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WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

**Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds on
Friday, 5th April, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

MEMBERSHIP

Sue Duffy – Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Adam Wilkinson – Calderdale Metropolitan District Council

Viv Kendrick – Kirklees Metropolitan District Council

Fiona Venner – Leeds City Council

Margaret Isherwood – Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

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A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2 of the Access to Information Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded)</p> <p>(In accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2, written notice of an appeal must be received by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting)</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:-</p>	

3

LATE ITEMS

To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration

(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes)

4

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To disclose or draw attention to any interests in accordance with Leeds City Council's 'Councillor Code of Conduct'.

5

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

6

MINUTES - 13 OCTOBER 2023

5 - 10

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2023

7

HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT

11 - 56

To receive and consider the attached report of the Director of Children and Families regarding the developments and activity of One Adoptoin Agency West Yorkshire (OAWY) as presented in the OAWY Half Year Report (Appendix A) which covers the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023

8

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed

Third Party Recording

Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts named on the front of this agenda.

Use of Recordings by Third Parties— code of practice

- a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.
- b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.

WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 2023

PRESENT Councillor F Venner – Leeds City Council (Chair)

Councillor S Duffy – Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Councillor D Tremayne – Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor V Kendrick – Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor J Pritchard – Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

1 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

2 EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The agenda contained no exempt information.

3 LATE ITEMS

No late items of business were added to the agenda.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Isherwood (Wakefield Metropolitan District Council) and Councillor A Wilkinson (Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council). Councillor J Pritchard (Wakefield) and Councillor D Tremayne (Calderdale) attended as substitutes.

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 7th February 2023

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held 7th August 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

7 MATTERS ARISING

Page 5 – Medical delays - Delays to medical examinations at GP surgeries remains an issue, with an inconsistent approach between surgeries.

Page 5 - Member Engagement – Details of engagement by the Agency for adoptive parents were previously distributed and will be recirculated.

Page 8 – M Rawlings was confirmed as Head of Service in January 2023.

Page 9 – There are financial challenges facing the multi-disciplinary team which has led to the removal of the speech and language therapist post. The Chair suggested writing to the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.

8 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Councillor V Kendrick be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2023/24.

9 HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT

The Head of Agency submitted a report presenting the Annual Report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) which provided an overview of adoption service activity and development from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The Annual report was presented as required by the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, pursuant to the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Head of Service advised the Committee that the format of the report had been refreshed, and stated that the Agency's current objectives are;

- Children to move in with their adoptive family without unnecessary delay
- Families get help and support at every stage of the adoption journey
- Children have good quality care, a good understanding of their identity, a sense of belonging and stability within their adoptive family
- Children, adoptive and birth parents and adopted adults feel they have a voice and influence

The Head of Service drew attention to the report's notable statistics;

- 181 children were adopted in 2022/23, the highest number since the agency formed in 2017.
- 242 children had an adoption plan and were not yet matched with an adoptive family, an increase of 72 from the previous year.

Engagement

The Agency has noted fewer attendees at information sessions, but an overall increase in applications from potential adopters, including an increase from 10% to 21% of adoption applications coming from the BAME communities.

A digital first approach to marketing has been identified as providing the best value for money, as well as better suited for targeting certain demographics. Instagram was noted as being a growth area for the agency's engagement, with an increase from 300 to 900 followers. It was noted that the platform is particularly adept at communicating with members of LGBTQ communities.

The digital first approach has been extended to the wider agency offer, with events and training being bookable on the website. This offer was noted to include birth parent information sessions as all adoptive parents are asked to meet birth parents, as well as six month training, provided six months into an adoption to develop therapeutic parenting skills. Support has also been delivered to friends and families of adoptive parents which has helped build a sense of community.

The digital first approach is being supplemented by providing a presence at events important to communities identified as key demographics to target, notably at Pride and at Carnival. A Black adoption manager has started to lead on this work by building links and networks with religious and community groups.

Placements

The Head of Service noted work to find families for children who typically wait the longest, and for whom adoption may not be achieved through a pilot project which has received funding from the national adoption strategy team. The project would feature these children to encourage potential adopters to apply to adopt them. The Head of Service noted there are many layers of ethical dilemmas about this type of programme, as well a large financial implication. The Committee noted previous programmes of this type, and how changes in technology have altered the appropriateness of them. As there had been no consultation done with children directly on this topic, the Head of Service raised the suggestion to explore this as part of the research being undertaken alongside the project.

The Head of Service noted two pieces of work to develop the use of early permanence. The Agency currently receives funding for one part time early permanence worker, with a view to developing early permanence practice and increasing its use across Yorkshire and Humber. A second project involves working with local Voluntary Adoption Agencies. The Committee noted the increasing need for older children's permanence due to increasing pressures on families such as the cost of living crisis meaning children are entering the care system at an older age.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

Following on from Minute 24 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting, the Committee resumed discussion of the financial challenges facing the multi-disciplinary team.

The Head of Service identified the financial challenge affecting the multi-disciplinary team within the Agency. Whilst the team has widened the services it offers, there has been a funding reduction from the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (WYICB). This has led to the removal of the speech and language therapist position in the team. The Agency is still able to provide an occupational therapy service provision and other therapeutic support, as the two psychologists on the team are able to provide the clinical lead necessary for social workers to carry out this service. However, if the psychologist positions are removed then this service will no longer be able to continue.

The Committee gave assent to the Chair to write to the WYICB to request a reconsideration.

Health Services

Councillor J Pritchard sought information regarding the Agency's support for adoptive children with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders FASD and their families. She noted that families are struggling to get diagnoses under the NHS. The Head of Service advised the Committee that whilst adoption funding cannot be used towards FASD diagnoses, One Adoption South Yorkshire received funding to develop pathways to FASD diagnosis, and One Adoption West Yorkshire will seek to implement any relevant findings in West Yorkshire. One challenge towards providing FASD diagnosis support to

adoptive families is that diagnosis for FASD must be taken out within a multi-disciplinary team, rather than an individual doctor. The multi-disciplinary team within the agency currently is able to screen a child for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or ADHD and with the agreement of the NHS Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), move them to a more advanced stage of the process for diagnosis. This also ensures children are not unnecessarily added to CAMHS waiting lists. However due to the challenges already facing the multi-disciplinary team this is not work that they currently have capacity to undertake for FASD.

The Committee noted barriers to adopter's medical examinations being conducted at GP surgeries. As this work is classified as private and is the largest single piece of work the surgeries perform, many surgeries are deprioritising the examinations. This creates delays in the adoption process.

Inspections

The Head of Service noted that the agency is likely to receive its first inspection from OFSTED soon as part of OFSTED's pilot programme of inspections of regional adoption agencies. The Agency is currently inspected through inspections of the five Local Authorities of West Yorkshire, however these inspections focus on scrutinising children's care planning, and not supervision and governance of the Agency or adoption support work.

Sufficiency

The Head of Service noted challenges with sufficient numbers of prospective adoptive parents, with this problem particularly prevalent within the North of England. As there are insufficient numbers of adoptive parents, some children with adoption plans are having to have their plans moved away from adoption. Councillor V Kendrick noted that the cost of living crisis must be having an impact on both children and adoptive families.

Staffing

The agency is able to recruit staff and there are low levels of sickness.

Complaints

All complaints received by the agency were resolved in stage 1. The Head of Service committed to improving communication as most of the complaints related to how information was shared following decision making.

After hearing from the Head of Service, The Chair highlighted a recent case, which she was informed of by Councillor H Bithell, and had been discussed with the Head of Service prior to the meeting. An adopted child's birth parent had been placed into a halfway house next door to the child. The Chair noted that a positive had been that it was the birth parent themselves who had notified the relevant authorities, however the adoptive parents decided to move house. Both the child and birth parent were not in their original Local Authority. The Head of Service highlighted why adoption records cannot be shared with external agencies, and that Probation Services need to consider tracking whether those they support have had children removed from their

care. Further work to identify steps to take to prevent a repeat of this incident is ongoing.

The Committee noted that this was a sad case which was unlikely to happen again, but that steps needed to be taken to ensure this. The family requested that their experience be shared with the Committee so that lessons may be learnt, and OAWY continues to support them.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the progress and outcomes of the agency
- b) To note the Head of Service's assurance that the agency is achieving good outcomes for children/service users
- c) To support the progression of these arrangements
- d) To write to the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and request a reconsideration of the funding towards the Agency's multi-disciplinary team

10 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting be arranged for April 2024, exact date and time to be confirmed at a later date.

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Report of Director of Children and Families

Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

Date: February 2024

Subject: Head of Service Report

Author: Michelle Rawlings, Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire

Are there implications for equality, diversity, cohesion, and integration?	No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:	N/A

Summary of main issues

1. The West Yorkshire Joint Committee has the responsibility to consider the Annual Report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).
2. This report provides an overview on the developments and activity in the service from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023. The report is attached at appendix A, with the performance summary at appendix B and MDT performance at appendix C.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Joint Committee receives the annual report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), detailed in appendix A of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, pursuant to the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Joint Committee is requested to:

- a) Note the progress and outcomes of the agency
- b) Ensure the agency is achieving good outcomes for children/service users
- c) Support the progression of these arrangements

1. Purpose of this report

This report asks the West Yorkshire Joint Committee to consider the half year report of OAWY (appendix A). This is to enable the Joint Committee to monitor the management and outcomes of the service so that they may be satisfied that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users' and satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

2. Background information

Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield adoption functions as specified in the partnership agreement were delegated on the 1st of April 2017 to Leeds City Council. One Adoption West Yorkshire formally opened on this date. On 1st April 2023 Bradford Children's Trust was established and also delegated adoption functions to One Adoption West Yorkshire.

3. Main issues

The main issues are contained within the report itself at appendix A.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 There has been consultation and engagement with staff and with Trade Union representatives where required. Consultation with service users, including adopted children and adults, adoptive parents and birth families is ongoing to inform the development of the service design and delivery.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 There are no specific implications for this report, OAWY are completing a review and update of the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment for 2024/25. This will be presented at the next Joint Committee meeting.

4.3 Resources and value for money

4.3.1 At the end of December 2023 there was a slight underspend due to staffing vacancies. Recruitment has been paused due to uncertainty around the budget. Some existing staff have taken on additional hours during Quarter 4 on a temporary basis to increase capacity and meet service demand.

4.3.2 The proposed budget for 2024/25 has not currently been agreed, which is placing significant pressure on the agency.

4.4 Legal implications and access to information

4.4.1 There are no implications for this report.

5. Risk management

There is a financial risk with regards to the budget for 2024/25 as this has not been agreed by the 5 Local Authorities. The budget for the multi-disciplinary team posts funded by the West Yorkshire ICBs has also not been agreed. A reduction or removal of funding poses a risk to service delivery and in the interim is impacting on staff morale with uncertainty regarding the security of their posts.

6. Recommendations

6.1.1 It is recommended that the West Yorkshire Joint Committee receive the half year report for One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), details in appendix A of this report, and:

- a) Note the progress and outcomes of the agency
- b) Ensure the agency is achieving good outcomes for children/service users
- c) Support the progression of these arrangements

7. Background documents¹

None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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One Adoption West Yorkshire



One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE

**HALF-YEAR REPORT
2023 - 2024**



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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Half Year Report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), which is the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) providing adoption services to children and families on behalf of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield. This report details the work of OAWY from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023. The purpose of the Half Year Report is to inform the public, elected members, partners and staff of the progress and developments of the adoption service during this period in line with the agency's vision:

"To be a flagship adoption agency that develops and promotes best practice, improving adoption standards nationally."

The agency's objectives are that:

- Children to move in with their adoptive family without unnecessary delay
- Families get help and support at every stage of the adoption journey
- Children have good quality care, a good understanding of their identity, a sense of belonging, and stability within their adoptive family
- Children, adoptive and birth parents, and adopted adults feel they have a voice and influence



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

69 children were adopted in the first half of the year.

At 30th September **251** children had an agency decision that they should be placed for adoption still awaiting a match, 166 of whom also had a Placement Order; court authority to place them for adoption and still awaiting a match.

The timeliness of children moving in with adoptive families after entering care for the 69 children adopted has increased from 448 days as at 30th September 2022 to **480 days** as at 30th September 2023.

OAWY have approved **49** households to adopt, an increase of **three** from the same period in the previous year.

The agency is facing sufficiency challenges as the number of children with an adoption plan in West Yorkshire continues to increase as the number of prospective adopters entering the process has decreased, both locally and nationally.



3. ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

One Adoption West Yorkshire has approved **49** adoptive families over the first half of this year and matched **54** families with children from the West Yorkshire region. This is an increase from the same period last year. On 30th September there were **99** households in the process pre-approval. This is a fall from the same period last year (135 households) and reflects the national picture of fewer families coming forward to adopt.

Within the 49 households approved, there were **85** individuals. Of these, **8** (9%) are of the Global Majority. In the same period of 2022/23 21% of our adopters approved were of the Global Majority so this is a decrease. Two days per week of manager time has been allocated to focus on engaging with Black communities and removing any barriers to them coming forward to adopt. We have engaged with the Staff College 'Just Heart, Just Hope, Just Home' programme for strategic managers to better recognise barriers and identify solutions to attract and motivate potential adopters to come forward to meet the needs of Global Majority children in the care system. The program was delivered over several days to senior managers across the LAs and OAWY and we shall shortly be pulling together the learning in a recruitment strategy.

18% (**9**) of the 49 households approved were willing to consider sibling groups compared to 20% in the first half of 22/23.

27% (**13**) of the 49 households were open to an Early Permanence Placement, a significant increase on last year's 15%. This has exceeded the demand for these placements over the period.

Six households could consider children over five years old.

204 households attended the 13 information events in the first half of this year. This is similar to the same time last year and indicates our marketing is working well, as other RAAs have been reporting far fewer people coming forward.

In the first half of this year **108** households requested an initial visit, an 11% decrease on the 121 requests received in the same period last year.



53 formal Registrations of Interest following an initial visit were received, a 39% decrease on the 87 received in the first half of 22/23.

An audit of people leaving the process prior to submitting a Registration of Interest found that decision making at this stage was appropriate. Most enquirers had a visit from a social worker to discuss their unique circumstances and chose to withdraw with a view to returning when their situation was more settled. Of those seen as not suitable, the primary reason was smoking/vaping, followed by very recent fertility treatment/loss, imminent changes in accommodation or employment and limited English skills. All but a few were advised to address specific issues before returning to the process.

The stage one team of advisors continue to support families from the request for a visit through stage one. Families have spent longer on average in stage one than last year. There are several factors impacting on this timescale, including families asking to go on hold due to changes in their circumstances, GPs being unable to prioritise medical appointments and reports, and the complexity of families meaning further exploration and additional visits needing to be completed before they progress to stage two. At the end of September, very few families were awaiting allocation for assessment as capacity pressures have eased.

OAWY has continued to use sessional assessors to ensure families are assessed and approved in a timely manner, though the reliance on these assessors has lessened. The focus on increasing the capacity of social workers to assess families by removing some of their other responsibilities has worked well. The average time spent in stage two has increased by 12 days. More families asked to take a break in stage two and increasing numbers have required additional preparation and support to be ready to meet the needs of children.

43 families adopted their children in the first half of 2023/24 a slight decrease on the same time last year, 47.

Feedback from Interactive Learning Audit:

"She felt in good hands and her SW is insightful and on the ball. She said that she can't praise her enough and feels very lucky to have chosen OAWY and had D as her social worker"



Preparation, Training and Support for Prospective Adopters

All training continues to be featured on and accessible through our website. Adopters can learn more about what is offered and book directly onto training through web forms.

Our **information events** continue to be delivered online and always include an experienced adopter who shares their experience and answers questions. There are daytime, evening and weekend sessions and applicants can book directly onto a session that suits them.

"The session covered all sorts of areas and I found it very informative. I was also thankful to hear from an adoptive parent and his experience."

Three-day preparation groups have been delivered face to face since April 2022. Training includes presentations, video content (including Virtual Reality headsets) and group activities. In the first half of the year, there were five groups which 43 families attended. Feedback received was entirely positive:

"This was a fantastic three days and really exceeded my expectations. The application of theoretical concepts in real life circumstances was really helpful in enabling us to envisage how things could be."

"I found hearing from XXXX, an adopted adult, particularly powerful and having an adoptive parent giving real-life examples provided a great insight into family life and how the theory works in practice."

Specific one day online training for **experienced adopters and foster carers** continue to be delivered. Nine households attended the experienced adopter training, and five households attended the foster carer training. Some of our experienced adopters and foster carers attended the three-day training where this was felt to be beneficial.

Delivery of training on **early permanence** in the preparation stage has been improved. All prospective adopters are now asked to watch a 45-minute pre-recorded webinar as part of the preparation training. Following this the applicants have the option to attend a one-day, classroom-based session to explore early permanence in more detail. The session is delivered alongside an experienced early permanence adopter. So far this year we have run two sessions to 24 households.

"I found it really informative, and it was delivered exceptionally well. It definitely clarified for me that EPP is a route that I'm interested in."



84 supporters attend the 'Connected by Adoption' training to learn more about the needs of adopted children and their families and think about how they can best support their friends/family on their adoption journey.

"Really informative and answered lots of questions that I was wondering about. Really liked the therapeutic parenting side which I have never come across before."

The **Birth Parent Information Session** is an opportunity for prospective adopters to hear directly from birth parents in a two-hour classroom-based session. There were seven sessions between April and September attended by 52 households. The feedback was entirely positive.

"Really appreciate the honesty that everyone brought, and I found their stories very moving."

Following approval, adopters are invited to attend our **Pre-Matching Training** which helps prepare adopters for transitions and early placement. There were six sessions between April and September which 64 households attended. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

"Lots of great advice and opportunities to ask questions, which were all taken on board and answered well."

Most prospective adopters attend **Brain Based Parenting, Therapeutic Parenting and FASD** webinars to learn more about the particular needs of the children waiting for adoption.

"Another parenting training which was very interesting and informative. We have more knowledge about brain development in children now".

Recently matched families can attend **Six months in**, a four-day therapeutic parenting program run over two weeks, led by an experienced adopter. It is aimed at the first year of adoptive parenting and supports parents to understand the needs of their child/ren.

All prospective adopters can access independent support through **Adoption UK**. Peer support and Passport are commissioned from AUK. 36 families were supported in the first half of the year through the one-to-one **Peer Mentoring** service and 84 households accessed WhatsApp support. 62 households accessed the **Adoption Passport**, providing access to online learning modules, message boards and support groups.

"Thank you for all of your support over the last few months I know we would have disrupted without it"

4. CHILDREN WITH AN ADOPTION PLAN

The number of children within the family finding service has continued to increase over the first half of the year and is at its highest since the agency was formed in 2017. At the end of September 2023 **251** children had a plan of adoption but were not matched.

There was a 46% increase in the number of children made subject to a Placement Order and the number of children placed for adoption in the period remaining static. Despite the challenging climate, there has been a 2% increase in the number of children placed with OAWY approved adopters and a 42% increase in the number of children placed in Early Permanence Placements. Keeping children local and placing them with permanent carers at the earliest opportunity is greatly beneficial for a child. So far for the same period 69 children have acquired Adoption Orders. This is against a climate of extended court processes and as such the figures show this is down by six on the same time last year.

Four children had their placements disrupted across One Adoption West Yorkshire for two sibling groups of two children, this is up from zero disruptions in the same period of the previous year. One of the placement disruptions in the first half of this year was with an OAWY family, the other children were placed with families approved by other agencies.

Specific Family Finding Activity

In addition to placing children with OAWY adoptive families partnership work continues with other regional and voluntary adoption agencies locally and nationally to find families for children.

An initial search for families is carried out within the Yorkshire region but the agency must also balance this with providing an opportunity for children to have permanency through adoption with families best able to meet their needs, even if this results in the children being placed at distance. When placing children, the importance of providing support for the children and their families is also factored in.



Profiling Events

Two online profiling events took place within this period. Profiling events serve to share information to a wider audience about the needs of 'children who wait longest.' The profiling events are open to families from regional adoption agencies (RAA) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAA) UK wide.

The following table sets out the numbers of children and families and the results so far. Although there had been several expressions of interest this generally centred around only a fraction of the number of children featured, hence some children received more Expressions of Interest (EOI) than others.

PROFILING EVENTS HELD	May	September
No. of single children profiled	9	10
No. of sibling groups profiled	6	9
No of expressions of interest (EOI)	45	23
No of EOI that progressed to a linking visit	3	3
No of linking visits that progressed to a match	2	n/a
No of children matched	2	n/a
Adopter attendance at event	126	124

Child focused family finding

OAWY has been working with Adoption Matters on a pilot called Child Focussed Family Finding Building (CFFB) service. The aim being to identify specific children with high-end level of need, using a scoring mechanism called a FLAG tool that the advanced practitioners have been trained in using at the point of SHOBPA decision. The project is building on the work started so far, and to date there is a growing list of five children either confirmed, or under consideration for the project.



Fun Days

Fun days (formally activity days) are a way of prospective adopters exploring the needs of children they would be best placed to care for, so although we do not always see that Fun Days result in matches directly, they do feed into the adopter experience which leads to more appropriate matches happening further down the line.

In July a Fun Day was held which resulted in three matches being identified:

Fun Day Held	July
No. of single children that attended	8
No. of sibling groups that attended	9
No. of expressions of interest	12
No. of EOI that progressed to a linking visit	5
No. of linking visits that are progressing to matching panel	3
No. of adopters at the event	36



Early Permanence Project

The project is now in the second year. The same Project Lead has remained in post and continued the development work that commenced within the project's first year. Following the success of the project in raising the profile of Early Permanence, additional funding has been secured to extend the Project Lead role until May 2024. Within One Adoption West Yorkshire, Early Permanence Champions have been established to drive the use of Early Permanence and support the Project Lead in developing practice through the implementation of the Early Permanence Strategy.

The number of children identified for Early Permanence in the first half of the year increased from 13 to 18. The number of children successfully placed in Early Permanence placements increased by five and the percentage of children matched following an Early Permanence Placement increased by 12%, evidencing the positive impact of the work. The number of prospective adopters approved in period that are open to Early Permanence has also increased from 16% to 27%.

Several key areas are under consideration for development including high quality and regular training for local authority social workers and other professionals across the region giving a clear message that Early Permanence can be considered for children of all ages. The work to date has had a positive impact in increasing the number of children placed through Early Permanence and has aligned preparation of Early Permanence carers across Yorkshire and Humber. An additional project, working with the local Voluntary Adoption Agencies to provide Early Permanence for sibling groups and older children, is progressing, with an agreed training and preparation package now in place.

AFDiT Project

'Anti-racist framework for decision-making in transitioning children from minoritised racial and ethnic groups into transracial adoptive families'

This is a joint pilot project with a research body which includes the University of Sussex with input from other regional adoption agencies alongside OAWY. The project's focus is on transracial and transcultural adoptions. While transracial adoption can provide a loving and nurturing environment for children who may not otherwise have a stable family home, it has also been recognised that this has its own unique challenges. The project's aim is to provide a framework which leads to best outcomes for children transracially or transculturally placed. OAWY is devising a toolkit to assist family finders, local authority social workers and assessing adoption workers to identify appropriate permanent placements for children.



5. ADOPTION PANEL

38 panels took place during the first half of 2023/24. There were **52** approvals, **69** matches and **two** relinquished children considered by panel in this period.

Two panel chairs, will shortly be leaving but they have been replaced by two experienced panel chairs, who will commence chairing panels in November 2023. The agency continues to recruit new panel members both to increase diversity and the number of members available. All serving members of panel including chairs are having their reviews on a rolling basis. The annual panel member training will take place in December 2023. In the first half of this year, additional workshops have been made available to panel members to share knowledge about relevant topics including an introduction to Safeguarding, use of VR and Attachment Style Interviews. The support to panels provided by the business support team continues to be excellent despite significant changes in personnel during this period. Communication between the chairs and OAWY is very good and occurs regularly, both informally and formally. This includes meetings between the Panel Chairs, the Service Manager responsible for panels, Business Support Manager and the Panel Adviser, allowing for regular and useful dialogue and discussion which have contributed to the smooth running of panels.

There were 19 survey responses from applicants and adopters who attended panel in the first half of 2023/24. 14 found the experience very good, four found the experience to be good and one rated neither good nor poor. 8 rated questions as very helpful, 10 as helpful and one did not rate.

"[The questions] made us think about a couple of new things which will be helpful as we get ready for the arrival of our child" (applicant)

"A great experience for us, we were made to feel at ease and reassured by all involved, very kind and helpful people. Amazing work from our social worker." (applicant)

"They put the adopters at their ease, and this helped them to answer the questions to the best of their ability. I felt that everyone had a chance to speak and that the questions were thorough and well thought out" (social worker)

"The relationship between panel chairs and the agency is a positive and open one allowing discussion and development to improve the process for all concerned. The panel process continues to function smoothly and contribute to well evidenced and thoughtful recommendations to meet the needs of West Yorkshire children who are placed for adoption." (Panel Chair)



6. ADOPTION SUPPORT



At the end of September 2023 there were **983** children/young people receiving an Adoption Support service from OAWY.

In January 2023, the Adoption Support service was reconfigured to deliver services differently to families. This was in response to the growing number of families who were waiting for a service from the first point of contact. The team has continued to embed the model and an evaluation of the Tier one and Tier two services was undertaken at the end of quarter two. The information gained from this will be used to identify further actions required and will be reported here at year end. Both services are busy with **235** children/families receiving a service at the end of Q2 from Early Advice and Support and **241** children/families receiving a service from Targeted Support.

Work in the Supporting Connections service continues at pace. Worker capacity has been increased slightly with the addition of a part-time Adoption Adviser who has been redeployed from the Recruitment and Assessment service. This worker has been able to provide invaluable support to the existing worker and at the end of Q2 they were actively supporting a combined **46** families, with an additional **63** families currently waiting for a service. This is clearly an area of work that is going to grow in the future with the increasing emphasis on the importance for adoptees of maintaining connections with their birth family.

The Supporting Connections strategy and action plan includes a number of areas of development work, and the team has successfully achieved some of these, including clarifying and publicising the core offer to adoptees aged 18+ and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of letterbox workers alongside those of the supporting connections workers. The adoption support team continues to work on protocols for making an 'Expression of Wish'; an offer for 16+ year olds to think about connections in the future; and archiving arrangements for 'dormant' letterbox files.

The letterbox service has processed **2104** pieces of mail coming in and sent out a further **1594** exchanges in the period – both an increase. OAWY has continued to take part in the pilot of a digital platform with a small number of adoptive and birth families and are planning to take part in a second pilot later in the year.

There were **442** applications to the Adoption Support Fund for individual therapeutic input or for therapeutic groups approved across the period equating to **£1,785m** of funding.

File access has received **165** requests to look at records. These requests are from PAC-UK (on behalf of adult adoptees or a birth relative), other professionals (including other adoption support agencies, therapists, safeguarding social workers, police) and adult adoptees. The file access team has continued to work to the protocol of responding to requests within a calendar month and have by and large been able to achieve this (except for one LA which is currently digitising their database, so requests to that area are taking longer; we are able to explain this to those making the requests).

PAC-UK has continued to provide a commissioned support service to adults as well as the Adoptees service. They have received **231** calls to their advice line and worked with **183** service users across the period offering **344** appointments; the overwhelming majority to adult adoptees, but are also starting to see an increase in birth relatives seeking information about their relative who was adopted. West Yorkshire continues to be well represented in Adoptees with **83** out of 146 young people being from the region (this is an increase of eight from 22/23 year-end). Adoptees continue to run activity days, both in person and online, and a member of OAWY staff attends regularly to provide some support to the project.



7. COMPLAINTS

Six complaints were received during the first half of the year. Two investigations are ongoing; four were resolved at stage one of the process.

Learning for the agency in relation to:

- Review and re-sharing of finance policy in relation to adoption allowances.
- Review of enquiry and stage one process for prospective adopters seeking to adopt specific children to ensure clear processes and information sharing.
- The importance of clear, timely and professional communication.

8. STAFFING

There were no vacancies at the half year point.

Staff absence due to sickness equates to 3.89 days per full time staff member. Staff absence is largely due to stress and mental health; wellbeing remains a focus in all staff supervision discussions. Sickness within OAWY remains lower than the wider social care workforce.

During the first six months of 2023/24 the following training has been undertaken:

- BUSS Level two – delivered to three social workers.
- Role specific learning, assigned to nine staff.
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Refresher training, delivered to 70 staff.

9. FINANCE

At the end of the mid-point of the year the agency is predicting a balanced budget position.

The largest in year expenditures relate to staff costs and interagency fees.



10. KEY PRIORITIES 2023/24

Priority	Progress
Developing family finding practice for children who wait longer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family finding strategy on how we identify children likely to wait longest in early tracking process in draft. • Trail with Coram-I collective matching underway.
Increase the number of adopters able to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption in West Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing strategy reviewed. • FASD webinar held in May. • Three live podcasts and a further three in development.
Increase the number of children placed through Early Permanence	Internal EP Teams channel created that shows list of adopters, who and where.
Improve the help and support for adopted teenagers and young adults who are moving towards independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear core offer for 18+ year olds produced and on OAWY website. • Supporting contact strategy implemented.
Work collaboratively with partners to improve the flexibility, variety & quality of family connections.	Letter Swap pilot running with 10 families and extended until April 2024. Arc Box pilot scheduled for Q3.
Improve participation and voice and influence in service development and delivery.	Methods to better capture the voice of children and young people are being introduced. Interactive learning audits now up and running.
Review development opportunities for staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUSS Level 2 - delivered to three social workers. • Role specific learning, assigned to nine staff. • Safeguarding Children and Young People Refresher training, delivered to 70 staff.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Half Year Performance Report

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One Adoption West Yorkshire



One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE

HALF-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024



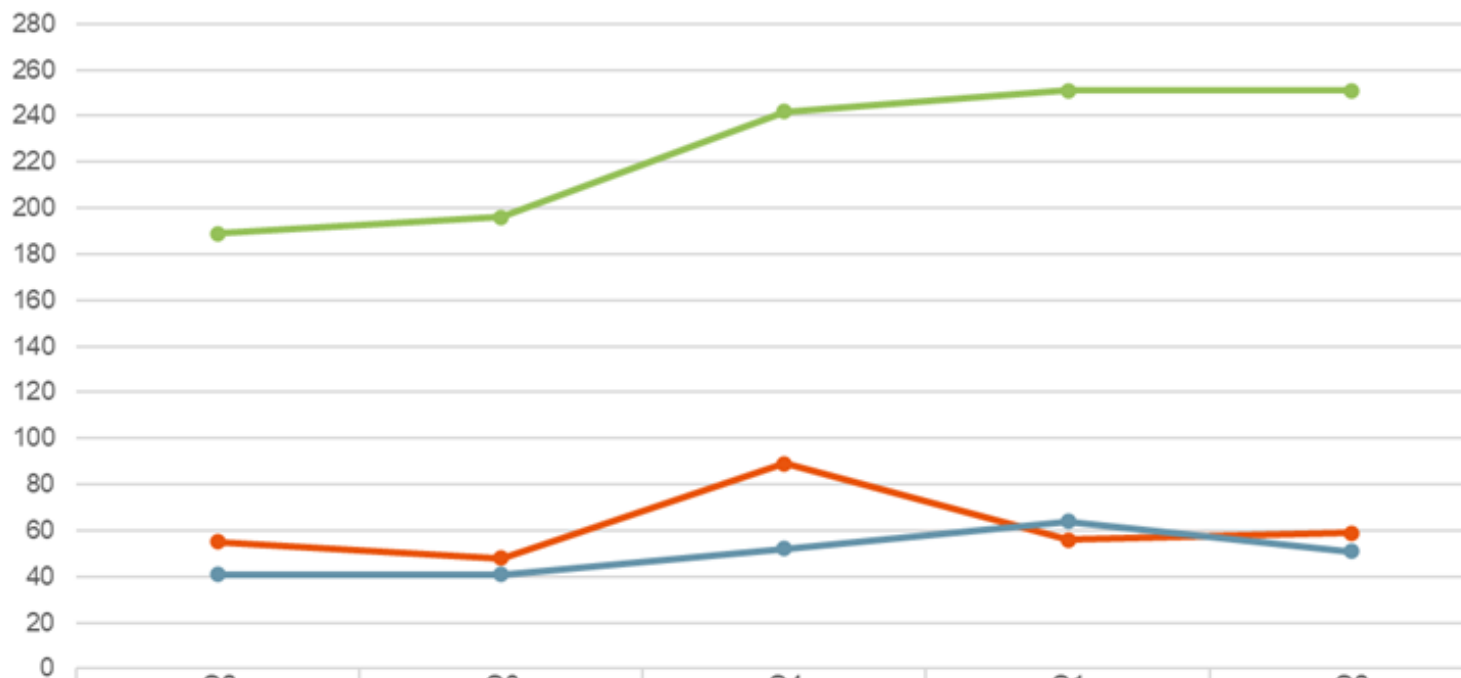
THE CHILDREN

	Q1&Q2 23/24	Compared to Q1&2 22/23
Number of children adopted in Q1&2	69	↓ -6
Number of ADMs in Q1&2	115	↑ +8
Number of POs in Q1&2	115	↑ +36
Number of children placed in Q1&2	84	= 0
Percentage of children placed with OAWY approved adopters	74%	↑ +2%
Number of children whose placements were disrupted	4	↑ +4
Number of children placed via Early Permanence	17	↑ +5
Percentage of children matched for adoption which were previously in EPPs	15%	↑ +12%
Number of children at half-year end with ADM not matched	251	↑ +62

The number of children with an ADM not matched continues to increase and is up 62 from the same time last year. Placement Orders have significantly increased in the first half of this year, resulting in there being 52 more children with a Placement Order not matched than on 30th September 2023. There is an increased use of Early Permanence, which means more children are experiencing fewer changes of carer and greater stability from an earlier stage. Three quarters of children have been placed for adoption with OAWY approved adopters, which means children are being matched with families we know well and who we can offer ongoing support.



ADMs, Placement Orders and ADM not matched One Adoption West Yorkshire



	Q2 2022-23	Q3 2022-23	Q4 2022-23	Q1 2023-24	Q2 2023-24
ADM	55	48	89	56	59
Placement Orders	41	41	52	64	51
ADM not yet matched (period end)	189	196	242	251	251

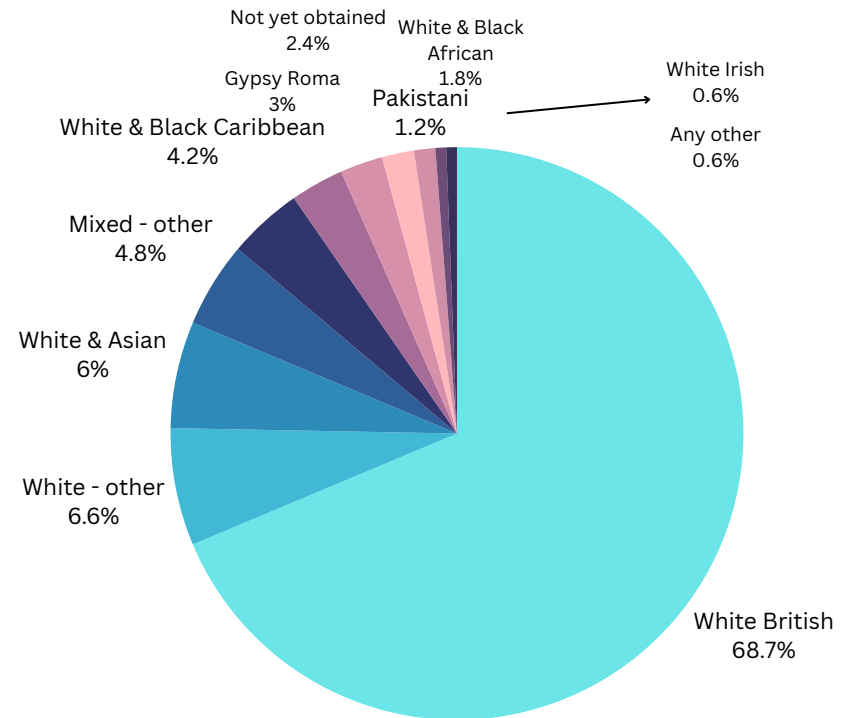
THE CHILDREN - DEMOGRAPHICS

The **166 children** who are not matched, with a placement order fall into the following demographics.



Ethnicity

White British	114	Information not yet obtained	4
White - other	11	White & Black African	3
White & Asian	10	Pakistani	2
Mixed heritage - other	8	Any other ethnic background	1
White & Black Caribbean	7	White Irish	1
Gypsy/ Roma	5		



THE CHILDREN - TIMESCALES

For the 69 children adopted in the first and second quarter:

A10 indicator: *"The time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, adjusted for those adopted by their foster carers"*



448 to 480 days (national target: 426 days)

There has been a slight increase in this timescale which reflects some of the complexities in care proceedings for children with an adoption plan.

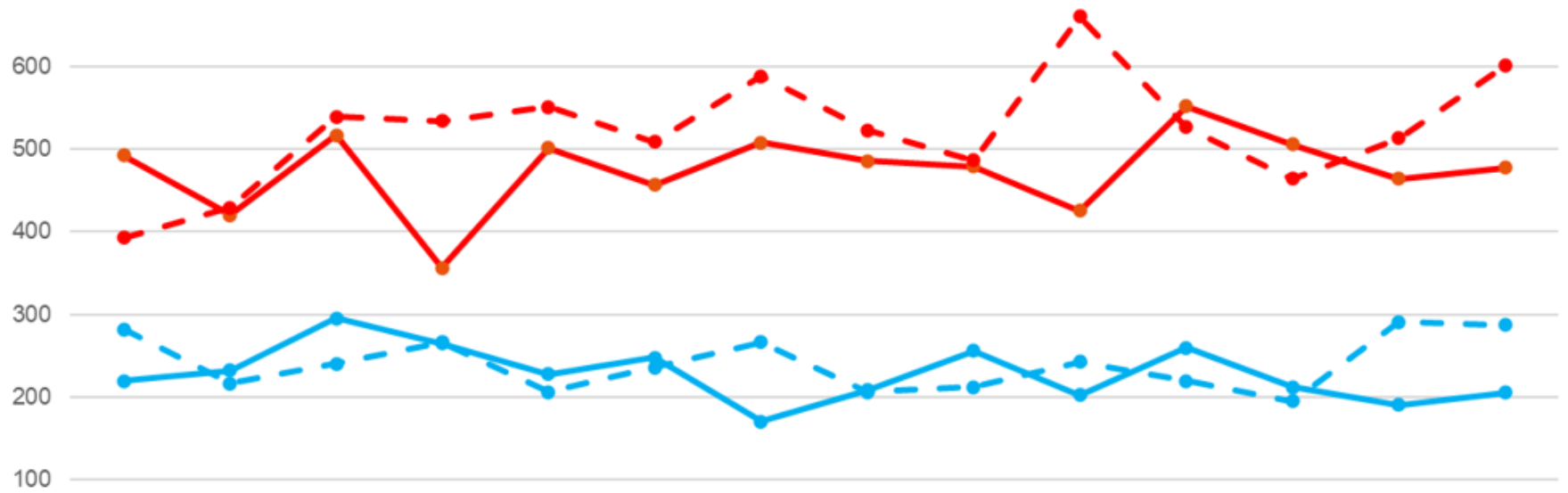
A2 indicator: *"The time taken from a local authority receiving court authority to place a child for adoption and a match to an adoptive family being agreed"*



229 to 206 days (national target: 121 days)

Despite sufficiency challenges the time taken to match children with adopters following a Placement Order has fallen in the first half of the year. This timescale will be positively impacted by an increased use of Early Permanence.

A10 AND A2 INDICATORS FOR CHILDREN ADOPTED AND PLACED - WEST YORKSHIRE



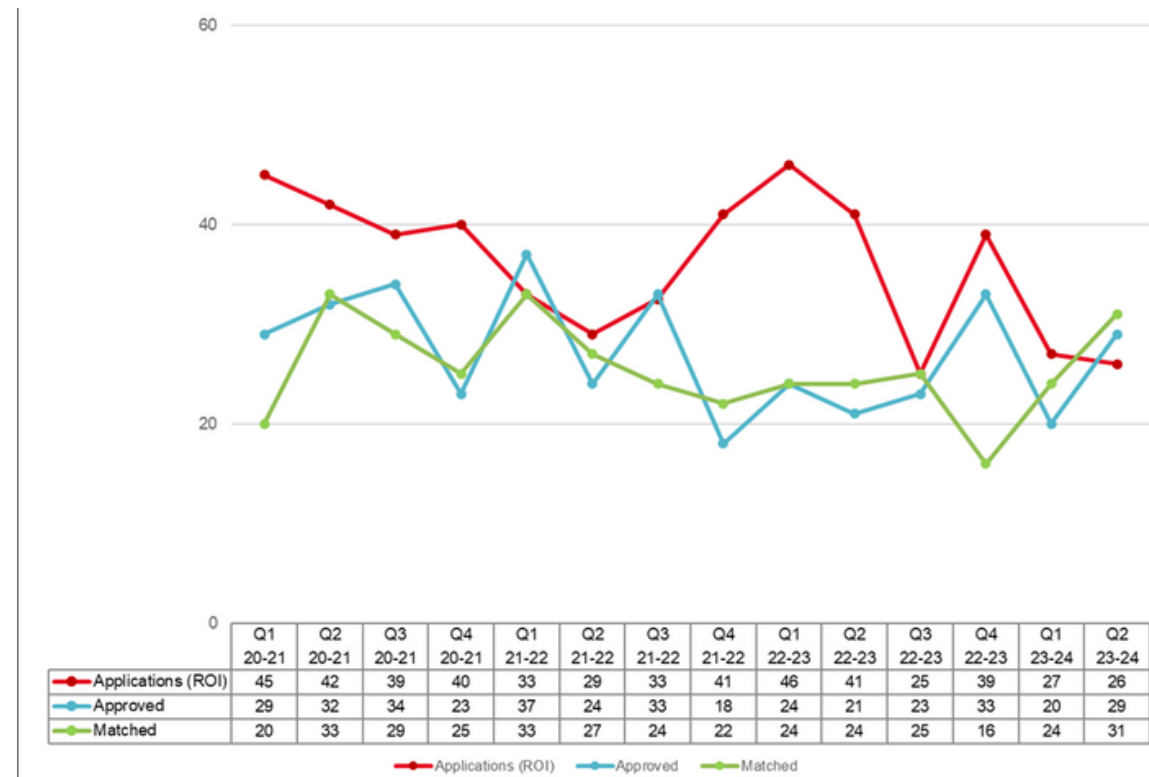
	Q1 20-21	Q2 20-21	Q3 20-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22	Q3 21-22	Q4 21-22	Q1 22-23	Q2 22-23	Q3 22-23	Q4 22-23	Q1 23-24	Q2 23-24
A10 indicator - Adopted	492	420	516	356	501	456	508	486	479	425	551	505	464	477
A10 indicator - Placed	393	429	539	534	551	509	588	522	486	660	527	464	513	601
A2 indicator - Adopted	220	232	295	265	228	248	171	209	256	202	259	212	191	205
A2 indicator - Placed	282	217	241	266	206	236	266	206	212	243	219	195	291	287

ADOPTERS

Compared to same time last year

Number of Applications (ROI) after Q1&2	53	↓	-35
Number of adopters matched after Q1&2	55	↑	+7
Number of adopters approved in Q1&2	49	↑	+3

Adopters through the process by quarter



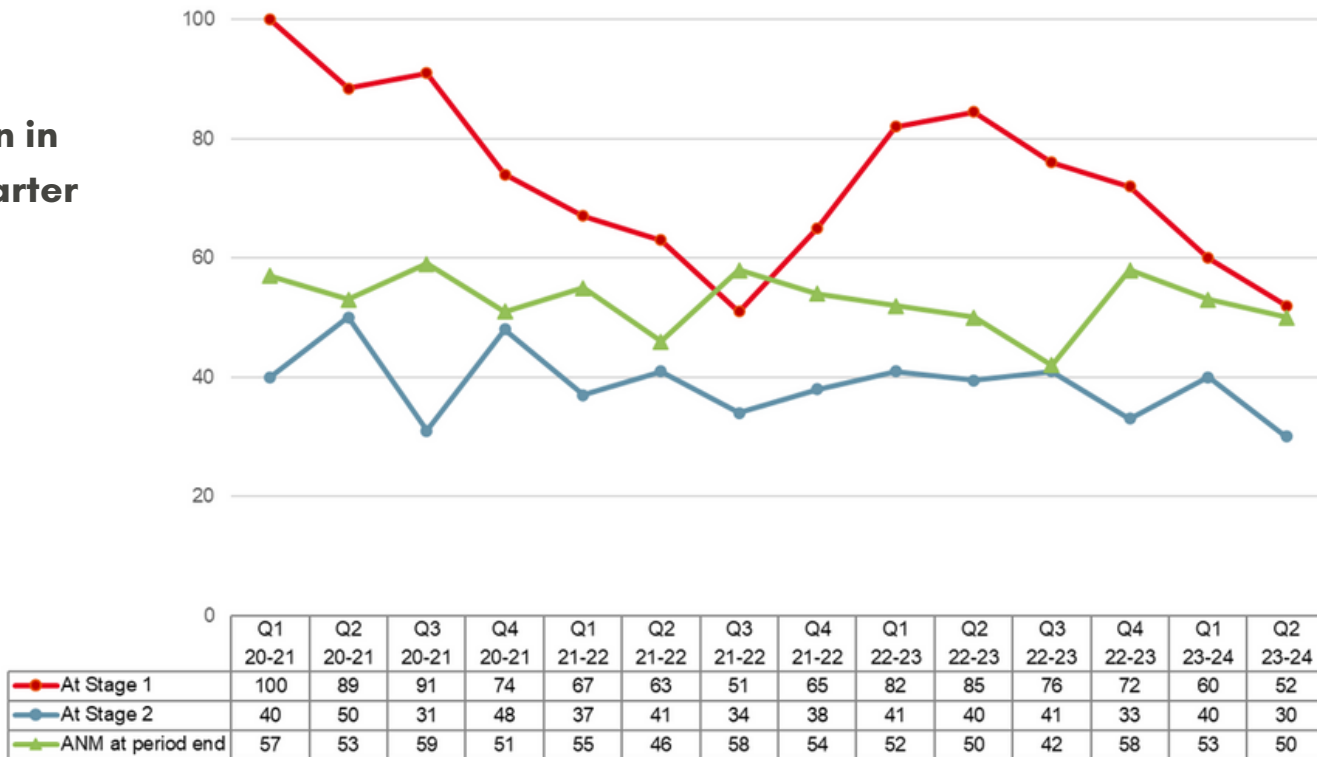
ADOPTERS

Compared to same time last year

Number of adopters in stage one after Q1&2	52	↓	-33
Number of adopters in stage two after Q1&2	30	↓	-10
Number of adopters approved not matched after Q1&2*	50	=	0

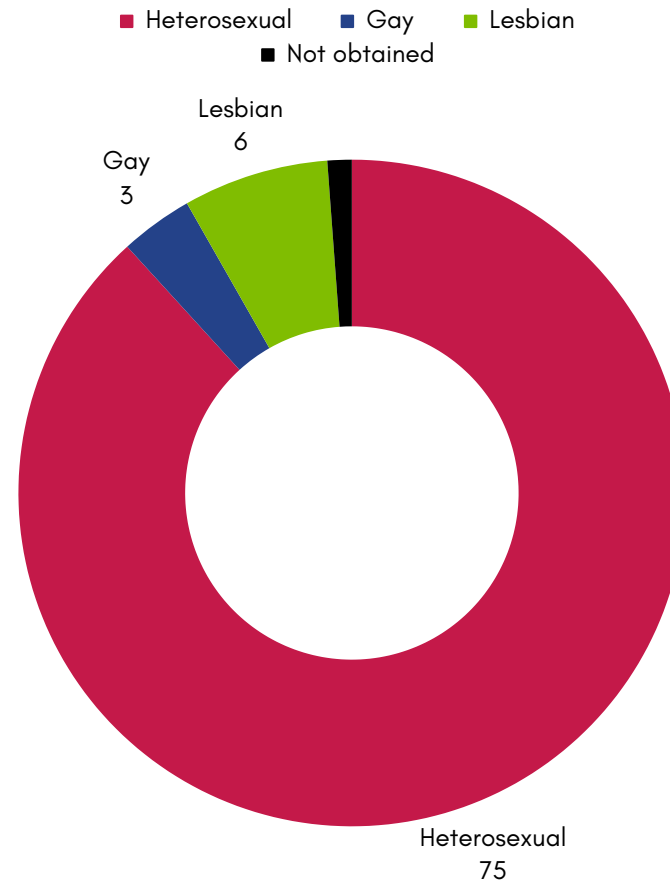
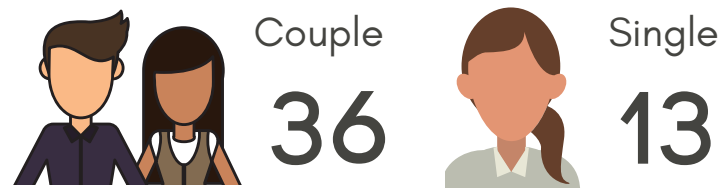
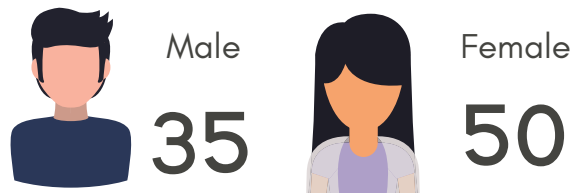
*of the 50, 14 have matching panel booked

Adopters position in the process at quarter end



DEMOGRAPHIC OF ADOPTERS APPROVED

The demographic of the 85 individual adopters approved during Q1 and Q2 was:



ADOPTION SUPPORT

	Half-year 23/24	Half Year 22/23
Adoption Support enquiries received	205	140
Children and families receiving adoption support	983	848
Applications to the Adoption Support Fund approved	442	432
ASF funding for therapeutic interventions	£1,785,916.84	
File Access requests received	165	206
Letters processed by the Letterbox team	2104 (incoming) 1594 (outgoing)	1818 (incoming) 1354 (outgoing)



TRAINING

Training Offered	Number of Households attended
Preparing to Adopt	45
Early Permanence	45
Adopting Siblings	17
Foster Carer Adopter	6
Experienced Sibling Adopter	9
Birth Parent Twilight Sessions	65
Pre-Match	64
Connected by Adoption	84



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One Adoption West Yorkshire



One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM
QUARTERLY REPORT
Q2 2023-2024

BY KATY GRAVES
TEAM MANAGER
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
TEAM



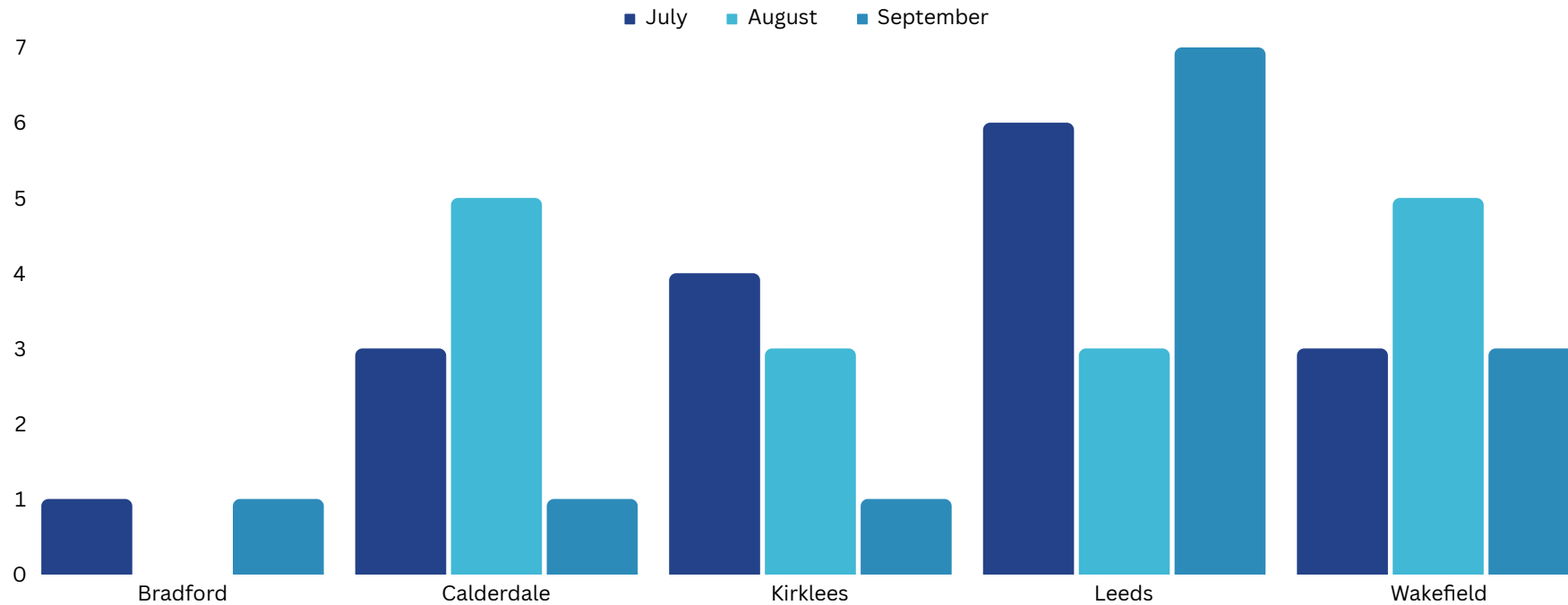
SERVICE PROVIDED

Enquiries

The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) welcome referrals from One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) workers where they feel MDT support would help with their work with a family.

From 1st July, 2023 to 30th September 2023 the MDT have received **46** enquires to MDT for support for OAWY Social Workers and families.

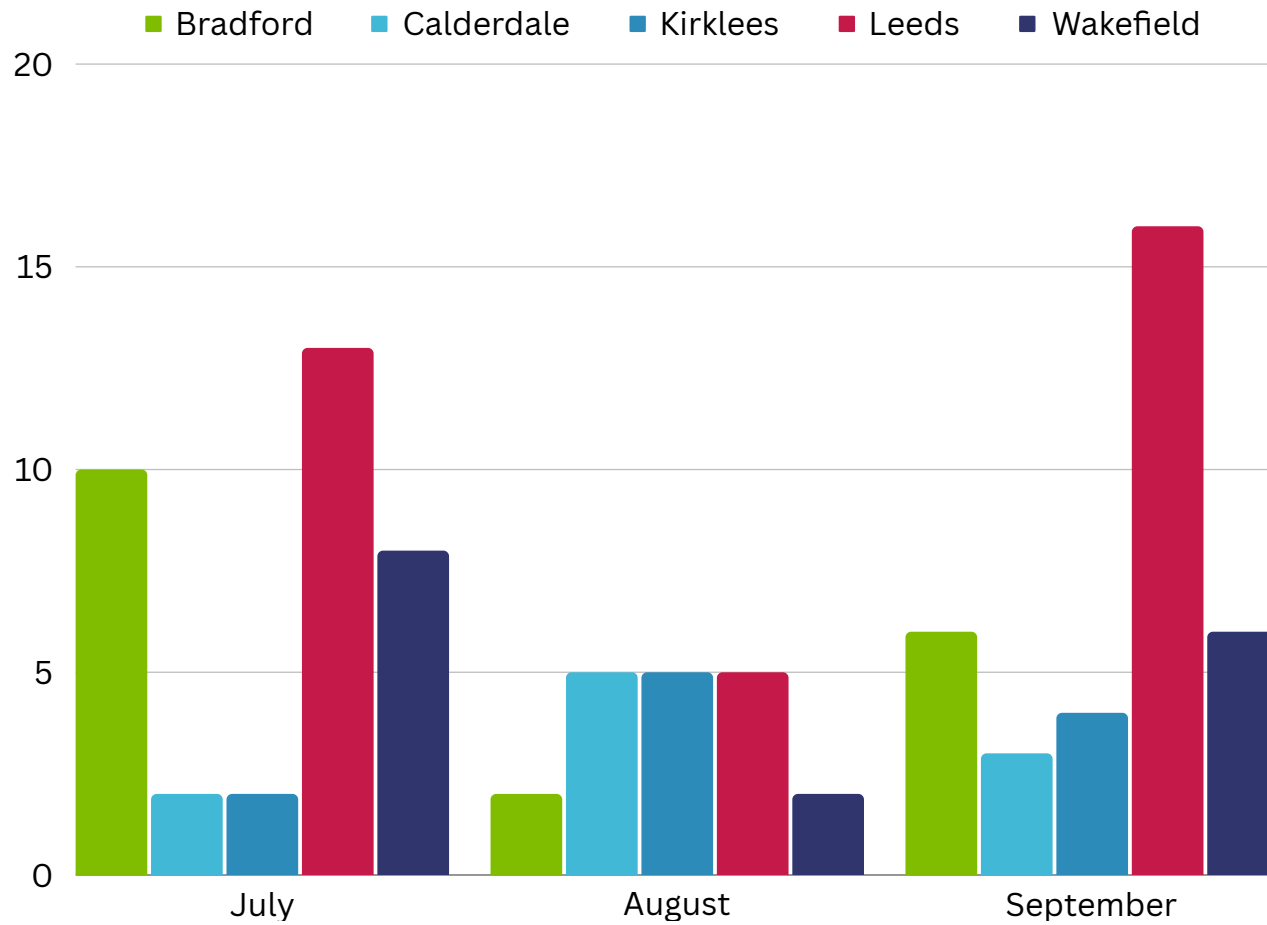
No. of MDT enquiries by LA



Consultations

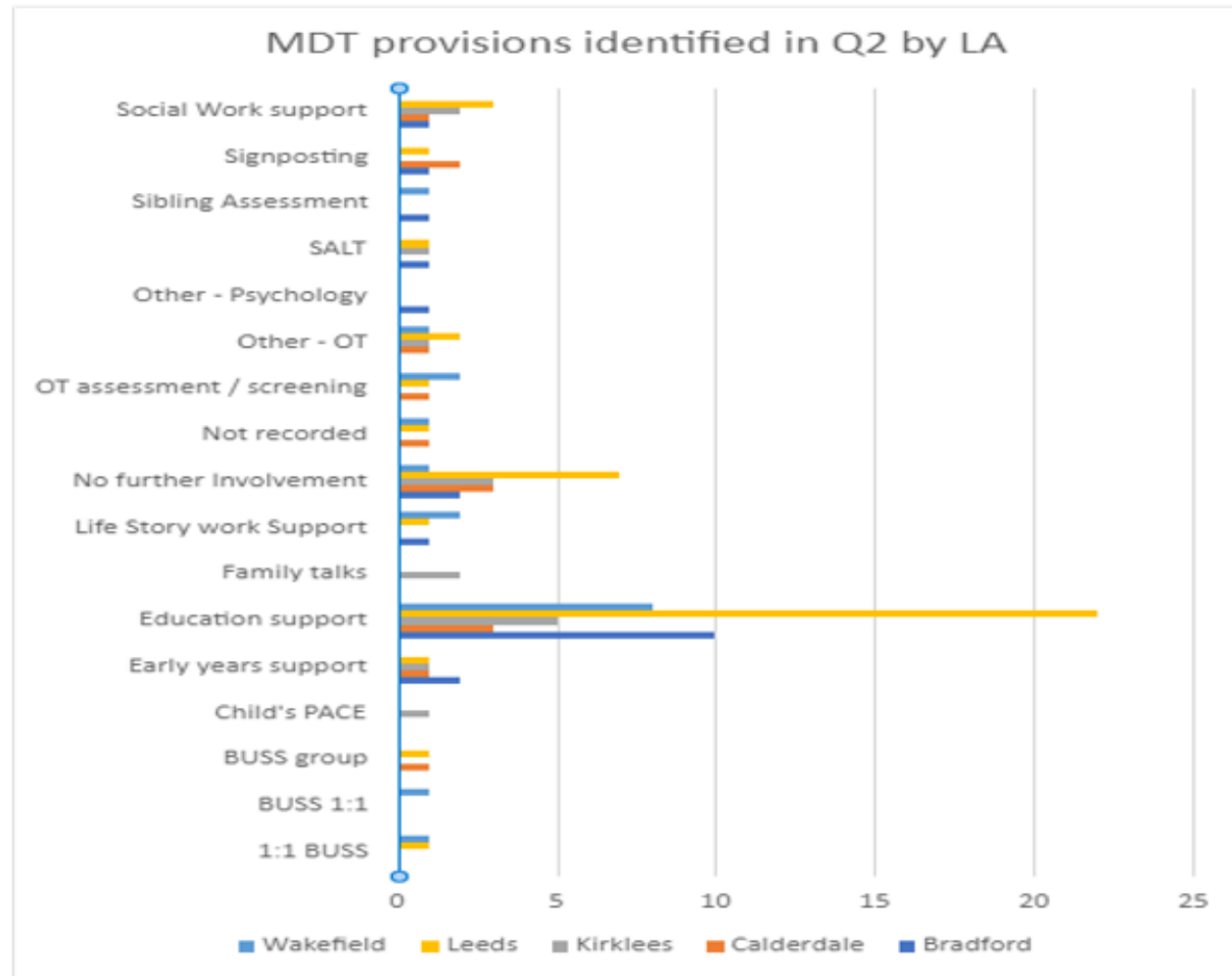
The support offered by the MDT includes a variety of 'one off support,' including formal consultations with families, drop-in consultations, informal support conversations with social workers as well as an education and life story helpline.

89 consultations were delivered this quarter.



Provisions

In addition to the one-off support offer, the team offer several types of longer-term support. During this quarter **110** sessions of support were delivered. The services include assessments, therapeutic interventions, social worker supervision and support.



IMPACT

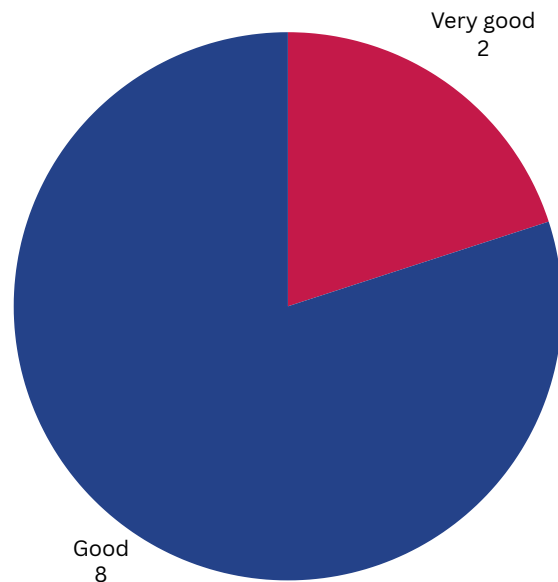
The MDT has a robust service evaluation plan utilising standardised outcome measures to measure interventions prior to the work and again at the end, as well as a catalogue of quick surveys which capture feedback in the below areas:

Families' access to, and experience of services is improved

In quarter two, all families reported that their experience of the MDT service was either 'very good' or 'good' (scales rate from very good to poor).

Most families also stated that the MDT fully addressed their reasons for attending (rated fully to not at all)

"Overall how would you rate the MDT service?"



Adoptive families tell us that the quality of life of their adopted child/ren and family has improved

The MDT offers various interventions to help improve the quality of life of their adopted children and improve family life overall. Children who have experienced early adversity often have difficulties with their sensorimotor processing systems which then causes difficulties with everyday life at home and school. To support this the MDT offer a BUSS (Building Underdeveloped Sensorimotor Systems) one-to-one intervention.

Goal based outcomes are administered pre, mid and post interventions. These outcomes show a marked improvement in children's sensorimotor processing with a score of **4.3 increasing to 8 (out of 10)** who access this provision.

Qualitative feedback from parents included:

'Excellent service with very nurturing and encouraging staff. Xxx was brilliant with our daughter, and we could see the progress slowly taking shape. Our daughter's confidence grew week by week'

That children and young people's emotional and mental health is improved

The MDT does not currently use outcome measures to measure emotional and mental health, however increasing parents' confidence, improving the child/ parent relationship and child's responsiveness to parenting, as evidenced in our outcomes, would help improve attachment relationships, increase resilience in children and reduce risk of poor mental and emotional health.



That parents have more confidence and more resilient in parenting their children

The MDT offer families 'Family Talks' which is a DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy) informed space for families and an MDT worker to help them at varying levels across their adoption journey. This can be a space to process grief, work through blocked care, develop therapeutic skills or help parents with tricky family dynamics. The aim is to build parents' confidence and resilience.

The MDT use Goal Based Outcomes (GBOs) to measure success with Family Talks. **GBO's showed an improvement from 3 to 8 (out of 10)** The 'thinking about your child questionnaire' was also used to measure change. **This score improved from 51 to 64.**

The MDT deliver training to parents on education issues, Closer in Play and Life Story. Surveys were sent out following the training.

This quarter we delivered training to parents on therapeutic parenting. Introduction to therapeutic parenting is our training which offers an introduction to attachment, brain development and therapeutic parenting for adoptive parents. All participants, rated the course very good or good. **Parents scored increase in knowledge at 4.1 (5 being highest) and 4 for confidence (5 being the highest) after attending the training.**

There is a reduction in the number of adoption breakdowns and disruptions

This quarter, six children/sibling groups were referred to the MDT where the families have been considered at risk of breakdown and the MDT have offered support. **Out of the six families none have returned to local authority care.**



There is less demand for intensive assessment and treatment services

The MDT has received **46** referrals this quarter, which would have been passed to mainstream services for assessment and support. **110** sessions of early intervention therapeutic sessions have also been delivered.

The education outcomes of the adopted children improve, and the number of school exclusions decrease

Our education specialist offers attachment and trauma training to schools across West Yorkshire. With a better understanding of the needs of adopted children and young people and how to meet their educational and emotional needs within schools, their academic attainment will improve as well as exclusions decreasing. This quarter, **10** schools were trained across West Yorkshire.

Teachers reported an increase in understanding of attachment and trauma knowledge after training with **the average score being 4 (out of 10) prior to training 9.5 (out of 10) following the training.** They also stated that they would be less likely to exclude an adopted child now, due to an increase in their knowledge around attachment and trauma.

That professionals working with children are skilled up in understanding and responding appropriately with families experiencing difficulties

Training: This quarter the MDT has delivered life story training for professionals. All professionals scored the course 'very good' and **overall scores for increase in knowledge were 4.5 (out of 5) and increase in confidence was 4.5.**

"I wanted to find out what life story work was so I would be able to discuss it further with my adopters, I feel confident I would be able to do this now."

"It has boosted my confidence when talking to parents about this area"



Consultations: Professionals attending consultations and drop-ins, rated them all 'very good' or 'good'. **They scored their knowledge after the interventions as 4.4 and confidence as 5 (out of 5).**

"It was very good to have space to properly discuss and think about my young person and to try and get some clarity in my own head as to what may be of benefit for him. The use of questions helped me in this as I was really unsure as to what the right approach/options for him was."

'Really helpful to have a reflective space to think about supporting a family where I had become 'stuck'. A suggestion was made which I would not have considered due to lack of knowledge about available options.'

'The service has been a huge support to my work. It has really helped me think about things I wouldn't have considered and also has continually been child focussed. The multi-agency approach is also really helpful when bringing specific issues.'

"I have accessed a consultation for a complex transition period for a sibling group. This resulted in being allocated specific reflective space for the professionals as required. The whole process is currently running fairly smoothly, and this is down to the high level of support in place with the MDT reflective space as part of this. There are always 'nuggets' of learning to take away once we have reflected. Thank you, MDT!"



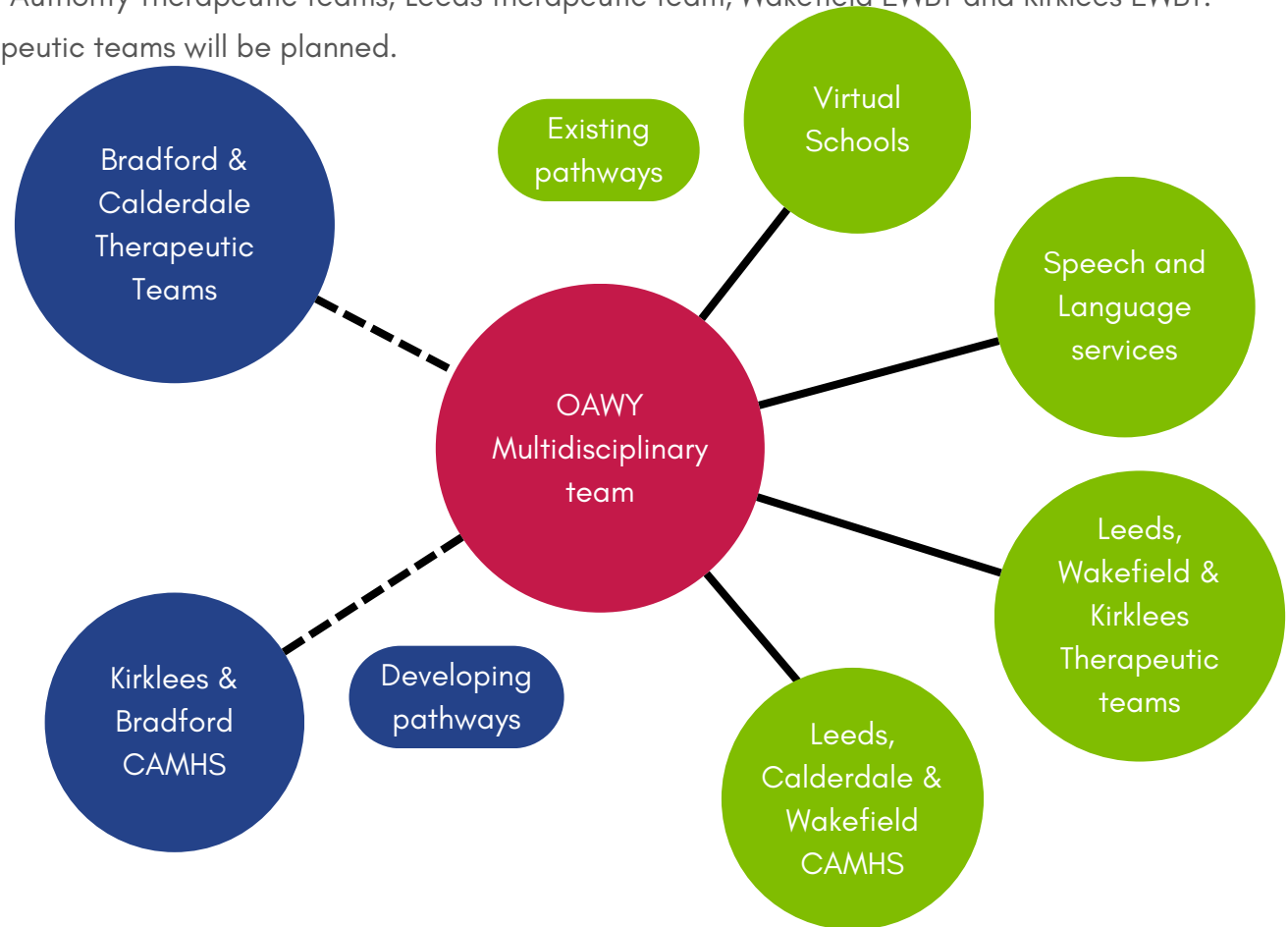
New trauma and neglect informed evidence-based support and care pathways are created

- Pathways exist between Virtual Schools and the MDT and MDT SALT (Speech and Language Therapist) and mainstream SALT services.
- Agreement already exists between Calderdale CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Leeds CAMHS and Wakefield CAMHS.
- Meetings with Kirklees and Bradford CAMHS are planned.
- Links have been made between the Local Authority Therapeutic teams; Leeds therapeutic team, Wakefield EWBT and Kirklees EWBT.
- Links with Bradford and Calderdale therapeutic teams will be planned.

Are we keeping this in?

Pathways between OAWY MDT and wider therapeutic services are important for our families, to ensure seamless services, reduce duplication and support early intervention.

The MDT are working hard to develop pathways and working agreements across LA and NHS therapeutic services to support our work and our families.



Case Example

Background information

A 10 year old boy was referred to MDT by the OAWY social worker due to concerns that the ASF private provider may not be meeting the needs of this family.

The adoptive placement is at risk of disruption due to high levels of child to parent violence and parents struggling to continue to parent their child.

There are concerns regarding the suitability of the current specialist education placement.

There are longstanding queries about possible autism/ ADHD which have not been addressed or assessed. There is a sense that the child's needs are wider in nature than developmental trauma. Two previous referrals to local CAMHS services; first time was just into lockdown and was made by parents requesting help (not specific to an ASD assessment). Parents recall being told their child was 'too complex'. The second time was via the GP requesting help and assessment. They received a generic letter back refusing the referral with no name or number for anyone to contact to discuss this.

There have been gaps in therapeutic support by the private provider due to insufficient funding due to the high cost of the private provider. This has meant that the family have had to wait for match-funding to be agreed to fund the therapy. This has had an impact on consistent therapeutic support.

MDT involvement

MDT supported the OAWY social worker with their match-funding application. The MDT met with the social worker, parents and the private provider and reviewed the current therapeutic intervention. The provider ensured that their support will initially be building resilience and confidence in parenting, before focussing on dyadic work. This was deemed as appropriate and parents were keen for this support to continue as they were in crisis. The private provider's focus was trauma however it was agreed with the private provider that we needed to look wider than attachment and trauma and agreed for MDT to undertake an ASD screen. The social worker allocated to the case was NVR trained and experienced, so it was also agreed that the OAWY social worker would undertake Non Violence Resistance with the family to manage the high level risk of violence. TAF meetings were recommended to ensure a joined up approach.

An ASD screen commenced with the MDT Consultant Psychologist and MDT Occupational Therapist. During this work safeguarding concerns were raised due to the high levels of child to parent violence disclosed. This resulted in a safeguarding referral which was accepted by the local team and an early help worker was allocated who worked with the family for three months, linking parents and child in to additional support.

The screen ruled-in the need for full ASD and ADHD assessments. In addition, the screen raised the question of possible genetic factors such as FASD (due to observed distinctive facial features) as well as questions regarding his cognitive ability/ profile (which appears to be a 'spiky' presentation of strengths and weaknesses).

The following course of action was agreed with family:

- That the psychologist would explore options for holistic assessment for all of the above (e.g. via the FASD national assessment centre).
- That parents were to request a referral to a paediatrician for genetic screening
- The psychologist would liaise with school Educational Psychologist re possible cognitive assessment
- Liaison with adoption social worker and manager re coordination of support via TAF meetings/ possible TCI intervention
- Additionally, during the course of this work, there have been 'working together' developments with the Calderdale NHS neurodevelopmental pathway, who have agreed to accept referrals from the MDT clinical psychologists directly for full assessment if requested following the above screening process (rather than parents having to start at the beginning of their screening process again). The ADHD/ASD screen was successfully accepted by Calderdale, which has reduced duplication and wait times for this family.

The MDT education specialist has also been involved and offered support to the school to ensure that they are meeting this child's needs.

The case example demonstrates MDT linking Local Authority and NHS services together, ensuring that families are offered a wider holistic lens, considering attachment and trauma, family functioning, mental health as well as neurological and genetic conditions. The work that MDT offered this family ensured that they received a seamless and joined up service that meets all the systemic needs of the family.