is influencing changes to contact, life story work and introductions within OAWY;
- There are now 25 peer mentors supporting over 70 families.



Early Permanence Placement (EPP)



This training provides an overview of the process that identifies children where EPP may be in their interests. It also provides an opportunity for prospective adopters to increase their understanding of the role of EPP carers in order to inform their decision making.

Here are some comments from those who have attended this training:

- *We had brief understanding of what EPP was going in however we have a clear understating now that we have done the session;*
- *Great training. Very honest and realistic;*
- *We were pretty sure we wanted to do EPP but the training confirmed we definitely do;*
- *The key learning for me was being able to listen to and ask questions to someone who has gone through the process and ask her opinions and thoughts;*
- *A great experience and being able to ask questions in an open environment was just what we needed.*

Connected by Adoption

Connected by Adoption is an informal, one day training event that offers relatives and close friends of those adopting the opportunity to ask questions, feel involved and to speak with others in a similar situation. The main reasons parents adopt are discussed, myths dispelled and a there is discussion of the changes in the adoption process over the years. We also look at how connected people can learn about embracing a child's identity when they join an adoptive family, and how to help a child feel securely embedded into their new family.



Here are some comments from those who have attended:

- *With little prior knowledge of the formal adoption process, the information was very useful and informative. It certainly gave us a very good introduction to how we can assist to help a successful adoption;*
- *I feel much more enabled to provide support on a practical and emotional level;*
- *Knowledge gained will, we feel, be of great benefit.*

Birth Parent – Twilight Session

Adopted teenagers talk about the importance of identity and lifelong relationships & birth families and adoptive families are key in helping children develop a coherent sense of identity, usually through contact arrangements and being open with children about their history. Many adoptive families have misconceptions about birth parents and therefore we have introduced workshops in preparation training, delivered by birth parents talking about their experiences of contact. The introduction of this has been very powerful for adopters and has helped dispel myths about birth parents.



Here are some comments from the adopters who have attended:

- *It's really eye-opening to hear about things from the birth parents' point of view;*
- *I really enjoyed this session, it was good to hear stories from the other side!*

- *The session really cemented the benefits for contact. Helps to see the wider perspective and aids in being able to feel empathy for birth parents. An extremely valuable session;*
- *It helped me to ensure I am patient and sympathetic towards birth parents no matter how hostile they might appear. I wished I could give them a hug;*
- *It was nice to hear the other side of adoption, I can honestly say I hadn't thought of it from the side of the birth parents;*
- *It was nice to hear the stories of the birth parents. It must be so hard for them and for them to sit there and tell people their story and their feelings was amazing.*

Best ideas - what next?

Contact Review – Adopter Voice

A review of contact is taking place across One Adoption (West and North). Adopter Voice have surveyed adopters on this subject which has so far had 212 responses. Once the survey is closed and the evaluation complete the findings will be fed into the contact project. We are also working closely with PAC-UK to ensure we capture the voice of birth parent/ family and their views are fed into the contact review.

adoptervoice

Creating empowerment and engagement for the adoption community

PAC-



PAC-UK



UK are

working with birth parents across the region to provide a guide specifically for birth parents which explains the processes leading from care proceedings to adoption and post order. Most guides are written by workers using their language and understanding, this may overlook what birth family need. A guide written by birth parents for birth parents in a language they understand may improve engagement. Taking part might help those contributing to feel they have helped others.

One Adoption Website Review



During 2020/21 we will be working with our web developers and One Adoption North and Humber to redesign the One Adoption website. The website is the gateway to the agency and often the first contact a prospective adopter will have with us, so it's really important that it presents us as professional, forward thinking and an agency they would like to adopt with.

Now more regional adoption agencies are in existence our current website is starting to look outdated and doesn't offer the functionality many people now expect in a modern website. Competitor analysis has already been undertaken, alongside needs analysis with both regional agencies. An adopter survey has also been developed to obtain user insight. The redesign is not about changing the branding (logo, colour scheme etc.), it is about making the public-facing section of website more user friendly, improving the look and feel and improving the content. The redesigned website will include a new area for birth families which will provide online support and advice as well as signpost to direct support services.

Appendix 2

ONE ADOPTION WEST YORKSHIRE'S PLAN: 2018/19 - 2020/21

Our Vision: To be a flagship adoption agency that develops & promotes best practice, improving adoption standards nationally.

Our Mission: To find loving families who can meet the needs of children & offer an innovative & supportive approach to all those affected by adoption.

What we'll do:

4 Outcomes:

1. Children move into their adoptive family without delay;
2. Families get help and support at every stage of the adoption journey;
3. Children have good quality care, a sense of belonging and stability within their adoptive family;
4. Children, adoptive and birth parents and adopted adults are listened to and have an influence in decisions that affect them and service development;

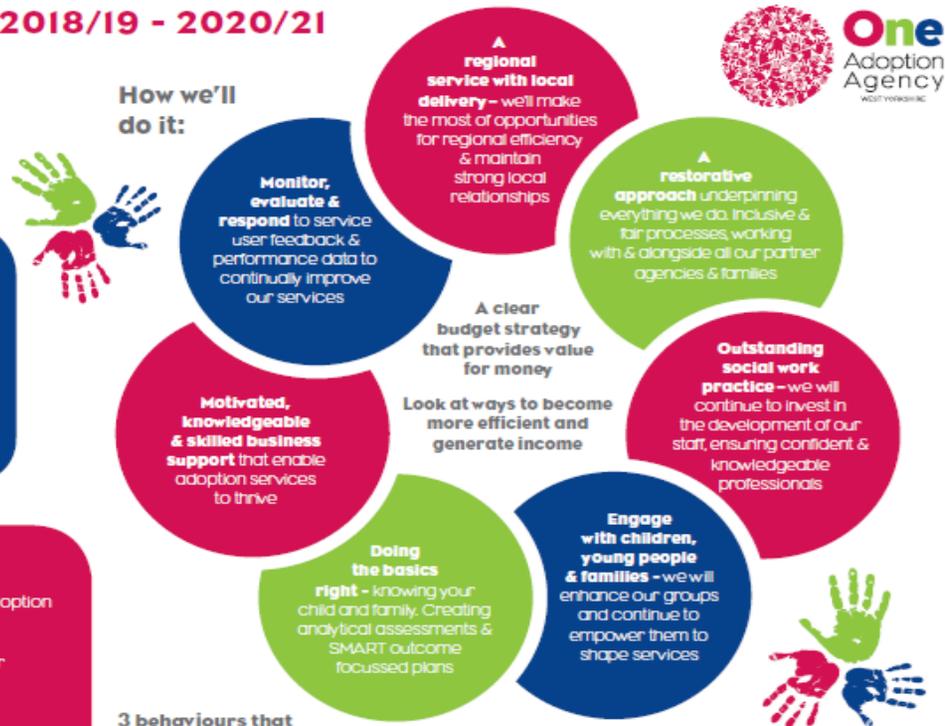
8 Priorities:

1. Recruit & assess sufficient numbers of adopters to meet the needs of our children;
2. Work with Local Authorities & partners to:
 - Improve early identification of children and further develop the use of EPP across the region;
 - Develop practice around identity (relationships with birth families & life story work);
 - Develop knowledge and understanding about matching with adopters who are committed, flexible, open communicators and are willing to access support.
3. Develop our staff team & panel members to ensure all our children & families receive consistently excellent service & support;
4. Implement a consistent offer of adoption support across OAWY;
5. Develop a Centre of Excellence for Adoption Support;
6. Create new partnerships with organisations that will help us achieve our outcomes;
7. Establish & promote a peer mentoring scheme;
8. Continue to work with Adopter Voice, AT-ID & birth families;

3 Obsessions:

1. Increase the number of adopters recruited
2. Timely placement of children with families
3. Quality of support provided

How we'll do it:



3 behaviours that underpin everything:

1. Listening & responding to the voice of the child;
2. Restorative Practice: doing with not for or to;
3. Outcomes based accountability is anyone any better off?

How we'll know if we've made a difference:

- Increased the numbers of adopters recruited & approved
- Positive service user feedback
- Reduced timescale in which children are placed with adoptive parent(s)
- Evaluation from Adoption Support Fund;
- High level of family stability maintained
- A range of established service user groups that feed directly into our business planning.



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As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. In all appropriate instances we will need to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment.

This form:

- can be used to prompt discussion when carrying out your impact assessment
- should be completed either during the assessment process or following completion of the assessment
- should include a brief explanation where a section is not applicable

Directorate: Children & Families	Service area: One Adoption West Yorkshire
Lead person: Sarah Johal	Contact number: 07891277316
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: February 2018	

1. Title: One Adoption West Yorkshire

Is this a:

Strategy /Policy
 Service / Function
 Other

If other, please specify

2. Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team e.g. service user, manager of service, specialist
Sarah Johal	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire
Mary Brudenell	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Service Delivery Manager, One Adoption West Yorkshire
Julie Chew	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Service Delivery Manager, One Adoption West Yorkshire
Mandy Prout	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Service Delivery Manager, One Adoption West Yorkshire
Aretha Hanson	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Business Support Manager, One Adoption West Yorkshire
Richard Stevenson	One Adoption West Yorkshire	Practice Improvement & Development Manager, One Adoption West Yorkshire

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:

In 'Regionalising adoption' in June 2015 the Government set out its commitment to

markedly improve outcomes for children through the delivery of a regional adoption system where:

- children are matched with the most suitable adopter as quickly as possible;
- recruitment takes place at an efficient scale to provide a pool of 'adoption ready' adopters large enough and well enough matched to the needs of children waiting and;
- enough high quality adoption support services are available nationwide.

One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) was the first Regional Adoption Agency to go-live on the 1st of April 2017. OAWY is made up of the 5 separate Local Authority adoption agencies which provided adoption services for West Yorkshire; Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield and is the largest adoption agency in the North of England.

This new agency is designed to offer an innovative and adopter friendly approach to adoption recruitment, adoption support, and family finding for children and prospective adopters as well as high quality training.

By working together we will provide even higher levels of expertise and support to our adoptive families at all stages of the adoption process and with the inspiration and direction provided by our adoptive parents we will ensure that we provide the kind of support that families want and need.

We want every child to have a family to grow up in and we need more adoptive parents to play a vital role in fulfilling this vision. Adoption is an exciting and challenging experience for everyone involved. We are seeking adoptive parents from all walks of life to reflect the range of children we have who are looking for a secure home with patience, understanding and loving kindness.

This Assessment looks at how OAWY considers Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration throughout the adoption process. It will also highlight areas that need to be improved and the actions that will be taken to address them.

4. Scope of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment
(complete - 4a. if you are assessing a strategy, policy or plan and 4b. if you are assessing a service, function or event)

4a. Strategy, policy or plan

(please tick the appropriate box below)

The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes and the supporting guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific section within the strategy, policy or plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail:

4b. Service, function, event please tick the appropriate box below	
The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A specific part of the service (including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please provide detail: This assessment will cover the three core elements of service delivery; Recruitment and Assessment, Family Finding and Adoption Support and the services users; the child/ adopted person, people wishing to adopt, adopters, birth parent and staff.</p>	

<p>5. Fact finding – what do we already know Make a note here of all information you will be using to carry out this assessment. This could include: previous consultation, involvement, research, results from perception surveys, equality monitoring and customer/ staff feedback.</p> <p>(priority should be given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration related information)</p> <p>There are no restrictions to adoptive applicants regardless of age, religion/ belief/ faith, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race or if they are a trans person, provided they are deemed to be able to meet the needs of the child/ children they wish to adopt.</p> <p>Children who wait longer to be adopted generally have one of more of the following characteristics; they are older, BME, have a disability or are part of a sibling group.</p>		
	Strengths	Weaknesses
Age	Age restrictions for adopting applicants are flexible and OAWY recognise that more people are having children at an older age.	There is a shortage of adopters for older children. The lack of placements could have a negative impact on this group as these children may be placed out of their local area which in turn may impact on their continued contact with their family and local support structures. Specific targeting of older adopters has not been carried out to date.
Religion/ Belief / Faith	OAWY accepts adoption applications from applicants of all religions/ beliefs/ faiths. This ensures there is potential for a	There are not always adequate numbers of potential adopters or children to meet the religious/ belief/ faith needs of either party.

	wide range of potential adopters recruited to meet the range of children needing placement.	Adopters from faith backgrounds often adopt for altruistic reasons and tend to consider taking older children and sibling groups. There is not enough adopters for this group of children so a more targeted approach is required.
Disability	Adopters with a disability are able to adopt. The services of the medical advisor are used to ensure decision making is always done to prevent discrimination, whilst ensuring the needs of the child are paramount.	<p>Some potential adoptive applicants who have a disability may view this as negatively impacting upon their right to adopt. For example, the issue of mental health or a life limiting health issue/disability can be a limiting factor when deciding someone is suitable to adopt a child. However the needs of the children to have stability and care throughout their childhood must remain the primary focus and therefore some applicants may feel they have been discriminated against.</p> <p>Some children, because of their complex needs, often wait longer for permanent placements. There is a need for more Adopters to offer a permanent home for disabled children. In particular children with Asperger's or those on the Autistic spectrum are particularly hard to place and consideration needs to be given to recruiting and supporting adopters who have the skills to look after these children.</p>
Gender	Female and male adopters are able to adopt.	<p>Single males and single female adopters at times are not aware they can adopt on their own and applicants from single males are small.</p> <p>Although there are no gender considerations in recruiting Adopters and the service operates according to our own anti-discriminatory practice the main carer within the household within adoption is usually female. A negative impact of this may be that there is a potential for male adopters to become isolated and in these instances they should be encouraged to attend support groups (see Action Plan).</p>
Sexual Orientation	OAWY recruitment procedures are anti-discriminatory and welcome applicants who are LGBT. The assessment process conforms to British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) guidance on assessment and workers have been trained in assessment,	We are not aware of any barriers to LGBT groups being recruited to adoption. However, refresher training would be useful to staff in matters of recruitment and assessment of LGBT applicants.

	including assessing gay and lesbian adopters.	
Race	Adopting applicants from any racial background are recruited to OAWY, if they meet all the relevant criteria and are able to meet the needs of the children.	Recruiting adopters for children from BME backgrounds particularly children with mixed heritage remains a challenge. Resources are available to purchase appropriate adoptive placements for children and we have a growing number of out of authority placements that reflect this.
Trans People	OAWY policies do not discriminate against trans-gender adopters.	Of all the diversity strands OAWY has the least knowledge and experience in working with Trans People. Staff training and development needs to be undertaken to ensure Trans People who wish to adopt have fair access to the process and feel confident to adopt.

**Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information
Please provide detail:**

N/A.

Action required:

Action 1 - Develop an innovative & bespoke family finding/ matching process for children who wait longer.

Action 2 - Ensure marketing campaigns are inclusive of older adopters.

Action 3 - Specific marketing campaign target at adopters from faith backgrounds.

Action 4 - Implement a service user feedback mechanism that allows analysis by diversity strand. This will enable OAWY to identify areas where action is required.

Action 5 – Provide refresher LGBT Training.

6. Wider involvement – have you involved groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested

Yes **No**

Please provide detail:

In order to gather a perspective of the main service users the following groups who represent adopted teenagers, adoptive parents and birth parents were consulted.

- Adopters via Adopter Voice.

Action required:
 Action 6 - Maintain active contact with service user groups and work with them to identify and implement service improvements.

7. Who may be affected by this activity?
 please tick all relevant and significant equality characteristics, stakeholders and barriers that apply to your strategy, policy, service or function

Equality characteristics

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex (male or female)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

(**Other** can include – marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being)
Please specify: n/a

Stakeholders

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Services users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Trade Unions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members	<input type="checkbox"/> Suppliers
<input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify		

Potential barriers.

<input type="checkbox"/> Built environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location of premises and services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information and communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer care
<input type="checkbox"/> Timing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stereotypes and assumptions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation and involvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial exclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment and training



specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function

Please specify

The above are noted as potential barriers but are not known to be. Action 4, section 12 will seek to evidence if there are any such barriers which OAWY will then plan to address.

8. Positive and negative impact

Think about what you are assessing (scope), the fact finding information, the potential positive and negative impact on equality characteristics, stakeholders and the effect of the barriers

8a. Positive impact:

Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters

1. The OAWY website signposts potential adopters to Information Events which are held across the region, so there are always local events. Generally the events are held at venues that ensure they are physically accessible for people who wish to attend who have a disability;
2. OAWY has a clear statement in its' policy that we accept and actively recruit adopters regardless of age, religion/ belief/ faith, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race or if they are a Trans Person provided they are deemed to be able to meet the needs of the child/ children they wish to adopt;
3. The service focuses on effective partnership working to continue the improvement of services to children affected by adoption irrespective of age, religion/ belief/ faith, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race or if they are a Trans Person. Our marketing and publicity material uses positive images to promote our approach to equality within our advertising, see Appendix A;
4. OAWY have approved a diverse range of people, including same gender couples and single people. We have undertaken specific LGBT recruitment for adoption families and have been actively involved in the LGBT Challenge group;
5. We have a planned process of continual training for adoption Social Workers around LGBT;
6. Constructive use of targeted recruitment activity has increased our ability to secure placements for children with specific needs arising from cultural background or developmental issues and disability;
7. Information events and preparation events are held at venues to meet the needs of adopters with a disability;

Family Finding for Children

8. Profiling Events are held in accessible buildings quarterly which are aimed at adopters in assessment as well as approved. This enables people to get information early about the reality of the children OAWY are seeking to place;
9. OAWY has a robust approach to ensuring that children's religious and cultural needs are met through effective matching meetings identifying need and support plans;
10. OAWY seeks to identify and meet any additional support needs Adopters may have in order to care for children from different ethnic, cultural and religious groups and children with disabilities;
11. OAWY uses Adoption Match and Link Maker to identify placements for those

children who wait longer. This includes regularly attending national exchange days and activity days – allowing OAWY to identify adopters who can meet the specific needs of the child;

Adoption Support

12. OAWY provides generic support services to all affected by adoption (birth relations, adopters and adoptees);
13. Adoption Support Assessments are based upon the needs of the person/ people;
14. Initial advice and information is free and the majority of services are free to access;
15. Adoption Support is provided at a range of accessible locations;

Adopter Voice

16. Adopter Voice are an adopter led group that work with OAWY to ‘challenge, support and input into the development of adoption services at local, regional and national levels so that they are adopter led’. Adopter Voice is available to all adopters and encourages adopters to become involved and/ or access support on-line;
17. All 15 Yorkshire LAs sent a survey to all registered adopters inviting them to join Adopter Voice;
18. Adopter Voice provides an arena for all adopters to access information and advice;

Birth Parent Groups

19. OAWY work with PAC-UK (the country’s largest independent Adoption Support Agency) to learn from feedback from birth parents;
<http://www.pac-uk.org/>

AT-ID

20. OAWY work with AT-ID (adopted teens identity) to learn from feedback from adopted teenagers;
<http://www.at-id.org.uk/>

Staffing

21. Diversity issues are addressed during supervision to ensure that the needs of children are met and that service users are being treated fairly;
22. We are members of New Family social, a LGBT group who offer specific support to the LGBT community of adopters. There are support groups across the region for single adopters;

Training

23. Social workers are trained regarding equality and diversity issues in their degree in social work. All the managers have had recent training regarding unconscious bias within OAWY;

Specialist Advice

24. We commission a service for Inter Country Adoption from the Yorkshire adoption agency. All inter country adopters attend specialist training specific to adopting from overseas provided by this agency.

Action required:

None.

8b. Negative impact:

Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters

1. There are insufficient adopters with a diverse background coming forward to adopt;
2. OAWY have a high level of interest from the south Asian communities to adopt full Asian babies rather than older children of mixed ethnicity;

Family Finding for Children

3. There can be unconscious bias from Children’s Social Workers regarding considering single females and males for the children they have waiting;
4. Children cannot always be matched with families that meet their own cultural heritage and social workers are not always willing to consider families with a different heritage from the child’s;

Adoption Support

5. We do not know if there are any groups of people who struggle to obtain the adoption support we offer;

Training

6. Of all the diversity stands Trans People is the area we have the least knowledge of, training is needed in this area.

Action Required

Action 7 - Link with BME communities to promote and educate in terms of the children we have available for adoption (work with Leeds City Council’s Communities Teams for advice and support).

Action 8 - Continue to challenge unconscious bias from children’s social workers in a restorative way and provide training and support as required.

Action 9 - Conduct Analytical work to establish if OAWY can better target adopters that meet the cultural needs of our children.

Action 10 - Work needs to be conducted to identify groups that may benefit from more specific adoption support i.e. Dad’s group, same sex parents as there may be gaps in the support we offer.

Action 11 – Training delivered to enhance organisational understanding of Trans People and to harness their ability to become adoptive parents.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?

Yes

No

<p>Please provide detail:</p> <p>OAWY will always try to build and maintain positive and open relationships for people aiming to or being involved in the adoption process.</p>
<p>Action required:</p> <p>See actions 1 – 11, section 12.</p>

<p>10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other? (e.g. in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)</p>
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No </p>
<p>Please provide detail:</p>
<p>Action required:</p> <p>None.</p>

<p>11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another? (e.g. where your activity/decision is aimed at adults could it have an impact on children and young people)</p>
<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p>
<p>Please provide detail:</p> <p>There could be the perception that certain groups are less likely to adopt than others. The primary focus of OAWY will always be the child. The decision to place a child will be based upon the individual(s) ability to meet the child’s ongoing needs and not their individual(s) diverse group. Therefore, prospective adopters who are not matched with a child may feel they are at a disadvantage.</p>
<p>Action required:</p> <p>See Action 3, section 12.</p>

12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

(insert all your actions from your assessment here, set timescales, measures and identify a lead person for each action)

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
Action 1: Develop an innovative & bespoke family finding/ matching process for children who wait longer.	31/03/2019	A new approach to reduce waiting time for children who wait longer piloted.	Mary Brudenell
Action 2: Ensure marketing campaigns are inclusive of older adopters.	31/03/2019	Campaign delivered.	Mandy Prout/ Dave Glanville
Action 3: Specific marketing campaign target at adopters from faith backgrounds.	31/03/2019	Campaign delivered.	Mandy Prout/ Dave Glanville
Action 4: Implement a service user feedback mechanism that allows analysis by diversity strand.	31/12/2018	Service user satisfaction results reportable by diversity strand. This will enable planned action to be taken to make improvements as required.	Richard Stevenson/ Aretha Hanson
Action 5: Provide refresher LGBT Training.	31/12/2018		Mandy Prout/ Mary Brudenell/ Julie Chew
Action 6: Maintain active contact with service user groups and work with them to identify and implement service improvements.	31/06/2018	Service user groups improvement actions added to OAWY service improvement plans.	Richard Stevenson
Action 7: Link with BME communities to promote and educate in terms of the children we have available for adoption (work with Leeds City Council's Communities Teams for advice and support).	31/03/2019	Outcomes based accountability workshop held with community leaders across the West Yorkshire Region.	Sarah Johal/ Mandy Prout/ Mary Brudenell
Action 8: Continue to challenge unconscious bias from children's social workers in a restorative way and provide training and support as required.	31/03/2019	Set-up training/ support group and deliver bespoke training session(s) as required to children's social workers.	Mandy Prout/ Mary Brudenell/ Julie Chew

13. Governance, ownership and approval

State here who has approved the actions and outcomes from the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment

Name	Job Title	Date
Sarah Johal	Head of OAWY	
Date impact assessment completed		

14. Monitoring progress for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration actions (please tick)

- As part of Service Planning performance monitoring
- As part of Project monitoring
- Update report will be agreed and provided to the appropriate board
Please specify which board
- Other (please specify)

15. Publishing

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality impact assessment should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality impact assessments that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached assessment was sent:

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent:

**You learn a lot when
you adopt, Liam and
Nick learned it really
is good to talk.**



One
Adoption

YOUR REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

**Hear more about their adoption story at
www.oneadoption.co.uk/liam**



**You learn a lot when
you adopt, Alice and
Ben learned that
honesty really is the
best policy.**



One
Adoption

YOUR REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

**Hear more about their adoption story at
www.oneadoption.co.uk/alice**



**You learn a lot
when you adopt,
Nicola learned that
two can be family.**



One
Adoption

YOUR REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

**Hear more about her adoption story at
www.oneadoption.co.uk/nicola**





For Megan and Angie, starting a family was a little more complicated than for some couples

We thought about all the alternatives - and explored some a little more than others - and although in the beginning I was keener than Angie to consider adoption that was the path we decided to follow.

[Read Megan and Angie's story](#)



Matt and James wanted to adopt a very young child so Early Permanence Placement (EPP) seemed like the natural choice

'We started talking about adoption with friends, family and work colleagues, and it became clear that many people had some knowledge of, or had their lives touched by adoption,' says James. 'So, armed with encouragement and reassurance, we began researching online to learn more about opportunities for adoption and the processes involved.'

[Read Matt and James' story](#)



'You learn a lot when you adopt. Jane and Simon learned how many toys fill a house'

Jane and Simon made the decision to adopt, rather than pursue fertility treatment, after trying for a baby for over five years. They felt that they could provide a loving, stable family home for a child that needed one.

[Read Jane and Simon's story](#)



'You learn a lot when you adopt. Alice and Ben learned that honesty really is the best policy'

Alice and Ben adopted James and his disabled brother Luke, when they were four and three years old respectively, and their four birth children were in their teens.

[Read Alice and Ben's story](#)

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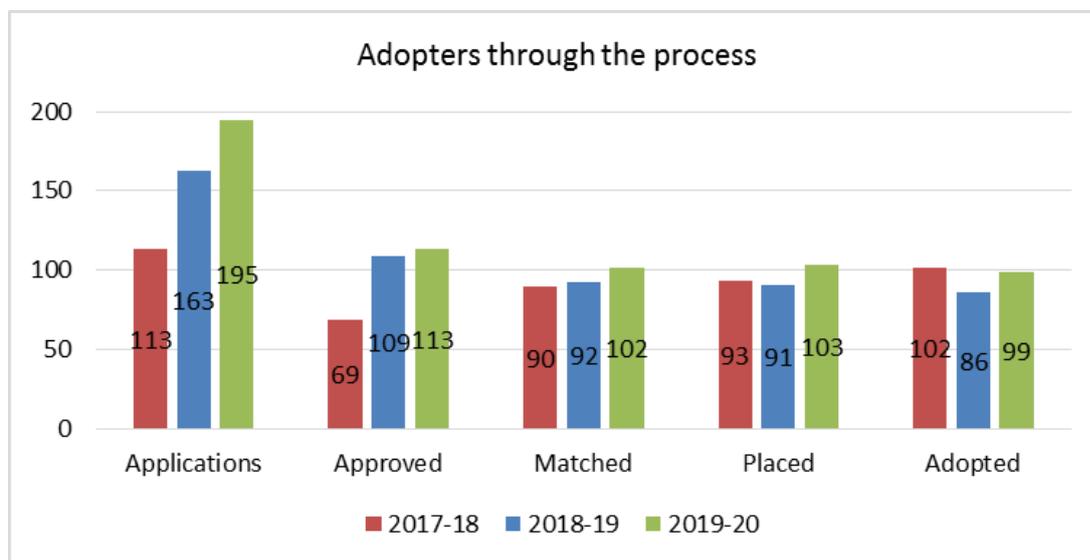


Highlight Report on Performance for the Board 2019-20 Full Year Bradford

Sufficiency: Are enough of the right kind of adopters being recruited and approved to meet the needs of the children waiting:

Adopter recruitment

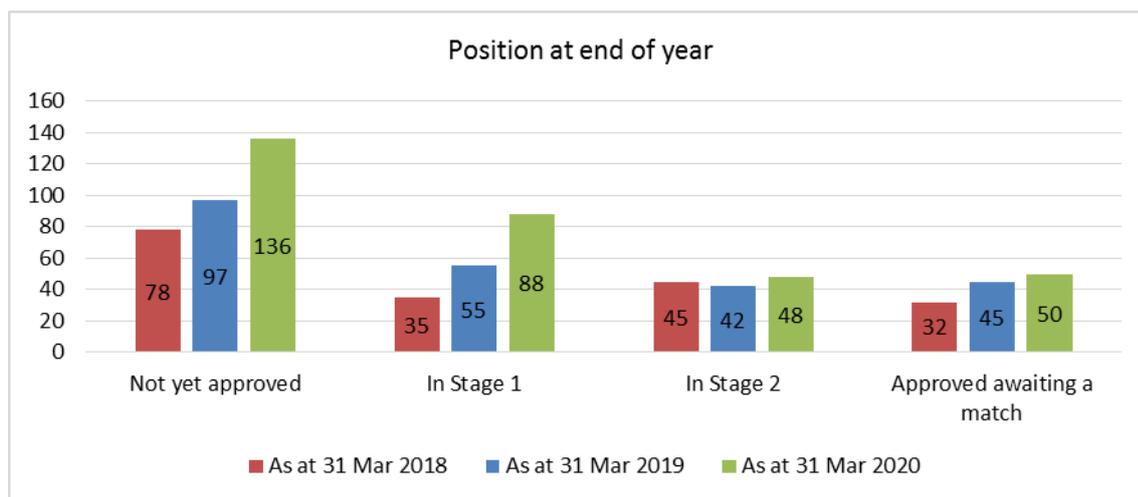
As at 31/3/20, 113 adoptive families have been approved, 102 families have been matched with children, 100 of these being with children from the West Yorkshire region.



Within the 113 households, 219 individuals were approved. Of these, 21 (10%) are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. We need to improve our percentage of BAME carers and keep a focus on ensuring that we approve a full range of adoptive families to meet the range of children requiring placement, while at the same time not relying on matching children with regard to ethnic identity as an overriding factor.

16 households were approved for sibling groups and 34 households were open to Early Permanence Placements. 16 households who were approved were open to children aged 4 years and over. 2 households were able to consider a child with a disability.

There is still more to do around recruiting adopters for sibling groups, which is reflected in the development of additional training to offer additional support to those considering this. This training was due to commence in April 2020, and is now being reviewed and further developed into an online program in response to Covid19.



Of the 163 adoptive families who ended Stage One in 2019/20, the average time in stage one was 3 months; 45% were completed within the 2 month timescale.

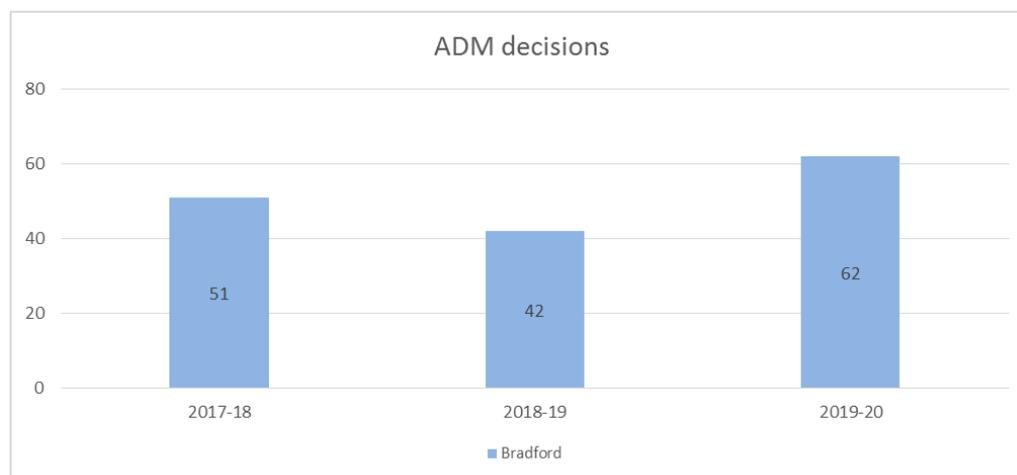
Of the 113 adoptive families who ended Stage Two (Approved) in 2019/20, the average time in stage two was 4 months; 76% were completed within the 4 month timescale.

Analysis of delays during Stage 1 has shown the outstanding GP medical reports and DBS checks are an overriding factor. Obtaining additional information from health consultants and other professionals in response to information contained in health and local authority checks also contributes. Exploration is currently underway to ascertain where changes to process could reduce this delay.

At the end 2019/20 there are 136 families who are not yet approved, 88 of these families are in stage 1 of the assessment process and 48 are in stage 2. OAWY has seen an increase in the number of prospective adoptive families entering the adoption process over the year. This will impact on the number of applicants in stage 2 of the process in the next quarter and should result in an increase in the approved adopters by the end of quarter 1. However, at present some applicants are unable to proceed to stage 2 of the process as a result of Covid19, which may mean that the increase in approved adopters is not seen until later in the year.

The children with a plan for adoption during 2019- 20

Between 1/4/19 and 31/3/20, 62 children had a plan for adoption ratified by Bradford Agency Decision Makers. 16 of these children had their adoption plan ratified during the final quarter of 2019/20. Of the 62 children, there were 36 female and 26 male children. This is a significant increase on the previous year.



Ethnicity

Of the 62 children with a plan for adoption ratified so far this year, 84% were from White British backgrounds (including information not obtained) and 10 children (16%) were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups.

Placement with Siblings

As a general principle, siblings will be placed together; however, due to the individual needs of children, this is not always appropriate and cannot always be achieved. It is essential that sibling assessments are carried out to ensure good quality decision making and support plans are evidence based if children are placed together or apart. The numbers of children requiring adoption in sibling groups at the end of the year is 43 children (this includes those with a match and/ or placed). Of the 11 children placed from this cohort during 2019-20, 9 were placed apart from their siblings, which reflects the care plan for each child.

Children with an adoption plan

As of the end of March 2020 there are 61 children with a plan for adoption from Bradford not currently placed and requiring adopters. 30 children out of the 61 are under 2 years, 22 are between 2 and 4 years and 9 children are 5 years of age or older. One of these 61 children 1 has a potential match identified and links are being pursued for other children.

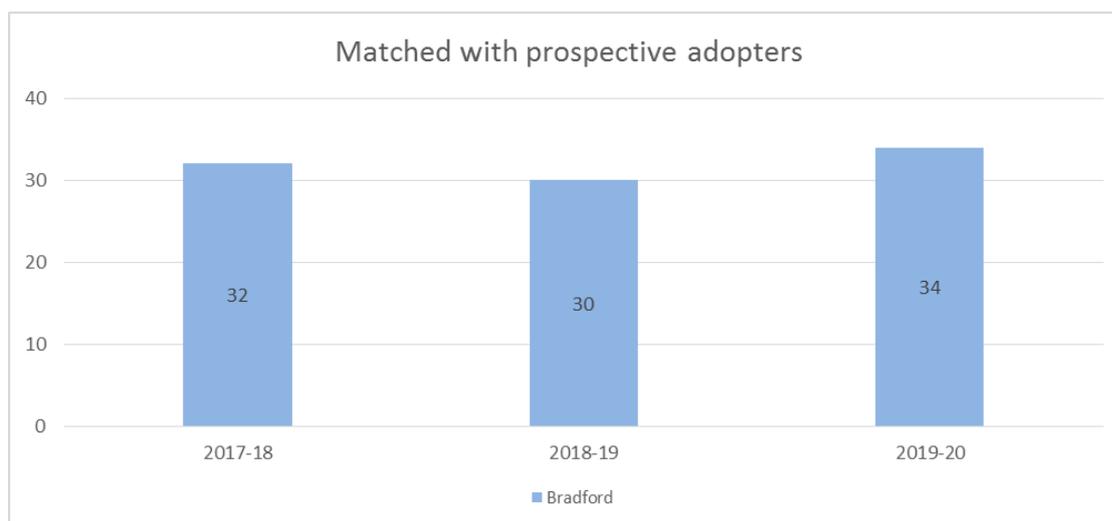
From the children with an adoption plan there are 32 girls and 29 boys, and 20% are children from BAME backgrounds. There are 30 children part of a sibling group.

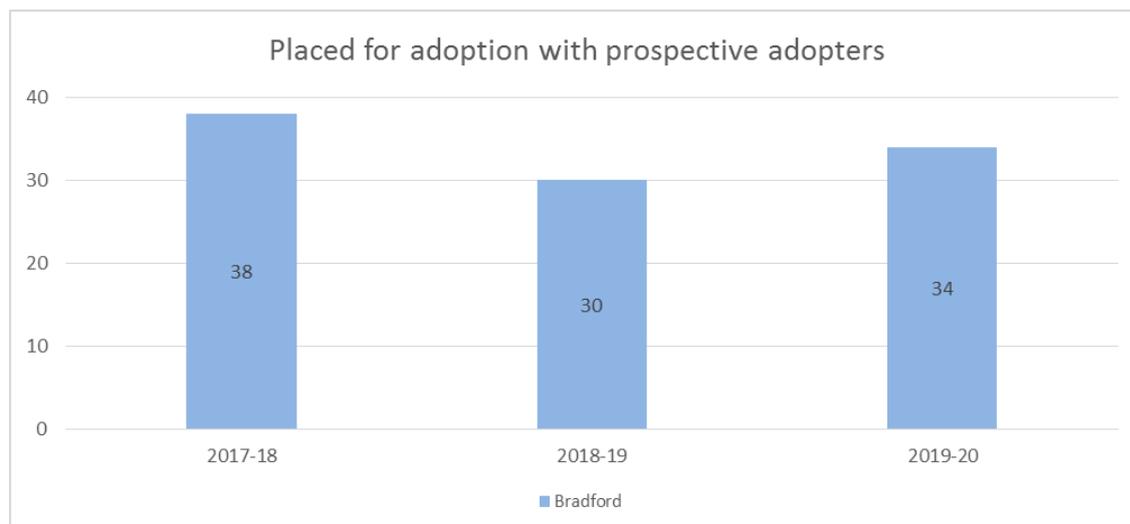
18 of these children do not yet have a Placement Order, giving Court authority to place them for adoption. Family Finding is ongoing for 43 children.



Over the course of 2019/20 the number of Placement Orders has remained relatively consistent each month and reflects the number of Placement Orders made during the previous year.

Timeliness: Are children being matched and placed without delay including those children who wait longer?

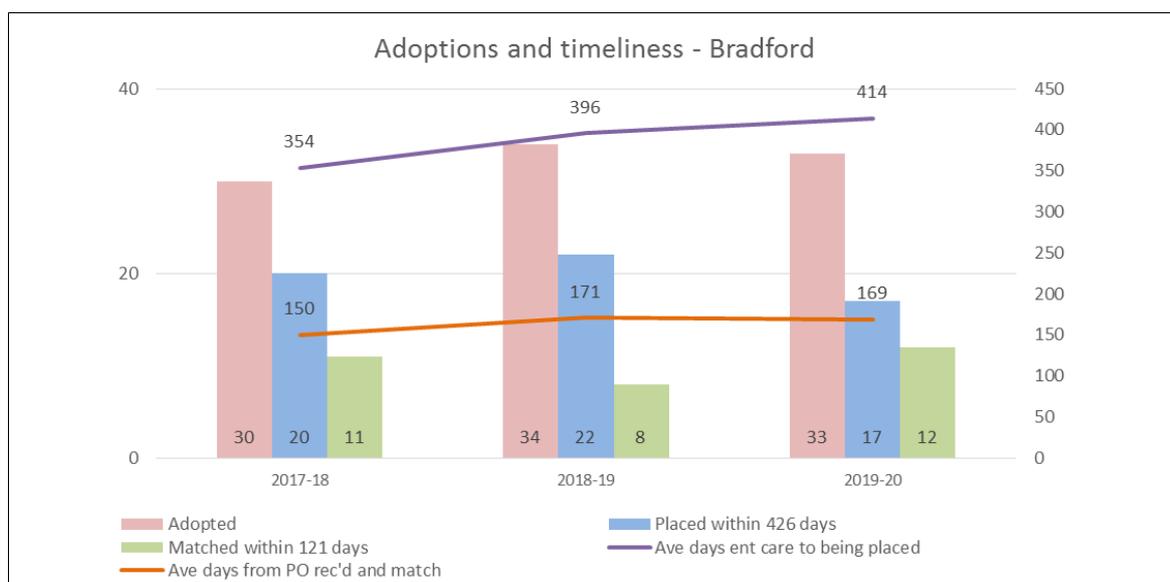




During 2019/20 34 children have been matched and 34 children have been placed with prospective adopters.

Of the children placed 7 children were from BAME backgrounds, 14 children were placed as part of a sibling group and 1 child was aged 5 or over.

A1 indicator (children adopted)

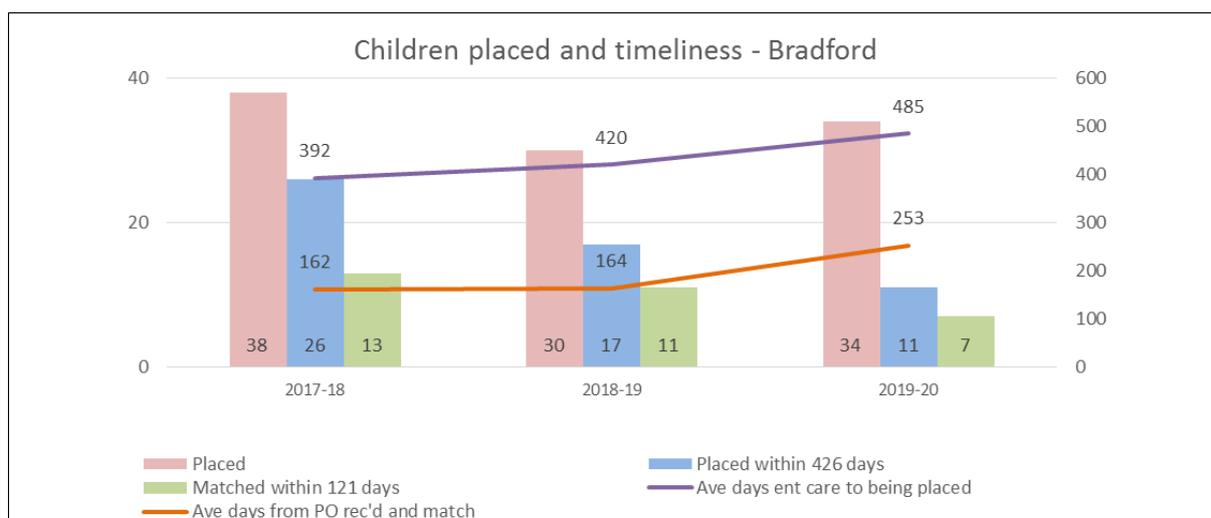


The graph immediately above is with regard to children adopted in the period. The A1 scorecard indicator of children adopted is 414 days and below the national indicator of 426 days.

The A2 scorecard indicator for children adopted is 169 days, which is above the national indicator of 121 days, but has improved since 2018/19.

Of the 33 children adopted in 2019/20, 15 of these were classed as a children who wait longer to match; this affects the overall average timeliness. Without these children the A1 average is 378 days and the A2 average is 130 days.

A1 indicator (children placed)



Of the 34 children placed in 2019/20, 16 children had more than 500 days between entering care and being placed making the average 485 days, without these 16 children it brings the average down to 363 days, well within the 426 day indicator.

Of the 16 children, 11 were children who wait longer (e.g. classed by the DfE as harder to place children):

- 1 was aged 5+ years;
- 8 were part of a sibling group;
- 5 was Black and minority ethnic (BAME).

A2 indicator of the children placed:

27 of the 34 children placed in 2019/20 took more than 121 days from Placement Order to match.

14 of the 27 children were part of a sibling group, who often wait longer to be placed with adoptive families. Of the remaining 13 children, 4 were from BAME backgrounds.

At the end of March 2020 there are 12 children who have been waiting for at least 18 months since entering care and are not yet placed for adoption:

11 are classed as “hard to place” children (5+years old, sibling group, disability, BAME), of which 5 have more than one of these characteristics. 1 of the 12 children is, however, not classed as hard to place.

This child entered into a residential assessment with his birth father after entering care and spent a period of time having been rehabilitated home before being placed in foster care. After a period of unsuccessful family finding, both locally and nationally, his foster carer expressed an interest in keeping him in her care and this is now being explored.

Support: Is the right kind of support being provided?

At the end of March 2020 there were 137 cases allocated to the Adoption Support Service from Bradford who have an Adoption Support Plan and are in receipt of or are awaiting therapeutic support via the Adoption Support Fund.

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 96 successful applications have been made to the Adoption Support Fund in respect of adopted children in Bradford accessing £355,841.81 for therapeutic support.

There has been an increase in referrals for Adoption Support services; there were 10 families from Bradford awaiting allocation at the end of March 2020. In the interim all the families continue to have access to the Core Support Services and some are accessing these. We hold monthly tracking and allocation meetings to ensure those families who are waiting are discussed routinely and progress to allocation is monitored. Keep in touch phone calls are made to some families who are waiting for an allocated worker.

There are currently 240 letterbox contact plans facilitated for Bradford children and young people by One Adoption West Yorkshire.

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 269 referrals were made to PAC-UK for families inclusive of adult adoptees, birth parents/relatives across West Yorkshire. 46 (17%) were families living in Bradford.

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Corporate Parenting Panel 2020/21 Forward Plan

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Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem
Cllr Dale Smith	Cllr Carol Thirkill (Chair)	Cllr Susan Knox
	Cllr Adrian Farley (Dep Chair)	
	Cllr Angela Tait	
Alternates	Alternates	Alternates
Cllr Mike Pollard	Cllr Sarfraz Nazir	Cllr Brendan Stubbs
	Cllr Nussrat Mohammed	
	Cllr Mohammed Shafiq	

Non-voting Co-opted Members	
Inspector Kevin Taylor (awaiting replacement)	West Yorkshire Police, Partnerships
Sue Lowndes	Education and Learning Strategic Manager, Education
Jude Mac Donald	Designated Nurse – Safeguarding Children and LAC, CCG Collaboration
The Chair of the Children in Care Council	

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date and Venue	Type of Meeting / Venue	Agenda Items	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
29th June 2020	City Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report of the Virtual School on education for CLA children who are not in education pre and post 16. This report to include a summary on education for CLA during the COVID crisis 	Jonathan Copper	5th June	9th June	16th June	19th June
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reg 44 report directly to the Chair . Suzanne Lythgow to joining the meeting for a report on Children's Homes during the COVID crisis 	Suzanne Lythgow	5th June	9th June	16th June	19th June
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on social work arrangements during the COVID crisis Progress in relation to the key issues raised in the Ofsted report and the Improvement Plan 	Irfan Alam	5th June	9th June	16th June	19th June

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on support for Care Leavers living independently during the COVID crisis, including and update on digital inclusion in this group 	Kirsty Askew	5th June	9th June	16th June	19th June
Date and Venue	Type of Meeting / Venue	Agenda Items	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
20th July 2020	Business Meeting Committee Room 1 City Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Co opted Members 	Chair	1 st July 2020	2 nd July 2020	7 th July 2020	10 th July 2020
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Adoption Agency: Annual report for Bradford focusing on the achievements and the challenges. 	Michelle Rawlings One Adoption West Yorkshire	1 st July 2020	2 nd July 2020	7 th July 2020	10 th July 2020
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Placed out of Bradford: Report on the numbers of children; services offered; challenges and sufficiency plans 	Mark Trinder (Deferred to Sept)	1 st July 2020	2 nd July 2020	7 th July 2020	10 th July 2020
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship and Passports update with a focus on Brexit planning 	Rachel Curtis	1 st July 2020	2 nd July 2020	7 th July 2020	10 th July 2020
		Forward Plan	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
7th	Joint meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		12 th August	19 th August	25 th August	28 th August

September 2020	with young people / Culture Fusion or Committee Room 3 (TBC)			2020	2020	2020	2020
		•		12 th August 2020	19 th August 2020	25 th August 2020	28 th August 2020
		•		12 th August 2020	19 th August 2020	25 th August 2020	28 th August 2020
		Forward Plan	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
2nd November 2020	Business meeting / Committee Room 1, City Hall	• Head of QA and Safeguarding annual report to include IRO/CP/Audit	Amandip Johal	7 th October 2020	14 th October 2020	20 th October 2020	23 rd October 2020
		• Corporate Services : Corporate Parenting Report	Amandip Johal	7 th October 2020	14 th October 2020	20 th October 2020	23 rd October 2020
		• Report from the Homelessness Review	Kirsty Askew	7 th October 2020	14 th October 2020	20 th October 2020	23 rd October 2020
		• Report on Emotional and Mental Wellbeing of Looked After Children	Sasha Bhat	7 th October 2020	14 th October 2020	20 th October 2020	23 rd October 2020
		Forward Plan	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
18th January 2021	Joint Meeting with young people / Keighley or Committee Room 1, City	• Viewpoint- what are young people telling us: Report and discussion	Amandip Johal	23 rd December 2020	30 th December 2020	5 th January 2021	8 th January 2021
		• Leaving Well App feedback on views	Amandip Johal	30 th December 2020	5 th January 2021	8 th January 2021	23 rd December 2020

	Hall (TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Parenting Report: Place 	Steve Hartley	30 th December 2020	5 th January 2021	8 th January 2021	23 rd December 2020
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's rights and advocacy services 	Amandip Johal	30 th December 2020	5 th January 2021	8 th January 2021	23 rd December 2020
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficiency Strategy 	Irfan Alam/Mark Trinder	30 th December 2020	5 th January 2021	8 th January 2021	23 rd December 2020
		Forward Plan	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
8th March 2021	Business Meeting Committee Room 1, City Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanence 	Richard Fawcett	10 th February 2021	17 th February 2021	23 rd February 2021	26 th February 2021
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post 16 Service 	Kirsty Askew	10 th February 2021	17 th February 2021	23 rd February 2021	26 th February 2021
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Services for Children Looked After: CCG and health partners 	Ali Jan Haider	10 th February 2021	17 th February 2021	23 rd February 2021	26 th February 2021
		Forward Plan	Lead Officer / Report Author	Deadline for report to J Cryer	Chair's briefing	Report deadline to Secretariat	Publication of Papers
5th April 2020	Joint Meeting Committee Room 1, City Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education report on children not in mainstream education, not in education and post 16 	Jonathan Cooper	10 th March 2021	17 th March 2021	23 rd March 2021	26 th March 2021
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reg 44 report on 	Suzanne	10 th March	17 th March	23 rd March	26 th March

		children's homes	Lythgow	2021	2021	2021	2021
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Parenting Report: Health and Wellbeing 		10 th March 2021	17 th March 2021	23 rd March 2021	26 th March 2021