



## Report of the Director of Children's Services

### Executive Board

11<sup>th</sup> February 2011

### The Ofsted Inspection of Leeds City Council's Adoption Service 2010

<b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b> All
<input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)

<b>Specific Implications For:</b>
Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/>
Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/>

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In  
(Details contained in the report)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Executive Board with details of the Ofsted inspection of Leeds City Council's Adoption Service. This was an important inspection in view of the wider service improvement work taking place across children's services in Leeds and the important role that adopters play in improving lives and outcomes for children and young people.
- 1.2 The inspection took place between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010. It was an announced inspection with the purpose of evaluating the service against the adoption national minimum standards. All the standards inspected are under the outcome areas of staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and organisation. The adoption service's promotion of equality and diversity is also inspected. A copy of the full published Ofsted inspection report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 There is further detail in the body of this cover report, but in summary the grades awarded were as follows:

Overall grading:	<b>Good</b>
Be Healthy:	Not judged on these inspections
Stay safe:	<b>Good</b>
Enjoy and Achieve:	<b>Outstanding</b>
Positive Contribution:	<b>Good</b>
Economic wellbeing:	Not judged on these inspections

Organisation: **Good**

1.4 A number of recommendations for improvement were also made and will be addressed as part of a wider service improvement plan.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Executive Board note the contents of this report, recognising the key role that adopters and the adoption service play in improving outcomes for children and young people in Leeds.

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Executive Board with details of the December 2010 Ofsted inspection of Leeds City Council's Adoption Service.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The inspection of Leeds City Council's adoption service took place between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010. It was an announced inspection with the purpose of evaluating the service against the adoption national minimum standards. All the standards inspected are under the outcome areas of staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and organisation. The adoption service's promotion of equality and diversity is also inspected.
- 2.2 The inspection is carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 and its purpose is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.
- 2.3 The last adoption inspection was carried out in January 2008 undertaken by CSCI rather than OFSTED and that inspection was a good inspection with a number of recommendations for improvement all of which have been met.
- 2.4 During the inspection the inspectors had contact with four young children who were adopted and their adoptive parents and scrutinised a number of case files of adopters. The inspectors spent time looking at the minutes of the adoption panel and considered the evidence provided regarding the service delivery of adoption and adoption support in Leeds.

## 3.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 The inspectors rated the service as a good adoption service with significant strengths.

Overall grading:	<b>Good</b>
Be Healthy:	Not judged on these inspections
Stay safe:	<b>Good</b>
Enjoy and Achieve	<b>Outstanding</b>
Positive Contribution:	<b>Good</b>
Economic wellbeing:	Not judged on these inspections
Organisation:	<b>Good</b>

- 3.2 Key positives highlighted that the service "undertakes good assessments of prospective adopters that prepare them well to look after children" and that "the service it provides support to people affected by adoption that is of outstanding quality". They go on to say that "information sharing between children's social work teams and the adoption team is good" and "Planning for children has improved since the last inspection and is now generally good."
- 3.3 The report states that the service "engages creatively with partner agencies to provide flexible, individualised, proactive and effective support wherever this is needed".

3.4 A number of recommendations were made for improvement :-

- (i) Ensure applicants are considered in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way. Specifically, ensure that safety assessments consider risks presented by a wider range of family pets (National Minimum Standard.
- (ii) Ensure that rigorous status checks and enquiries are undertaken about all prospective adopters.
- (iii) Ensure the Statement of Purpose accurately describes the facilities and services provided. Specifically, ensure that it is updated to reflect the new structure of the adoption service.
- (iv) Ensure that the children's guide is produced in different formats to meet the needs of different groups of children and contains information on how a child can contact the Children's Rights Director.
- (v) Ensure that the staffing complement is adequate to meet the needs of the adoption agency. Specifically, ensure that sufficient staffing resources are devoted to intermediary, tracing and birth records counselling work.

3.5 All of these recommendations will be addressed as part of the service improvement plan with an aim for ensuring that all of addressed with in the next 6 months.

#### **4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 There are no specific implications from this inspection report, but the adoption service is a key strand of the wider agenda to improve children's services and in particular to address issues relating to the number of children and young people in care in Leeds.

#### **5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no specific legal or resource implications from this report.

#### **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 Those who adopt children and young people in Leeds provide a vital service for the city and of course for those they adopt. It is critical therefore that they are supported by an effective service. This Ofsted inspection provides a very positive picture of the adoption service in Leeds, reflecting the importance that children's services place on this work and the collective effort there has been to maintain high standards within the service. The report provides a strong platform on which the service can continue to build as part of the wider transformation of children's services in Leeds.

#### **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 It is recommended that Executive Board note the contents of this report, recognising the key role that adopters and the adoption service play in improving outcomes for children and young people in Leeds.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no specific background papers to this report.