



WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

**Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, on
Wednesday, 28th June, 2017 at 2.00pm**

MEMBERSHIP

Val Slater City of Bradford MDC
Megan Swift Calderdale MBC
Erin Hill Kirklees MBC
Lisa Mulherin (Chair) Leeds City Council
Olivia Rowley City of Wakefield MDC

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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

DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To disclose or draw attention to any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraphs 13 -16 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

5

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence (If any)

6

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th March 2017.

(Copy attached)

1 - 4

7

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

To consider any matters arising from the minutes.

8

ADOPTER DEVELOPMENT REPORT

To consider a report by the Director of Children's Services which sets out information from adoptive parents who are employed as development co-ordinators and their plan to work with the regional adoption agencies across Yorkshire and Humber region to develop adopter led services.

(Report attached)

5 - 14

9		<p>HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT</p> <p>To consider a report by the Director of Children’s Services which sets out the structural and reporting arrangements for the Regional Adoption Agency.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	15 - 40
10		<p>PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>To consider a report by the Director of Children’s Services which sets out the practice improvement framework and baseline performance data for One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY).</p> <p>(Report attached)</p>	41 - 68
11		<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Date and time of next meeting, to be determined</p>	

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

WEDNESDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2017

Present: Councillor L Mulherin (Leeds) - Chair
Councillor E Hill (Kirklees), Councillor V Slater (City of Bradford) and
Councillor M Swift (Calderdale MBC)

Councillor H Hayden (LCC)

In Attendance: S Johal (LCC), S Tariq (LCC), J Jenkins (Calderdale MBC) R
Roberts (LCC), H Lovelady (LCC) and J Grieve (LCC)

1 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

2 EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items identified where it was considered necessary to exclude the press or public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be considered.

3 LATE ITEMS

There were no late items of business

4 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O Rowley.

6 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to this, the inaugural meeting of the West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee. The Chair said the establishment of the "One Adoption Agency West Yorkshire" had already begun to forge strong relationships across the West Yorkshire region.

7 Business Report

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which explained that the Joint Committee's Constitution and Procedure Rules required and permitted the Joint Committee to take decisions on the following:

- The appointment of a Vice Chair
- To consider the appointment of and delegation of functions to any Sub – Groups or Advisory Groups
- Consider whether a standing invitation be made to any other party to attend meetings of the Joint Committee

The Chair sought nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Joint Committee

Councillor Slater nominated Councillor Swift, this was seconded by Councillor Hill.

Upon being put to the vote, Councillor M Swift was unanimously voted in as Vice Chair to the Joint Committee

A discussion ensued on the possible delegation of functions to any Sub Groups or Advisory Groups, but Members were not supportive of the proposal at this time.

In considering whether a standing invitation be made to any other party/ organisation to attend meetings of the Joint Committee, Members were supportive of the attendance of representation from the Voluntary Adoption Alliance.

The Chair made reference to the Joint Committee's Rules of Procedure for Meetings and the requirement for the WYAJC to meet a minimum of once per year.

It was suggested that for the first year meetings be arranged more frequently, possibly quarterly and then reviewed after the first year.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That Councillor M Swift be appointed as Vice Chair to the West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee
- (ii) That at this stage, no functions of the Joint Committee be delegated to any Sub Groups or Advisory Groups
- (iii) That a standing invitation to attend meetings of the Joint Committee be issued to representatives from the Voluntary Adoption Alliance (One senior representative with a wider Yorkshire and Humberside or national overview of adoption and one management representative with a local West Yorkshire overview)
- (iv) That for the first year, up to four meetings of the WYAJC be arranged.

8 Delegation of Functions

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought the approval of the Joint Committee to delegate the adoption functions to the Director of Children and Families at Leeds City Council.

The report explained the way in which it was proposed to discharge the adoption functions through the agency, to the Director of Children and Families at Leeds City Council in order that those functions may be sub-delegated to the Head of Service within the Agency to enable the day to day operation of the Agency and the adoption of the functions through the Agency.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the delegation of the following adoption functions to the Director of Children and Families:-

- Adoption services including:-
 - a) Recruitment and approval of potential adopters;
 - b) Identification of potential matches between children and adopters
 - c) Provision of adoption panels; and
 - d) Provision of adoption support services to adopters, adoptees, birth families and relevant professionals.

9 Structure Report

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which set out details of the structural and reporting arrangements for the Regional Adoption Agency.

The report explained the arrangements in establishing the "One Adoption Agency West Yorkshire" (A new regional adoption agency) including the transfer of staff via TUPE from other Local Authorities into the employment of Leeds City Council to work within the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)

An update on the progression of transfer arrangements, together with details as to where staff would be based was provided.

The report set out the Corporate Parenting Responsibilities for the agency and explained the operation of the Management Board.

Referring to the operation of the Management Board councillor Swift asked about the monitoring/ performance arrangements for the Board.

In responding officers reported that the One Adoption Agency West Yorkshire was the first regional agency to be established and that guidance around the inspection regime was still awaited.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the structural arrangements and support the progression of these arrangements
- (ii) To note that the structure would continue to be populated and updated with a view to the completed structure been circulated to Members by early April 2017

10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – That the next meeting be arranged for Wednesday 28th June 2017 at 2.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds.



Report author: Sarah Johal

Tel: 0113 2783623

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

Date: 28th June 2017

Subject: Adopter Development Report

Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. One Adoption West Yorkshire was formally opened on the 1 April 2017, with the councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Wakefield and Leeds formally entering into a Partnership Agreement to carry out shared adoption services. The adoption functions of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield, as specified in the partnership agreement have been delegated to Leeds City Council.
2. This report sets out information from adoptive parents who are employed as development co-ordinators and their plan to work with the regional adoption agencies across Yorkshire and Humber region to develop adopter led services.

Recommendations

The Joint Committee is requested to:

1. Endorse the information provided by the adopter development coordinators and to support the work going forward.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out information from adoptive parents who are employed as development co-ordinators and their plan to work with the regional adoption agencies across Yorkshire and Humber region to develop adopter led services.

2. Background information

- 2.1 There is an established adopter voice forum in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The adopter development co-ordinators roles link closely with the adopter voice forum to ensure that all regional adoption agencies are enabled to respond to the issues and concerns of adopters.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The Adopter Development Co-ordinators (ADC's) are roles funded by One Adoption to engage adopters in the region and ensure their voices are heard in the development of the new agencies, in the practice development within these agencies and in the ongoing provision of support for adopters in Yorkshire and Humber.
- 3.2 The three posts (one for each, North & Humber, West and South) were appointed in February 2017 and are in place until February 2018, each working 15 hours a week.
- 3.3 Their report (Appendix 1) sets out the main outcomes these roles are to achieve.
- 3.4 One Adoption West Yorkshire is committed to working closely with adoptive families in the region and the work that this report discusses will help to develop services and practice to ensure that family's needs are met.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with adoptive parents in the recruitment of staff and the development of practice and services. This will be further developed over the next few months.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The work undertaken by the adopter development coordinator in West Yorkshire will aim to ensure that the adoption agency maintains an equal service which meets the varied and diverse needs of West Yorkshire's children and adoptive families..

4.3 Resources and value for money

- 4.3.1 There are no specific financial implications for this report. It is envisaged that feedback from adopters will identify areas in which more effective use of resources and value for money can be achieved.

4.4 Legal implications and access to information

- 4.4.1 There are no specific legal implications for this report. Consultation with adopters and their families will ensure that the new agency fulfils the requirement to consult with all stakeholders.

4.5 Risk management

- 4.5.1 There are no specific risk management implications for this report. Feedback from adopters will assist in the identification of any risks for the new agency.

5. Recommendations

The Joint Committee is requested to:

- 5.1 Endorse the information provided by the adopter development coordinators and to support the work going forward.

6. Background documents¹

- 6.1 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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Adopter Development Co-ordinator Strategy



One
Adoption

adoptervoice
Creating empowerment and
engagement for the
adoption community

Report Title: **How to create Adopter Led Services within One Adoption**

Author: **Sam Parkin, Marnie Freeman-Hacker, Andrew Mouse**

Date: **16/05/17**

Summary:

1. The Adopter Development Co-ordinators (ADC's) are roles funded by One Adoption to engage adopters in the region and ensure their voices are heard in the development of the new agencies, in the practice development within these agencies and in the ongoing provision of support for adopters in Yorkshire and Humber.
2. The three posts (one for each, North & Humber, West and South) were appointed in February 2017 and are in place until February 2018, each working 15 hours a week.
3. This report sets out the main outcomes these roles are to achieve.

1. Background:

- 1.1. Initial research into what adopters in the region want from adoption agencies has been conducted as part of the regionalisation programme and previously through the Adopter Voice Forum.
- 1.2. This has consisted of focus groups of adopters working with service staff to plot out the customer journey and identify key issues that adopters feel are important for services to address (In North and Humber) This could be replicated in the other regions. We are also getting families to come forward to conduct case studies for further research purposes. Further more we are able to draw on research from the timeline, workshops and ongoing case studies.
- 1.3. This can then be mapped against social workers and the service views which need to be considered.
- 1.4. In addition, the three Adopter Development Co-ordinators through engagement with their local community of existing adopters have established what the wider cohort of adopters would like to see from their roles and the agencies.

2. Main Issues:

- 2.1. The research and engagement discussed in section 1 (shown in part in appendix 1) shows that adopters in the region would like to see:
 - 2.1.1. An **Adopters Charter** for adoption agencies to sign up to, guaranteeing a common minimum service standard across the region.
 - 2.1.2. Establishment of a **Peer Mentoring** scheme to provide additional support for adopters beyond the current offer.
 - 2.1.3. Easier Access to **Adoption Support**, with a better focus on communication and relationships.
 - 2.1.4. **Adopter Led/engaged Training**, more training throughout their journey.
- 2.2. While it may not be possible to fully realise the above before February 2018 the ADC posts can conduct further, fuller, research and engagement with adopters in the region to feed into the development of these work streams and provide a conduit for the regional agencies to engage with adopters on these and other issues.
- 2.3. This research and engagement will require a commitment from local authorities, the hub, voluntary and regional agencies to provide appropriate support. Particularly with communications to existing adopters and those in the process of approval.
- 2.4. The ADC's should establish a cohort of adopters for data collection through survey work and focus groups
- 2.5. With only 9 months of the current funding remaining and the project being time sensitive it is vital that the work commences swiftly. Ideally the ADCs will begin fuller engagement with adopters before the summer holiday season with the aim to have data to report back to regional board by January 2018.

3. Recommendations:

- 3.1. Board are asked to approve the outline aims for the ADC's to February 2018 as:
 - 3.1.1. Engage with adopters in the region to establish a viable research cohort
 - 3.1.2. Carry out research and surveys with adopters to provide data for service development
 - 3.1.3. Interpret information collected and make recommendations based on this for key areas including – peer mentoring, an agency charter and the adoption support offer ahead of February 2018.
 - 3.1.4. Pilot a new secure login area for the One Adoption Website which will serve as a focus for adopter engagement, research and data collection.
 - 3.1.5. Provide the framework to agree a pilot of the peer support model in one of the agencies to begin post March 2018.

4. Benefits

There are a number of potential business benefits which could be realised, providing the ADC's are able to work with the agency to ensure the peer support and adopter training and delivery becomes part of the service provision (see appendix 2 for outline evidence of business benefit that has been realised in other agencies).

5. Risks

The ADC's are not given access to adopters, in order to conduct the research.
15 hours per week over 9 months is a very short time for the ADC's to conduct this work and provide full business benefit to the RAA.

Timescales



May-August Draft Charter for consultation & Research carried out.



Sept – Nov Secure Login Website Area Pilot & Gather Data.



Dec -Feb Peer Support Pilot & Training Pilot Plan agreed.

Adopters Charter Agreed. Adopter led services to be piloted.

Appendix 1

This is from the research from North and Humber Adoption Journey interviews.

What Adopters Said

Adopters told us about the things that work well and the things they feel need to be improved. A small sample of comments shows this:

Council websites mind boggle me

We thought [the authority] were quite good at getting back to us

Like adopters were there [at the information event] to give us a 'glossy' picture

Wonder whether there ought to be subsequent training once you've got your child – you don't realise some of the issues until you've got the child

Didn't find it [first home visit] invasive at all

That's where your social worker gets to know you and you have to gel

It felt like shopping for children

Felt a bit nervous and a bit excited. You want to move it on by that time {at panel}

Needs to be pre-emptive, not reactive – don't wait until you've got problems, in crisis

Just having that chance to sit and talk to people in exactly the same situation is a massively big deal

Themes

While every family is unique, a number of recurrent themes emerged from the interviews. This highlighted some key areas that are important to adopters, and must be addressed as part of the new Regional Adoption Agency.



Appendix 2

Harnessing the Power of the Peer: An Analysis of Structured One to One Peer to peer Mentoring in Adoption

A new issue that has arisen as a result of the increased number of approved prospective adopters and the reduction in the number of children with an adoption plan, is that of how to support and assist waiting approved adopters to cope with the wait for a child. Mentoring has, for many proved to be invaluable in this situation, ensuring that they have someone to discuss their frustrations with in an open manner and without fear of censure as part of the confidential mentoring relationship. In these situations, mentors are able to guide prospective adopters on how to be proactive while waiting.

Informational support tends to be given at times of stress and is also support with problem solving. For many the process of being assessed as an adopter is inherently stressful, it takes place over a considerable period of time and there may be challenges along the way. The role of the mentor at times of stress was clearly valued by the mentee families. Specific issues where the mentor assisted were in relation to understanding the process, dealing with perceived bureaucracy and 'red tape' or coping with challenges such as minor conflict with social workers or adoption panel concerns.

I was deferred at panel and having someone to talk to who had been through the whole process was great. The guidance tips and advice were fantastic and I use them to continue my road to adoption."

"During the waiting periods it was helpful to talk through the holdups and be reassured of what we could be/should expect/be doing."

- Using mentors to support adopters offers the opportunity to release social worker capacity – allowing social workers to focus on the aspects of the adoption process that only they as practitioners can do.



Report author: Sarah Johal

Tel: 0113 2783623

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

Date: 28th June 2017

Subject: Head of Service Report

Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. One Adoption West Yorkshire formally opened for service on the 1 April 2017. It brings together the councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees Wakefield and Leeds to provide adoption services to our region of West Yorkshire. The five councils have now signed and entered into a partnership agreement, which provides for the delegation of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield's adoption functions to Leeds City Council. One Adoption West Yorkshire is pioneering the way forward for regionalisation of adoption.
2. This report provides a summary from the Head of Service on the developments of the service in the first two months of becoming established

Recommendations

1. The Joint Committee is requested to:
 - 1.1 Endorse and comment upon the progress of the agency and to support the progression of these arrangements.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the structural and reporting arrangements for the Regional Adoption Agency.

2. Background information

- 2.1.1 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.

3. Main issues

3.1 Senior Leadership Team

One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) opened as Regional Adoption Agency on Monday 3 April 2017. It is led by the senior leadership team of:

Sarah Johal, Head of Service

Mary Brudenell, Service Delivery Manager

Julie Chew, Service Delivery Manager

Mandy Prout, Service Delivery Manager

Aretha Hanson, Business Support Manager

- 3.2 The Head of Service will have overall responsibility for the operations of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) and she will undertake the role of the agency decision maker for adopters. One Service Delivery Manager will take a strategic lead on family finding, while taking on the line management of staff in the Bradford and Wakefield offices and links with those Local authorities. Another Service Delivery Manager will take a strategic lead on adoption support, with line management for staff in the Leeds office and linking with that Local Authority (LA). The third Service Delivery Manager will take a strategic lead on recruitment and assessment, line manager for staff in the Halifax and Huddersfield offices and linking with Calderdale and Kirklees LA. The Business Support Manager will manage the administrative business support to all of the teams based in the 5 offices. She will have the strategic lead on seeking rationalisation of business processes, where beneficial and practicable.

3.3 Staffing

108 staff were affected from December 2017, 96% of these affected staff transferred on 31 March 2017 to become One Adoption West Yorkshire.

- 3.4 The collaboration between the Leeds HR business partner and his counterparts in the other 4 LA's enabled as smooth a transition as possible. The staff were all paid in April 2017.
- 3.5 The trade unions have been actively involved in the process and they have reported that there haven't been any instances of staff expressing concerns to them during transition.

- 3.6 It is noted that the OAWY teams consist of staff that have a range of terms and conditions which vary between the 5 LA's. It was agreed at a meeting with the Leeds trade unions (as all staff are now employed by Leeds City Council) that they would consult with their new members to engage their views and wishes in relation to the possibility of aligning the terms and conditions going forwards.
- 3.7 All new staff will be recruited on Leeds terms and conditions and greater than 50% of staff are already engaged accordingly (existing Leeds staff and newly appointed promoted posts).
- 3.8 Recruitment to vacant posts continues with ongoing recruitment for adoption advisor, advanced practitioner, social worker and business support positions. The largest gap remains business support and further interviews are planned through June and early July.
- 3.9 Teams in transition
- 3.10 On 3 April 2017, all staff from the erstwhile adoption teams of the 5 LA's continued to work in their existing office with their existing team manager. During April and May 2017, the staff have been meeting with their new manager and in new shadow team meetings in preparation for the new line management and team arrangements to be operational from 5 June 2017.
- 3.11 All staff have been provided with a One Adoption mobile phone, which will assist in enabling them to access the Leeds ICT system, including Mosaic the integrated children's case recording system utilised by OAWY. All staff now have a your.name@oneadoptionwy.leeds.gov.uk e mail address.
- 3.12 There has been active consideration about the best means of delivering a duty function for OAWY, which avoids the duplication of staff being deployed in all 5 offices. The major areas of duty calls are adoption support referrals and prospective adopters. A decision has recently been taken that this will be undertaken from a single site from the 1st week in July.
- 3.13 Key IT training is underway throughout June on the Mosaic case recording system for all staff & induction training for staff regarding the self service, Performance and Learning system (PALS) and finance system is taking place from June through to mid-July.
- 3.14 Adoption Panels
- Adoption panels have been rationalised (from 11 per month to 7) and they will be chaired by two independent adoption panel chairs, Julie Archer and Julia Pearmain. Julia and Julie were successful in a ring fenced recruitment process from the former pool of independent chairs for all of the 5 Local Authorities. 7 adoption panels will sit per month across three of the OAWY bases (Bradford, Huddersfield and Leeds). The panels will make recommendations about proposed matches for all 5 partner LA children, which will be decided upon by the agency decision makers in the 5 LA's. The panels will make recommendations regarding the suitability of prospective adopters to be approved, which will be decided by the OAWY agency decision maker. These arrangements will be brought together in the next few months with one electronic panel process co-ordinated centrally. A panel training day has been arranged for the 13th June.
- 3.15 Establishing the culture
- Further work has been undertaken with the senior leadership team, the management team and with all staff to establish the vision and values of One Adoption West Yorkshire. The mission statement is clear: "To be an outstanding

adoption service achieving outcomes for children without delay; recruit adopters for all children who need adoption with an excellent adoption support service for all affected by adoption.”

- 3.16 The vision is to be a listening service; a learning service and a responsive service. This is underpinned by 3 behaviours: Children are the client; a sense of urgency to avoid unnecessary delay and working with families every step of the way.
- 3.17 Work continues with the staff regarding the importance of relationships as we build our OAWY identity and our teams, working in a culture of high support and high challenge.
- 3.18 Practice focus
The major focus on practice will be to ensure that the voices and messages of the key people in adoption are listened to and acted upon.
- 3.19 There are established reference groups for adopted young people (AT_ID) and adopters (Adopter Voice Forum) across the Yorkshire and Humber region. OAWY aims to maintain its good links with the Yorkshire and Humber wide groups while also aiming to consult with the young people and the adopters of West Yorkshire. A workshop has been set up with young people and work is ongoing with adoptive parents who are involved in various working groups to develop practice.
- 3.20 Support for the birth parents of children who may be adopted or are adopted has, for the most, been provided through contracts with independent adoption support agencies (PAC-UK and After Adoption). Work is ongoing to link with these providers to establish a West Yorkshire wide approach and offer to birth parents, as the scope of the support has differed between the 5 local authorities. Contracts have rolled forward for 2017-18 to ensure continuity in each locality.
- 3.21 It is envisaged however that a common specification for the required services for independent support to adopted adults, adoptive families and birth parents will be developed and used in a refreshed commissioning process with the adoption support agencies. Links with birth parent groups are being made for further work to improve their engagement with our services.
- 3.22 The outcome of the practice improvement fund bids in relation to the centre of excellence, early permanence and the involvement of the Voluntary Adoption Alliance (VAA) in developing services will become known around September.
- 3.23 Recruitment & Marketing, website
One Adoption West Yorkshire is the first regional adoption agency to become operational in the government’s 2015-17 initiative. It will work in close conjunction with the One Adoption North and Humber (planned for Autumn 2017) and One Adoption South Yorkshire (planned for April 2018) to ensure that opportunities for joint activity in marketing is targeted and cost efficient.
- 3.24 The One Adoption website has been launched and marketing activity has been undertaken to raise its web profile. Early indications are that prospective adopters are making contact with OAWY and attendance at the information evenings across the WY area has been reasonable. Further development work is ongoing regarding the website and marketing to meet the needs of the region.

3.25 Two key areas for the agency are the prompt and efficient recruitment of new prospective adopters and ensuring that the family finding teams are responsive in seeking the best matches for the children requiring adoption from the 5 LA's.

3.26 Matching

3.27 The family finding teams have identified that a significant number of children require placements at the outset of the agency and that "should be placed for adoption" (SHOBPA) decisions are likely to increase in the first quarter. Prompt in- agency matches have been identified for panels to consider. There is a strong link with the VAA, which recruit and approve families in Yorkshire and Humber and the North and an agreement has been agreed about how the alliance works with us family finding for children to avoid any delay.

3.28 Links with senior leadership teams in partner Local authorities

The Head of Service has attended the senior leadership meetings of each of the 5 partner local authorities during the past 3 months with the relevant service manager lead for each LA. These valuable meetings enabled a discussion regarding the service specification which delineates the service provided by OAWY and those which will continue to be the responsibility of the 5 LA's. The meeting indicated the range of issues upon which there will be interdependence between the adoption agency and the Local authorities.

In recognition of this interdependence, Sarah Johal has asked each local authority to designate a senior officer who will be the operation lead for adoption, with whom Sarah and the service delivery managers will regularly confer.

3.29 A schedule of "operation management group" meetings has been established at which the 5 LA leads for adoption will meet with OAWY senior leadership team in order to maintain a regular overview of adoption activity, performance and strategic planning to inform the agency's priorities and to provide peer support and challenge across LA's and OAWY. It is the proposal that issues arising from this group will feed into the management board and vice versa.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with affected staff that have transferred in to the agency as well as formal consultation with the trade unions. This is ongoing. Consultation with service users is ongoing to inform the development of the service design and delivery of the agency.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 One Adoption West Yorkshire as a regional adoption agency will aim to ensure that there is an equal service provision which addresses the varied and diverse needs of the children and adoptive families of the West Yorkshire region.

4.3 Resources and value for money

- 4.3.1 A financial dashboard will be provided each quarter for the Joint Committee that is in development. It is clear that there are a significant number of children booked into adoption panels for matches across the region in the next few months that ensures that children's plans are being progressed that reduces the cost of children remaining in foster care. The bringing together of the adoption panels has also made some savings reducing from 11 adoption panels to 7. The service also has a number of children being matched with families from voluntary adoption agencies utilising the budgetary provision in place to progress permanence for the children waiting. There is a robust system in place to monitor this aspect of the budget and this will be regularly monitored.
- 4.3.2 There are a number of vacancies in the service at the moment and a number of staff on maternity leave. The agency is seeking temporary cover to assist with family finding and adoption support work across the region, working within the budgetary provision for the agency.

4.4 Legal implications and access to information

- 4.4.1 The Partnership Agreement has been signed by all Directors of Children's Services for Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. This agreement forms the contractual basis upon which the agency will function. It has key schedules which cover:
- Service specification
 - Function of the Joint Committee
 - Information Sharing protocol
 - Legal context
 - Management Board governance arrangements
 - Financial protocol
 - Assets
- 4.4.2 Ofsted were notified of the changes to the arrangements in West Yorkshire advising them of the arrangements for Registered Manager status and Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA) arrangements.
- 4.4.3 A statement of purpose has been drafted (Appendix 1) and is published on the website.

4.5 Risk management

- 4.5.1 The new regional adoption agency aims to reduce the risk of children who require adoption waiting for a prolonged period in West Yorkshire.

5. Recommendations

The Joint Committee is requested to:

- 5.1 Endorse and comment upon the progress of the agency and to support the progression of these arrangements.

6. Background documents¹

6.1 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.

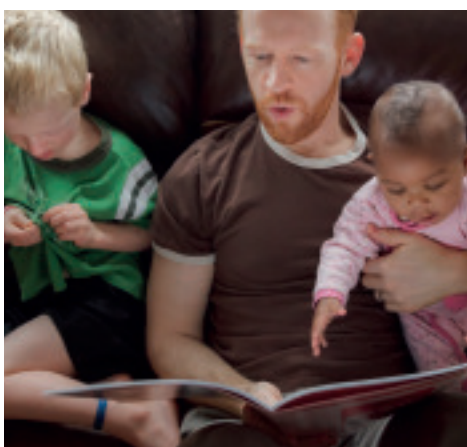
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One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

FOR YOUR ADOPTION JOURNEY



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*(The wording in this publication can be made available in large formats such as large print or Braille.
Please call us on 0113 3783535)*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that an adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that it provides. It can be used by children and young people and families as a guide to what they should expect a service to provide and to do.

This document is the Statement of purpose for One Adoption West Yorkshire, a shared adoption service between the five local authorities Leeds City Council, City of Bradford MDC, Kirklees MBC, Calderdale MBC and Wakefield Council. The Regional Adoption Agency is hosted by Leeds City Council.

The Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with:

- Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011.
- Care Planning Regulations 2010
- Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 (amended 2011);
- Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013;
- Local Authority Regulations 2005
- Adoption Agencies & Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011;
- Adoption Agencies (Panel & Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012
- Care Planning, placement and Case and fostering services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Standards Act 2000

The Adoption Agency is inspected against these standards by Ofsted.

2. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Children and Families Act 2014 underpin the principles and values of our service:-

Values: Children

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and where possible this should be within their own family
- The Child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process
- The Child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account at all stages
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible
- The child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality will be fully recognised, positively valued and promoted when decisions are made
- The particular needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family will be valued and respected.

- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many organisations, professionals and individuals who have to work together to deliver to meet the needs of the services.
- Birth parents and birth families are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption. They will be treated fairly, openly and offered a support service.

Equal Opportunities

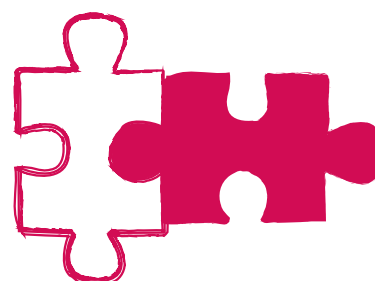
The adoption service abides by equal opportunities legislation and the policies of Leeds City Council. The service works positively and respectfully with all service users and partner agencies regardless of race, colour, religion, language, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.

Every attempt will be made to secure an adoptive family which meets a child's emotional and developmental needs taking into account their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability taking into account the need to avoid undue delay.

3. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AGENCY

The agency is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Children and Families Act 2014 by:

1. Ensuring the provision of a high quality adoption service which guarantees the best possible standards for care, safety and protection for children or young people who are looked after and who need adoptive placements.
2. Ensuring that all those whose lives have been affected by adoption are helped to identify and receive appropriate services.
3. Working in partnership with adoptive families & other agencies ensuring the service is based on statutory requirements & good practice within the principles of value for money for the agency.



Objectives of the agency

1. To recruit, assess and provide adopters that meet the needs of the children to be placed for adoption within the timescales laid down by National Adoption Standards.
2. To provide information on the process to applicants interested in becoming adopters and on the children requiring adoption.
3. To ensure that adopters receive appropriate preparation, training, support and advice to enable them to offer the best possible standards of parenting, safety and protection for children or young people in their care.
4. To minimise delay in family finding, paying attention to the needs of the child at all times.
5. To provide information on the services available to all those affected by adoption recognising that as adoption has lifelong implications for all those involved, their needs will change over time.
6. To provide a range of adoption support services to birth relatives, adopted adults, adopters and their children in partnership with other agencies.
7. To provide information on the Service that is available to those wishing to adopt from abroad
8. To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair.

9. That concerns about the service are addressed, that information about the complaints procedure is made available.
10. That the organisation regularly reviews the services it provides, consults with, and learns from, those in receipt of their services through comments, compliments and complaints

4. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & SERVICE USERS

Head of Service, One Adoption West Yorkshire		
Sarah Johal		
Service Delivery Managers & Registered Managers		
Julie Chew (Leeds)	Mary Brudenell (Wakefield/ Bradford)	Mandy Prout (Calderdale/Kirklees)
Team Managers – Recruitment and Assessment		
Sheila Wood (Leeds)	Samantha Thomas (Wakefield)	Michelle Rawlings (Huddersfield)
Team Managers – Family Finding		
Lynn Buckle (Leeds)	Katie Robinson (Bradford); maternity cover from May 2017 by Carol Ledgard	Valerie Edwards (Halifax)
Team Managers – Adoption Support and Adoption Support Services Advisors (ASSA's)		
Shelagh Ethell (Leeds)	Rhian Beynon (Bradford & Wakefield)	Tony Bryce (Calderdale & Kirklees)
Business Support Manager		
Aretha Hanson		

One Adoption West Yorkshire came into being on the 3rd April 2017. It is a shared adoption service across the region working on behalf of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield councils. The Head of Service reports quarterly to a Management Board, made up of Senior Officers from each local authority with representation drawn from Adopters and the Voluntary Adoption Alliance (VAA). The Chair of the Management Board is Julie Jenkins (Head of Safeguarding Calderdale). The service is overseen by a Joint Committee, made up of elected members from the five local authorities chaired by Councillor Lisa Mulherin (Leeds).

The regional agency is operated under the terms of a Partnership Agreement, which confirms the legal and governance arrangements; the budget; staffing and funding contributions for the five local authorities.

One Adoption provides an adoption service to:

Children who are in need of family finding for an adoptive family

Birth parents

Prospective and approved adopters

Children and adoptive parents who need adoption support services

Adopted adults and members of their birth families



5. THE WORK OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

The Head office is based at:

**Kernel House,
Killingbeck Drive
Leeds
LS14 6UF**



Other office bases are:

Bradford	Wakefield	Halifax	Huddersfield
Sir Henry Mitchell House 4 Manchester Road, Bradford BD5 0QL	Queen's House Queen's Row Market Street Wakefield WF1 1DF	The Shay Shaw Hill Halifax HX1 2YT	Riverbank Court Wakefield Road Aspley Huddersfield HD5 9AA

The service undertakes the following tasks:

Recruitment of prospective adoptive families

Assessment and preparation of adoptive families, including visits to the home, a home study, taking up references and statutory checks and running preparation training

Family finding for children who need a permanent home through adoption

Support for families waiting for a child to be placed with them

Advice, guidance and support to adoptive families during the matching process and after placement. This includes workshops and training and support groups

Those wishing to adopt are referred to another agency that provide a service under contract for One Adoption.

Non agency adoption work for Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.

The family finding team become involved with every child where adoption may be the plan during the decision making process and takes the lead in family finding at the earliest point possible

Children's social workers and adoption social workers undertake the task of planning for permanence and permanence and preparing children for adoption. The responsibility for matching and supporting adoptive families is a shared task until the adoption order.

The adoption letterbox service and access to adoption archives is provided and enables adopted children to maintain contact with their birth families.

Support and signposting to counselling services for adopted adults wishing to find out about their birth families and an Intermediary service are provided. The majority of this work is provided through a contract with other agencies operating in West Yorkshire.

Information about all aspects of the adoption service can be accessed via the One Adoption line 0113 3783535, the website oneadoption.co.uk or via the Facebook page www.facebook.com/oneadoption

All enquirers are followed through by an adoption advisor. An interpreter is available through a three way phone if required. Help is also available through social workers in the service who speak Asian languages. Currently there are social workers who speak Urdu and Punjabi. Approved interpreters will be used if required.

There are nine adoption teams in total:

The 3 **recruitment and assessment** teams are responsible for the recruitment, assessment and approval of adopters (office bases in Leeds, Halifax and Wakefield)

The 3 **family finding** teams have responsibility for the placement of children who have adoption as their plan (office bases in Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield)

The 3 **adoption support** teams are responsible for providing a variety of adoption support services (office bases in Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield)

The teams work cooperatively with each other in order to provide a seamless service for children and their adoptive families, ensuring the allocation of work as needed.

6. NUMBERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF

The Head of Service, Sarah Johal, has responsibility for the overall service and is the responsible individual. Qualifications: CQSW in Social Work 1990; MA Social Work and Social Care 2001; Advanced Award in Social Work 2002; Post Graduate Certificate in Applied Social Work Management 2007. She has over 26 years post qualification experience in child care, including 17 years in Adoption and Fostering. She has been a manager for over 14 years within both statutory child care and adoption and fostering services.

The agency has three Service Delivery Managers, who are also the Registered Managers for the adoption services across the five local authorities. Mandy Prout (Diploma in Social Work 1991) has extensive knowledge and experience in adoption practice and has been a manager in adoption services since 2007. Julie Chew (CQSW 1992 & NVQ Level 4 in management). Julie has worked in a variety of settings in relation to children and families social work and has been an adoption manager since 2007. Mary Brudenell BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies & CQSW 1986. Mary has twenty-nine years post-qualifying experience in children's services and has been a manager in the adoption service since 2007.

The agency employs 109 staff. There are 58 full time equivalent qualified social workers across the three service areas, 6 of whom are Advanced Practitioners. In addition there are 3 specialist advisors in the adoption support team who have a range of therapeutic qualifications. There are 6 adoption advisors who support the recruitment and family finding service. The agency has a Business Support Manager and 18 full time equivalent administrative staff.

All social workers have a social work qualification and are registered with the HCPC (Health and care Professionals Council) and have relevant experience in children and families service. They have an enhanced DBS check.

7. THE SERVICE TO PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

Enquiries and First Contact

Enquirers can access information on adopting with One Adoption West Yorkshire via the Regional Adoption Agency website (<https://www.oneadoption.co.uk/about-one-adoption-west-yorkshire>) or make contact through the dedicated advice line. At first contact, enquirers are given information verbally about the adoption process. Information packs are sent out to; usually on the same working day but always within two working days.



Applications for adoptions from overseas

Inter-country adoption is a specialist area of work, as each country has its own rules and regulations regarding adoption. One Adoption West Yorkshire has a contract with another agency to provide this work. Applicants pay a fee for their assessment service, including the home study and then further fees for safeguarding checks etc.

Information meetings

Enquirers are invited to an information evening held every three weeks across West Yorkshire. Details of these are provided on the website pages and in the information pack along with detailed written accounts regarding the needs of the children waiting for adoption and the various routes to adoption. The information meeting has a presentation about adoption and meet adopters and experienced adoption social workers to discuss the different routes to adoption. If enquirers are unable to attend an information meeting this needs to be discussed and alternative arrangements made, usually at one of the offices. If enquiries wish to progress their interest, they request a home visit. A request for a visit form is made available at the end of the meeting for prospective adopters to take away to complete.

Initial Home Visit

The home visit request can be submitted at any point during the twelve month period following the information meeting being attended. The home visit is undertaken by an adoption social worker and advisor who will provide more information about adoption the personal circumstances of adopters will be discussed in detail to help them consider if adoption is the right choice for them. The social worker will also start discussions about practical considerations.

A detailed summary of the home visit will be completed and passed to an adoption manager before the registration of interest form is accepted. On most occasions, enquirer(s) will be given a registration of interest form. The adoption manager will make a decision within 5 days about whether it should be accepted.

At this stage, the enquirer becomes known as prospective adopter(s). A letter will be sent to the prospective adopter (s) confirming that their application is proceeding or detailing the reasons why their registration of interest cannot be accepted.



Stage 1 Pre-assessment process

Stage One begins on the day that One Adoption West Yorkshire accepts the registration of interest from adopter(s) and should normally take 2 months to complete.

The stage one process will include the following:

- All of the statutory references/checks will be completed including the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.
- The prospective adopter(s) will complete an adoption medical as soon as possible which will be considered by the adoption agency medical advisor, who will provide advice about any concerning medical issues
- The prospective adopter(s) will be expected to attend training /preparation sessions. This will give prospective adopter(s) more detailed information and will allow them to meet

experienced adopters who can help answer questions that they have.

- An adoption advisor will be provided to support prospective adopters on completing the stage 1 process and an agreement will be drawn up with prospective adopters detailing expectations.

Preparation sessions

Prospective applicants will be invited to attend preparation sessions in Stage One. The process will be delayed if applicants are unable to attend initial preparation, and a clear indication of their availability will be ascertained. They will also be encouraged to access e-learning components on the First4Adoption website.

Preparation groups for first time adopters usually run approximately 11 times per year based on need. Second or subsequent adopter training is provided at regular intervals across the region, as is foster carer adoption preparation group training.

Stage 2 – the assessment process

The stage two assessment process cannot begin until the stage one assessment has successfully being completed (apart from second time and foster carer adoptions, see next page)

Stage two begins when prospective adopters notify the agency of their wish to continue. The prospective adopter(s) have 6 months from the completion of stage one to provide this notification. From the date of receipt of this notification, the stage two process is a 4 month long process during which a home study assessment is undertaken leading to a panel recommendation and an Agency Decision about suitability to adopt.

The prospective adopter(s) will be allocated an adoption social worker to complete their assessment. A Stage Two plan will be drawn up between the social worker and the prospective adopter(s) agreeing arrangements for the assessment process and provisional panel dates.

The assessment will involve a series of home visits utilising a variety of assessment tools and will include additional checks including school, nursery, ex-partner, employers and references. Personal referees will also be visited.

On the basis of the information in the assessment the adoption social worker will put together a detailed Prospective Adopters' Report (PAR). This is a very detailed report providing information about the prospective adopter(s) and their background. The report will reach a conclusion about the prospective adopters(s) suitability to adopt and the applicants will have up to 5 working days to comment on their completed assessment before it is presented to the adoption panel.

Once approved, they should be informed about the role of Adoption Match (formally known as the National Adoption Register), and with their permission, referred as soon as possible and no later than three months after approval.

If the agency reaches a decision during the stage 2 process that they cannot recommend approval and /or if the agency decision maker decides not to agree the approval, the prospective adopter(s) will be able to request a review by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). The IRM is an independent body that can scrutinize the decisions of adoption agencies.

Adoption by existing foster carers

Foster carers should notify the service in writing of their wish to be considered as adopters for a child or children in their care. (If the child (or the children's) plan is for adoption, this will be acknowledged and a meeting held between workers from the adoption and fostering teams and the child's social worker

to consider how this should be progressed and will be discussed with the foster carers, who will also be informed of their legal rights.

A fast track process will be provided for approved foster carers who want to be assessed as adoptive parents. The process will bypass the stage one process and start at the beginning of stage two (as above). They will be offered training.

Second or subsequent adopters

Families who have already been assessed as adopters can apply to adopt again as long as there is a year's gap following their child's adoption order being made and there is a 2 year average age gap between that child and a potential new child. In this case, they would write to express an interest in adopting again and be offered a home visit to discuss their circumstances. If it is appropriate to proceed they would then complete the registration of interest form and start in stage 2. They would be offered training.

If their interest is in respect of a subsequent sibling or half sibling of a child they have already adopted, the timescales and age gap would not necessarily apply. This assessment would be given high priority and the home visit would involve the child's social worker too.

Adoption Panel

The main purpose of the Adoption Panel is to consider and make recommendations to the adoption agency on the following:-

- people to be approved as adoptive parents
- whether an assessment to approve adopters should continue following a brief report to panel
- approval of the match between children and adopters and
- The placement of children for adoption where their birth parents desire adoption to be the plan

One Adoption West Yorkshire holds seven adoption panels per month, three taking place in Leeds, two taking place in Bradford and two taking place in Huddersfield. They meet monthly and have an Independent Chair with significant experience of family placement work.

Membership of the panels meets the statutory regulations and takes its members from a central list. Members include those who have personal experience of adoption and others with relevant skills and experience and aim to reflect the diversity of the population of the district.

All applicants are invited to attend the Adoption Panel. The Panel makes recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker who will make their decision following careful consideration of the recommendations and all of the information presented at panel. The Decision Maker must make their decision within 7 working days of the recommendation of the panel. They may make a decision different to that recommended by the panel.

One Adoption West Yorkshire has an agency decision maker to consider the approval of prospective adopters; decision making for children to be placed for adoption is considered by the Agency Decision Maker in the child's home local authority.

Decisions are notified to a child's parents,



guardian, prospective adopters and social workers will be informed orally of the agency decision within 2 working days and the decision will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days.

8. BEYOND APPROVAL

Matching and support

Following panel adopters are offered an additional training day to help them prepare for a child coming into their family. Topics covered include introductions, moving children into new families, making good connections and contact. Adoption Social Workers also ensure that adopters have access to local support networks and specialist national organisations, e.g. CoramBAAF, Adoption UK and PAC UK; adopters are provided with one year free subscription to Adoption UK following approval.

There is also a one day training course available for grandparents or other relatives who are supporting the adopter/s and wish to have more in depth information regarding adoption called Related by Adoption.

The adopter(s) social worker will help to identify suitable matches with a child/ren and will provide support and guidance throughout the whole process. All prospective adopters are referred to the regional Hub and the Adoption Match at three months, with their agreement, if no match has been identified locally.

Each child where adoption is a likely plan will have an allocated worker from the family finding team. The family finder works closely with the child's social worker to consider matches for that child.

When a match is being considered adopters are given the Child Permanence Report and all appropriate written information about the child, their background and assessed needs. The report will include details of any proposal for contact, or exchange of information through the letterbox system with the birth family that will operate once the child is adopted.

Adopters meeting with child's social worker and other professionals relevant for that child; medical advisors; child's foster carers; teachers etc. to enable them to make an informed decision. A life appreciation day will often be arranged depending on the child's age and circumstances to help build as full a picture as possible of the child's experiences.

Details of the level of parental responsibility that will be delegated to the prospective adopters will be outlined and any adoption support, including any financial arrangements will also be discussed. The proposals for the placement will then be set out in the adoption placement report, which will be seen by the prospective adopters before panel and comments and observations will be included in the panel documentation.

Process for the matching of a child

The child's worker, the prospective adopters and their worker will attend the Adoption Panel. The process for panel is the same as for approval with recommendations being made to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the decision on whether the adopters are suitable for a particular child.

If a match is agreed there will be an introductions planning meeting is arranged to plan for the introduction and placement of the child. Good practice guidance on placements called "Flying Start" is used to guide the meeting. This meeting will involve the foster carer for the child, the prospective adopters, and the relevant social workers. The meeting will establish that the adoptive family has all the information available about the child and will draw up a timetable and process



for the introductions, monitoring and support.

There are some variations to this process if prospective adoptive parent/s are taking the Early Permanency Route to adoption, are second time adopters or foster carers adopting the child they have been fostering. These differences will be carefully explained to prospective adoptive parents from the beginning of their adoption process with us starting with written accounts on the One Adoption West Yorkshire website under "routes to adoption".

Annual Reviews of Prospective adopters

In the event that it is not possible to move to a match within 12 months from approval, the adoption social worker and their manager will conduct an a review of the plans and checks and references may need to be updated. If no placement has been made within two years of approval, an updated report will go to adoption panel for consideration.

Meeting birth parents

Most adopters will meet the child's birth parents either prior to placement, or more usually, once the child is placed and settled. They will be supported by their social workers in a suitable venue The benefit of meeting birth parents is so adoptive parents can talk to their child about their birth family and aid the exchange of information.

After placement

Visits will be made by both the child's social worker and the family's adoption social worker. These are based on both statutory requirements and the individual needs of the child and prospective adopter(s).

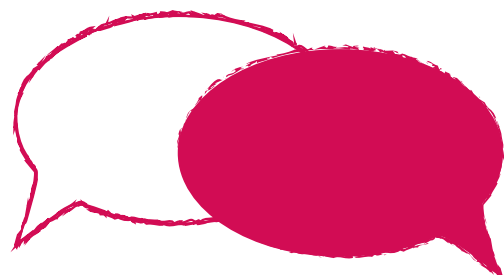
The child remains a 'looked after' child until an Adoption Order is made. The child has to be visited in the first week of placement, followed visiting weekly up to the child's first statutory review at 4 weeks post placement, when the pattern of visiting will be discussed and agreed but will be not less than six weekly. The child's review will determine when an application to adopt may be made and advice will be given by the worker for the prospective adopters. The Annex A report for court will be prepared by both the family's and child's social workers.

Life story material will be provided for the child by the child's social worker and given to the adopters for safe keeping for the child in the future. The child's social worker is responsible for ensuring that a "later life letter" is completed before the Adoption Order is made, which will give an account of the circumstances of the adoption.

Contact and the letterbox service

Support with contact arrangements between adopted children and their birth families are provided by the agency. All contact arrangements will be reached having taken account of what is in the best interests of the child, and will be specified in the Adoption Support Plan before a child is placed. Contact may include letter-box contact or face-to-face meetings between the child and members of his/her family, including parents, siblings, or extended family members.

A letterbox service may be set up between the adoptive parents on behalf of the child and a birth parent or any other relative or with any other person the agency considers relevant. Support and supervision of direct contact may be arranged where necessary and agreed.



9. ADOPTION SUPPORT

One Adoption West Yorkshire has a comprehensive adoption support service for all those affected by adoption. This service is provided in partnership with a number of voluntary agencies & other providers who provide an independent service and other services.

The adopters' worker will ensure that adopters have access to local support networks and specialist organisations, e.g. Adoption UK, NORCAP, New Family Social and other services and are on the mailing list for any events organised through the adoption service. The adoption service also provides 12 months free membership of Adoption UK to all new adopters.

The agency has 3 specialist adoption support teams across the region who offer a range of adoption support services and acts as a sign-posting for all other services for other services to all those affected by adoption:

Adoptive parents

Adopted children and young people, birth parents

Adopted adults

The adoption support service provides adoption support services in line with the "Adoption Passport" according to individual circumstances

For adoptive families:

The adoption support team will undertake an assessment of need with the family and will agree a support package based on the family's identified needs, including consideration of making an application to the Adoption Support Fund.

- Advice line and newsletter
- Support groups including stay and play groups
- Training and Workshops including ADOPT programme, non- violence resistance training & Safebase.
- Therapeutic and filial therapy groups and access to theraplay trained workers
- Links with mental health and educational services
- Assistance and review of contact arrangements between adopters and birth relatives
- A annual social event for adoptive families
- Assistance and review of contact arrangements



Adopted children & young people:

- Social groups and activities
- Offering training and advice for schools to help teachers understand adopted children's needs
- Working with children in their adoptive families around understanding their life stories
- Signposting to other organisations designed to help adopted children
- Information about registering a veto

Birth relatives:

- Access to a confidential and independent advice and counselling service via an independent agency.
- Support regarding letterbox and contact arrangements
- Enabling parents to record on their child's file whether or not they wish to have contact with their child from the age of 18

For Adopted Adults:

- Discussion and advice about wishes around contact with and from birth relatives

Information about our Adoption Services can be accessed via our Adoption Advice Line Telephone number 0113 378 3535, website: <https://www.oneadoption.co.uk/about-one-adoption-west-yorkshire> or by email: oneadoptionwy.leeds@gov.uk

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Adoption staffs receive regular supervision and annual appraisals of their performance. Training needs are identified and met through in house training or through externally commissioned trainers.

A management information system and government score card are in place which ensures reporting of accurate information about adoption.

The Adoption Agency is monitored by external inspections carried out by Ofsted.

There is regular adoption panel training to ensure that panel members keep up to date with current issues. Panel members also have annual appraisals.

Regular feedback is received from the Adoption Panels and twice yearly meetings are held between the Management team, Panel Chairs and Agency Decision Maker.

The Head of Service submits a quarterly report to the Management Board and provides an annual review and plan for the Joint Committee by 30th June in any year. His can also be taken to individual local authority scrutiny boards or Executives by 30 September in any year.

A robust quality assurance framework is in place with regular auditing of files, plus evaluation feedback from adoptive parents and other service users. This is held centrally and is undertaken at key points in the adoption process.



II. CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

All prospective adopters engaging with the Agency and all birth parents of child for whom the Agency is planning adoption are provided with written information about Complaints Procedures, including contact details for the Complaints Officer. All young people, for whom there is an adoption plan and who are of an appropriate age and understanding are likewise informed of the Complaints Procedures and also informed of the role of the Children's Rights Service.

Freepost
PO Box 657
Leeds LS1 9BS

Tel: 01132224405
Email: feedback.children@leeds.gov.uk

Details of the Registration Authority

OFSTED CONTACT DETAILS

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate Store Street,
Manchester,
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk





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Kernel House Killingbeck Drive, Leeds
LS14 6UF

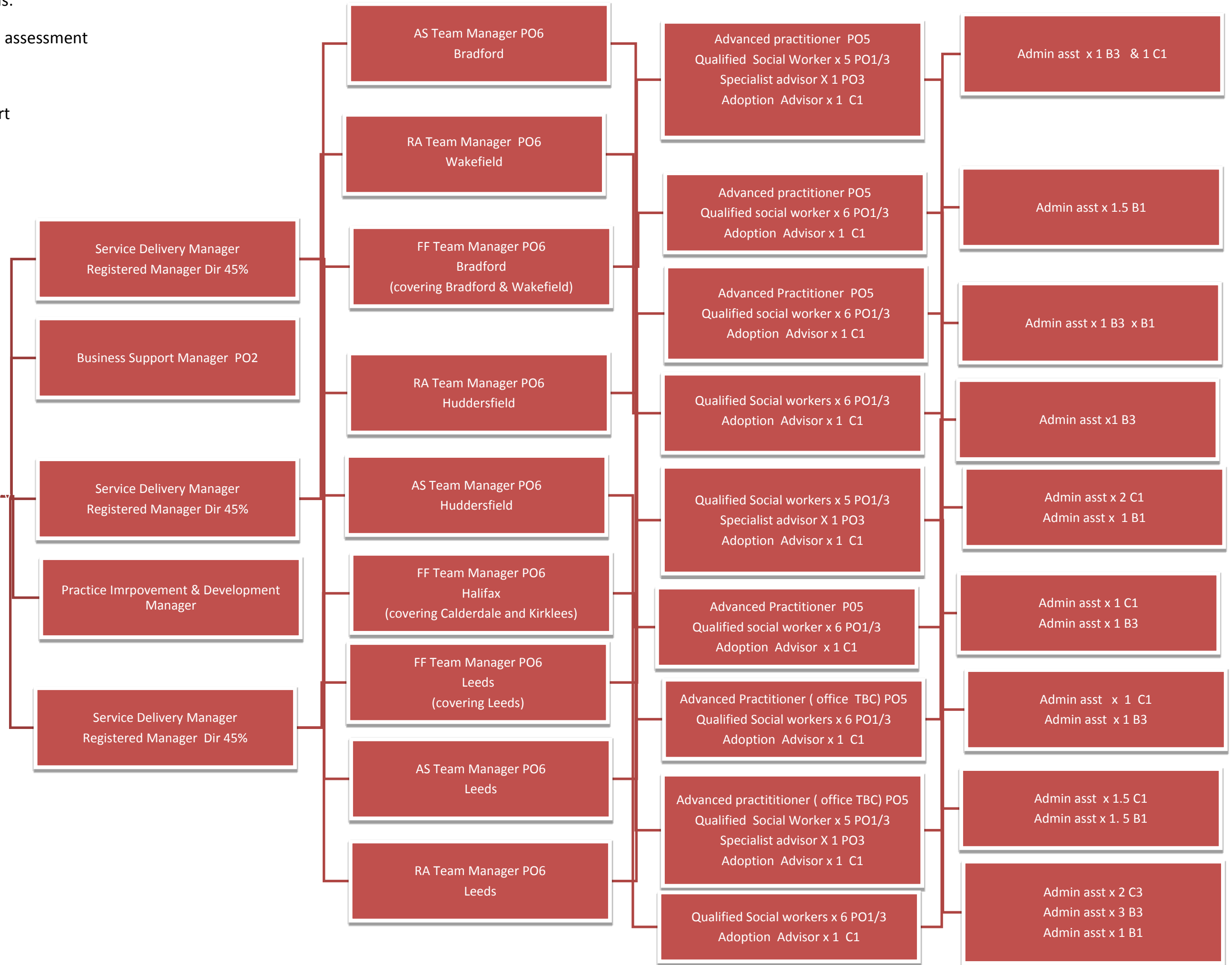
0113 378 3535
OneAdoptionWY@Leeds.gov.uk
www.oneadoption.co.uk

Table of Abbreviations:

RA – recruitment and assessment

FF – Family Finding

AS – Adoption Support



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Report author: Sarah Johal

Tel: 0113 2783623

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

Date: 28th June 2017

Subject: Practice Improvement & Performance Report

Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. One Adoption West Yorkshire was formally opened on the 1 April 2017, with the councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees Wakefield and Leeds formally entering into a Partnership Agreement to carry out shared adoption services. The adoption functions of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield, as specified in the partnership agreement have been delegated to Leeds City Council.
2. This report sets out the progression of the arrangements for a practice improvement framework and also provides baseline data of the performance of each Local authority to be considered as a basis for analysing performance data as the agency develops.

Recommendations

The Joint Committee is requested to:

1. Endorse the proposed practice improvement framework and baseline data and support the development of this work

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the practice improvement framework and baseline performance data for One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY).

2. Background information

- 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.
- 2.2 The partnership agreement is clear that One Adoption West Yorkshire will develop a performance management framework and will comply with the key performance indicators set and report upon performance in relation to these to the Management Board of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), the Adoption Leadership board and any other statutory body as required.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Work has been undertaken to establish the key performance criteria which will form the basis for practice improvement for the agency (See Appendix 1).
- 3.2 Parallel work has established the baseline data which shows the patterns, trends and snapshot information relating to adoption activity in the past 3-5 years in each local authority. A performance group has been set up across the region involving a lead person from each Local Authority (LA) to ensure that the data is effectively shared with OAWY and to develop this work. Further data from LA partners is required as we move forward and development work going forward (Appendix 2).
- 3.3 Adoption Support is one area that requires more detailed consideration. There are a number of discussions locally, regionally and nationally about the data requirements that will assist in measuring performance and the adopter voice forum is working closely with us in developing this. This work will be presented to the next meeting.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with other local authorities and with adoptive parents about the practice improvement framework and performance measures.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 One Adoption West Yorkshire as a regional adoption agency will aim to ensure that there is an equal service provision which addresses the varied and diverse needs of the children and adoptive families of the West Yorkshire region.

4.3 Resources and value for money

- 4.3.1 The oversight of the new agency's performance will contribute to the efficient use of resources and greater value for money.

4.4 Legal implications and access to information

4.4.1 There are no specific legal implications for this report.

4.5 Risk management

4.5.1 The oversight of performance will identify any key risks for the new agency and the local authorities. Over time the risks will be addressed through a defined action plan.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Joint Committee is requested to:

Endorse the proposed practice improvement framework and baseline data and support the development of this work.

6. Background documents¹

6.1 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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Practice Improvement framework

Introduction

This Practice improvement framework relates specifically to One Adoption West Yorkshire and its work as an Adoption Agency. One Adoption West Yorkshire aims to be “an outstanding adoption service achieving positive outcomes for children without delay & recruiting adopters for children, with an excellent adoption support service for all those affected by adoption.”

In One Adoption West Yorkshire we are committed to be an agency committed to an improvement culture of learning. The agency is committed to shared values, behaviours and priorities and we believe that intelligence and feedback information are viewed as integral to professional practice.

The principal sources of feedback are:

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

Included in the above are the findings of any research and evaluation projects in which we are participating.

We use this feedback to serve two important ends. First, as evidence in local and national accountability frameworks; and secondly to support the oversight and improvement of adoption practice.

Principles (For agreement)

The principles and purpose of this Quality Assurance Framework and practice improvement framework are:

- Child and Family Centred – the focus of quality assurance will be ensuring that adopters recruited can then meet the needs of children including the development of the child, adopter’s, birth parents and adopted adults experiences of the agency and specifically the outcomes for children.

- Restorative: quality assurance will be restorative, based on working with staff and managers building relationships and collective learning. As a restorative process case quality assurance will be characterised by both high support and high challenge.
- Outcomes Based: in line with the key behaviours for children’s services the focus of quality assurance will be on outcomes, rather than processes.
- Positive: our approach to quality assurance will be positive – looking at informing and encouraging improvement and supporting the development of staff and services.
- Reflective: our quality assurance framework is designed to be about promoting reflective practice and shared learning

The Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) approach that we use follow stresses the need to make a clear distinction between population accountability and performance accountability.

- Population accountability describes the arrangements for holding high-level partnerships collectively responsible for progress towards better outcomes for all children within a given population.
- Performance accountability describes the arrangements within partner agencies for holding individual agencies (or programmes) responsible for their contribution towards the desired outcomes of the partnership. The approach described here is largely concerned with performance accountability.

The Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) suggests that performance accountability should be organised around three simple questions:

How much did we do?

How well did we do it?

Is anyone any better off?

We believe that this is a helpful convention and wherever it makes sense, we intend to structure feedback data around these three simple questions.

We believe that our staff want a way of assessing the quality and effect of their efforts in a way that is authentic and which resonates with their professional vocation – namely to ‘make a difference’ to the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

We believe that the approach described here does this by:

- Describing in a simple set of **desired outcomes** what that difference might look like.
- Encouraging an **evidence-informed approach** to the things that are likely to make that difference.
- Agreeing a way of using **feedback** data that helps us judge if we're making that difference.
- Being clear about the **team working and partnerships** that we rely on to help us make it.

The improvement feedback referenced below is focused on performance data. But all three types of feedback inform the improvement processes outlined.

Practice improvement systems will support the following activity:

1. Reactive – Use of the best available management information to identify potential concerns and to then either maintain an awareness, investigate further or take immediate action. For our internal management at all levels.
2. Reflective - A more considered view over the quarter. Used to identify areas of practice that requires action and/or further investigation. Used for both internal consideration and then external reporting providing assurance in both contexts. A quarterly meeting focussed on practice would be an example of this for use.
3. Evaluative - Regular opportunities to bring together a broader reflection on practice and progress. Focusing on lessons learnt and sharing opportunities for improvement. For internal and partner learning and for external openness on progress within the partnership and wider Yorkshire & Humber region. Journey of the child and adoptive/birth parent reports are an example of this.

Relationship to other performance frameworks

This document focuses on One Adoption West Yorkshire practice however there is a key relationship and interplay between this and each partner local authority that also measure and monitor their performance. Therefore the feedback considered and the conclusions reached here are utilised within wider performance arrangements these include.

- Reporting to the Management Board for the 5 local authority partners in West Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency
- Leeds City Council accountability arrangements at directorate, corporate and executive levels e.g.as host authority
- Reporting to the joint committee and partnering local authority corporate parenting boards
- Children Trust Boards in each LA

- Health and well-being boards in each LA.

Monthly information allows routine monitoring of what is important and the taking of action in response to this. The monthly reports are a key component of this focusing on important measures that underpin the quality of practice, they help managers to maintain the accuracy of the data and to focus in on emerging trends in the data. The measures used in these processes can be thought of as 'lead indicators' because they cover activities that are expected to 'lead to' desired outcomes. For example, the monthly alert would provide timely information about the number of enquires waiting because delays in responding to requests can compromise the ability to recruit adopters in a timely manner; in addition the number of children referred for early tracking can also alert the agency to rises in children requiring adoption to inform the recruitment strategy. By improving the visibility of the key features of the referral and assessment processes we are taking the first step towards understanding if these processes are working in the way that we expect. The information in these reports is invariably based on un-validated data that has been taken straight off the system. For this reason, the reports are only intended for use by managers within the service.

Quarterly processes are focused on a whole service practice improvement meetings with the management and across the 5 Local authorities as part of practice improvement meeting to drive up practice across the region with operational leads in each local authority. The meeting will reflect on progress against previously actions and from the new material highlight areas of success to be shared and areas of development for further focus and action. In addition to a standard quarterly report all timely feedback is collated with the key points distilled and shared at the meeting in relation to the appropriate stage of the child and adopter's journey and timeline. Producing a report of this sort on a quarterly basis inevitably means that there has to be compromises in terms of the quality of the data and the depth of analysis. For this reason, the report is seen an entry point for professional debate and understanding on key aspects of practice.

6 monthly reports on the Journey of the child and experiences of the adopters, birth parents and adopted adults. We should make time for reflection on our practice and on our impact on outcomes for children and young people. Taking the central key questions from the quarterly report of how much do we do, how well do we do it, and is anyone better off we will create space for reflection at regular intervals during the year. This will take the form of 6 monthly Journey of the Child & Adopters Reports. One of which will act as an annual report.

- a) The views of children, young people and their adoptive parents at different points in their journeys
- b) Feedback from practitioners gathered during training and professional development activities;
- c) Evaluative summaries of professional audits examples would include case file reviews & supervision
- d) Evaluative summaries of complaints, comments and compliments collected through the feedback system;
- e) Summaries of local research activity, analysis work and statistical returns; national research and policy releases

- f) Feedback from and progress against the recommendations of inspections and other forms of independent inquiry
- g) Progress against previously agreed actions including feedback from quarterly practice improvement workshops
- h) Data quality processes and data development priorities.

Supervision and appraisal

A key tool to ensure that we are delivering a quality service is ensuring that regular supervision of staff is undertaken. Formal supervision of staff will include case discussion, reflective practice and consideration of performance data, ensuring assessments are of good quality and undertaken in a timely manner and meet regulatory requirements. Supervision will also be used to consider the worker's development and training needs in relation to their practice. All managers will have a quality assurance role and will read and sign all assessment reports, specifically prospective adopter's reports, adoption placement reports, adoption placement plans and adoption support assessments and reviews. Direct observation of staff will also be undertaken as part of supervision and appraisal and staff development.

Annual appraisals will be undertaken on all staff where their practice and performance will be reviewed and any training and developmental needs will be identified and addressed.

Recording and Quality

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that records are accurate and up-to-date. All recording should take place within two working days of visits or events occurring. However in emergency and child protection situations recording should be completed on the same day as the event or early next morning as it is crucial that events are clearly recorded in case others need to access the records. The table below details expectations about recording and the electronic case recording system that captures the work of the agency in regard to individual children and adopters.

Role	Responsibility
Business Support Staff	Data input (what do business support staff input??) quality checks/record upkeep; extracting and sharing with teams directly from electronic reporting system. Use of validation reports to prompt follow up on data quality
Social worker	Individual caseload management; ensure all records are updated within two days of the event
Team manager	Team management; use of reports from mosaic; accurate and timely record upkeep of team; address performance in their team
Service delivery manager	Management of multiple teams; use of reports in mosaic; accurate and timely record upkeep of teams; embed use of management information within

	their teams;
Head of Service	Accurate and timely record upkeep of teams; embed performance management and the use of management within the agency;

Quantitative Data

The table below summarises the purposes of all of our proposed arrangements for reporting and summarising quantitative data. They are largely based on statistical counts and as such they answer the question “How much did we do?” By reporting on the changing status and/or destination of children and young people and adopters, some of the reports also begin to answer the question “Is anyone better off?”

Products	Status	Frequency	Purpose & use	Operational Lead	Products audience & distribution / Processes outputs
Live – Operational management information. This enables service managers to accurately brief their managers and their staff on any significant demand, recording or practice issues that relate to their team and to initiate appropriate action in response to this.					
Product – Mosaic reports	Suite of reports to be developed from the system.	Live based on information from the end of the previous working day.	Allows users to view performance statistics, drill down to detailed information, including case level. Ensures a day to day awareness of performance by operational managers.	Technical – IMT Content – CPS	Live in the system, dependent on access rights to Mosaic.
Quarterly – a combination of Leadership and management evaluation of performance and progress AND improvement processes: Practice Improvement Report: Reflects how much was done, how well it was done and what difference is made at each stage of the child and adopter’s journey. The report is an entry point for professional debate and understanding on key aspects of practice. It is supplemented by LA scorecards and data detailing LA actual and comparative performance against key indicators.					
Process – Teams performance	Development needed	Quarterly	Performance staff attend management meetings to both promote performance information and to initiate discussion on practice	HoS	As agreed with HoS
Product – Quarterly Improvement Report	Development needed	Quarterly	1.Quarterly report reflecting adopters in the assessment process; those not yet matched;	Performance team	Available for the quarterly management board To be circulated to SLT

			those linked but not matched; those matched but with no placement; those with placements awaiting order; 2.Quarterly from early tracking to ADM & then Placement order; those not yet placed – linked but not matched; those matched and not yet placed; those placed and not yet adopted with key adoption scorecard indicators and summary narrative.		prior to Management board. For wider circulation to Joint Committee & LA's
<p>Evaluation: Taking the central key questions from the quarterly report of how much did we do, how well do we do it, and is anyone better off we will create space for reflection on our practice and on our impact on outcomes for children and young people at regular intervals during the year across the region. Journey of the Child & adopters reports six monthly reports on the experience of children and families within the adoption system, based on evaluation of all sources of feedback. One of which will act as an annual report. Quarterly, Termly, six-monthly and annual – combination of Leadership and management evaluation of performance and progress AND evaluative information around trends and needs</p>					
Product – ALB & Statutory Return analysis	When required,	When required	Initial analysis of data returns made to ALB & Ofsted	Performance Service	SLT and management board
Product - Product – Journey of the Child/Adopter Report Proposed					
Product – Journey of the Child/Adopter Report	Proposed	Six Monthly	Six monthly reports on the experience of children and families within the adoption system, reflecting quality, performance and improvements.	Performance and service	SLT, management board and Joint committee

Using feedback to map, manage and measure our progress

Qualitative Data

This summarises the purposes of all of our current arrangements for gathering qualitative data and information.

The key process Quality Assurance include:

- Professional Audit: using case files and direct observation with practitioners to assess the quality of practice
- Voice and Influence: using feedback from children, families and staff to define and assess the quality of practice, services and management. Evaluation forms are made available for completion by participants after each component of the preparation training group with comments made analysed and used to make adjustments to the training where needed. The adoption preparation training will be managed by a staff group with adoptive parents who meet at regular intervals to consider the training programme for the year and use the opportunity to consider any amendments and additions to the training programme; Additional information will be collected from prospective adopters following their attendance at the Adoption Panel and also from social workers. This will capture the views of prospective adopters and social workers and how they experience the process of attending panel. Evaluation of this information will be used to make any necessary improvements to the functioning of the adoption panel and also to the adoption agency administration. An exit questionnaire will be sent to adoptive parents once the adoption order has been granted. This information will consider different parts of the adoption process and identify where there are shortfalls and where improvements can be made. An Adoption Support questionnaire will be sent to all users of the Adoption Support Service on completion and closure of the work undertaken with the family. Services provided to birth parents and other parties through commissioned services are subject to user evaluation as part of the contractual arrangements.
- Adoption Panel Quality assurance process: using feedback to assess practice and inform learning. Adoption Panel members will complete an evaluation form on each item presented to Panel, assessing the quality of the information provided and the social workers' presentation at panel. This will be collated by the panel chair and a copy of the form will be sent to the social workers' and team manager and where necessary to the service delivery manager so that feedback can be given to the social worker and inform any training or development needs. Copies of the evaluation sheets will be kept by the Panel Administrator and these will be evaluated by

on a six monthly/annual basis. The evaluation and analysis will be made available to the Adoption Panel and will be included in future annual reports.

- **Agency Decision Maker:** The role of the agency decision maker is an active one with a critical challenge of the quality of work presented to Adoption Panel and the quality of decision making by the panel itself. Regular meetings also take place between the agency decision makers across the region and panel chairs to monitor progress.
- **Wider Quality Assurance processes:** using research and other work to better use external expertise and challenge to understand quality of practice.
- **Shared Reflection and Learning:** how the information and intelligence learned through Quality Assurance are analysed, summarised, shared and used to inform improvement. For example, disruption Meetings are held as a matter of course and resulting reports are used to look at the need for any practice improvement measures with recommendations referred back for consideration by the senior management team and further discussions across the local authorities. Disruption meeting reports will also be made available to the relevant panel which agreed the original match in order for panel to consider whether there are any learning points or changes required for Adoption Panel process.

What this document outlines is common principles and expectations. These do not diminish professional needs but rather encourage that learning is shared both within the service undertaking practice improvement activity and with the wider professional community.

Audit activity

Professional Audit activity:

This will be shared at the Management Board and will be summarised in the annual report.

Professional Audit Activity Title + Aims and objectives	Service Lead & Completed by	Audit Process	Last Audit Period & Numbers Undertaken	Summary Key Findings Reports	Summary Key Findings Reports
				Good Practice Areas for Improvement Learning for multi-agency working	Good Practice Areas for Improvement Learning for multi-

					agency working
Recruitment & assessment files; Family Finding Files; Adoption Support cases; Assess quality of practice; quality of outcome focussed plans; voice of the child and engagement of the family; reviews quality of reflective supervision & management oversight used to inform practice improvement work	Head of Service Service Delivery Managers Team Managers	Quarterly summary report (5 audits per person per quarter) (case file audit to be developed)			
Disruption Reports	Service Delivery manager Family finding	Annually for the Adoption Agency Report			
Complaints & compliments: Information from the Customer Care teams will be brought to the adoption service management meeting on a six monthly basis for consideration and evaluation. An annual collation/overview exercise will be undertaken to identify any underlying trends and practice		Annually for the Adoption agency report			

improvement recommendations.					
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One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE

A BASELINE ANALYSIS

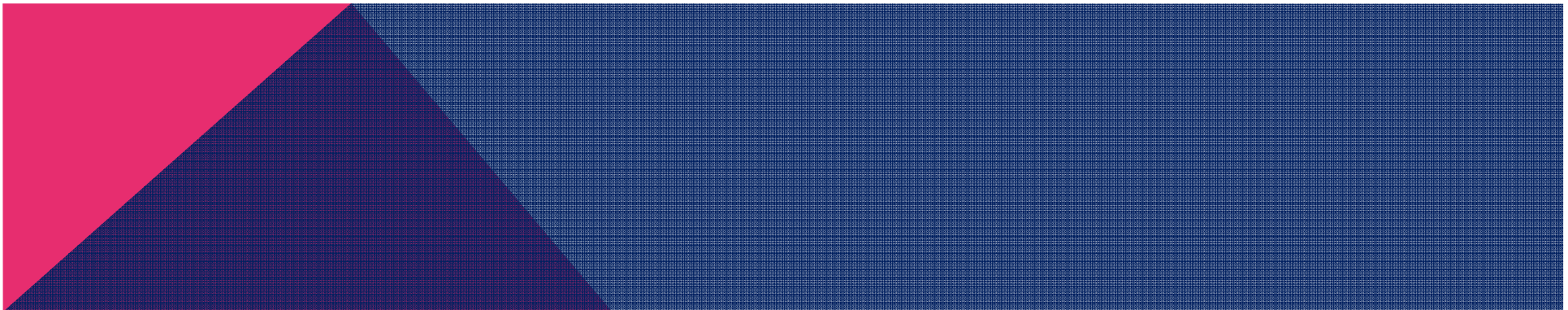
JUNE 2017

INTRODUCTION



One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE

This baseline analysis covers the financial years between 2013-14 and 2015-16, and provides a sense of the direction of travel for adoption and associated processes within the five local authorities before 01 April 2017, when One Adoption Agency West Yorkshire was established.



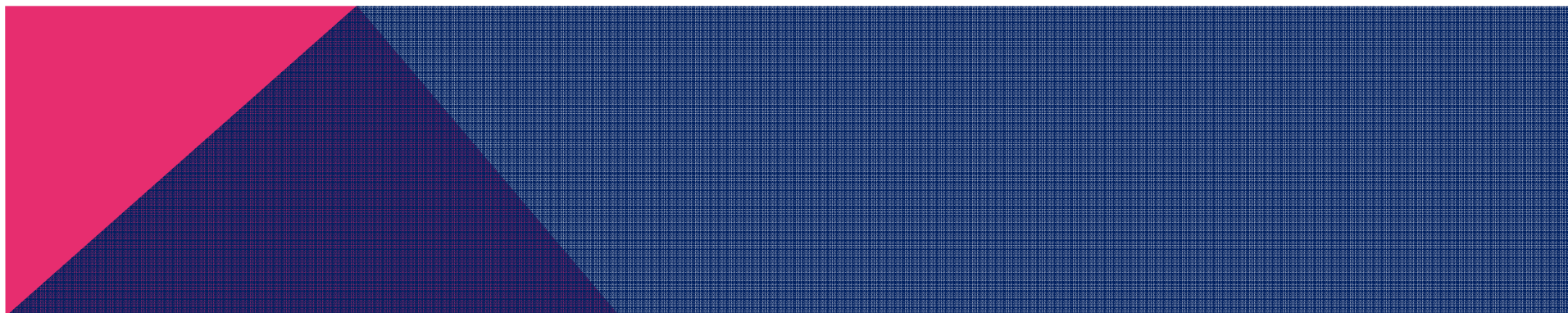
PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS' PROGRESS THROUGH THE ADOPTION PROCESS

Fewer applications, approvals, and matches

The number of adopter applications halved in 2015-16 compared to the previous year. A reduction was seen through all stages of the adoption process over the same period, but not at the same attrition rate as applications.

	Number of applications		Approved		Matched		Placed		Adopted	
	2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16
Bradford	22	18	65	18	50	25	55	25	45	45
Calderdale	31	9	31	29	10	..	5	..	5	..
Kirklees	61	20	43	23	15	20	15	25	20	20
Leeds	90	41	64	58	60	60	65	60	70	65
Wakefield	17	17	20	17	5	..	5	..	10	..
West sub-region	221	105	223	145	140	105	145	110	150	130

.. Data not returned - note that some items have been returned but suppressed due to data quality concerns

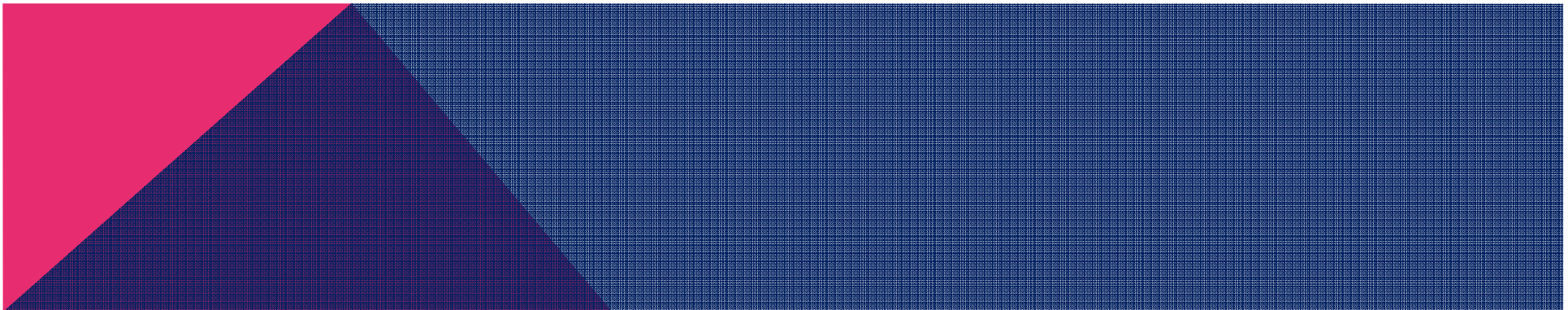
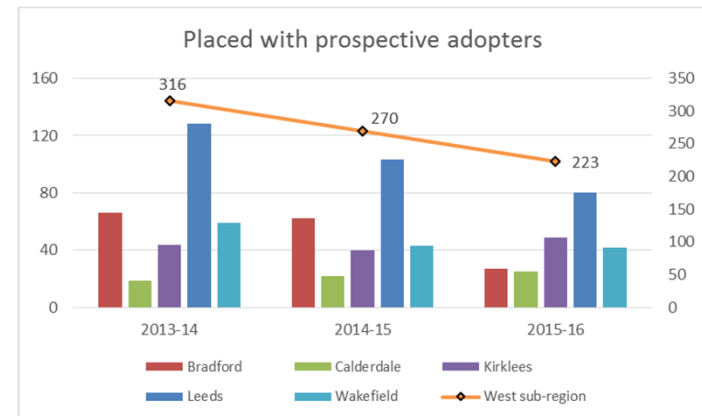
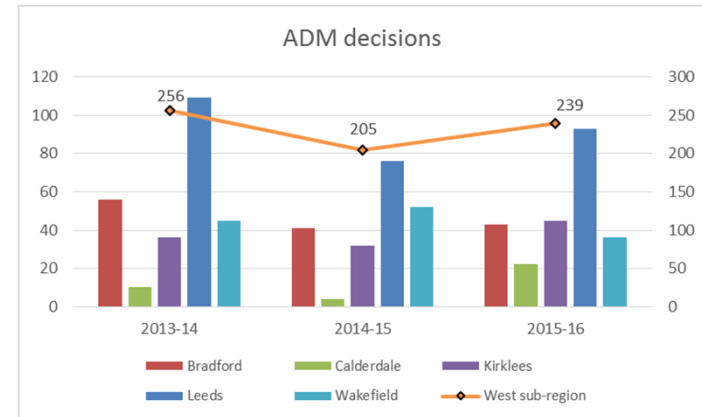


DECISION MAKING

A reduction in ADM and placements

The number of ADM decisions has reduced by 6.5 per cent in three years.

In the same period, there has been an even more marked reduction (29 per cent) in children being placed with prospective adopters.

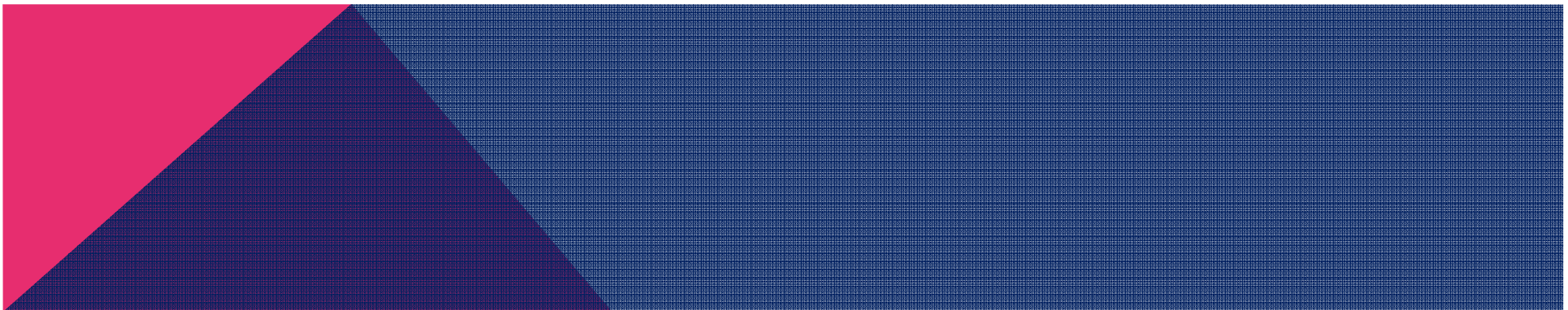
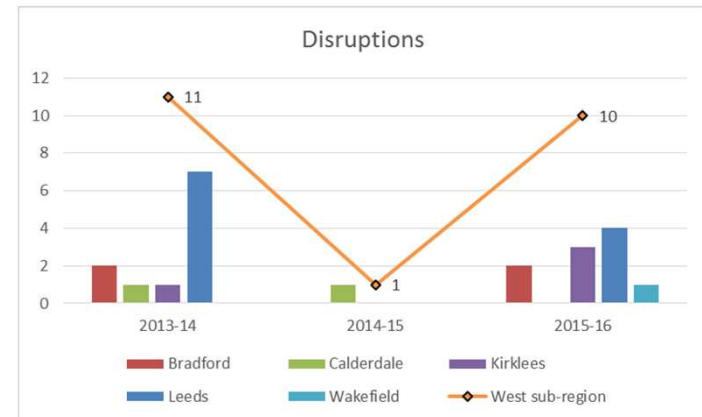
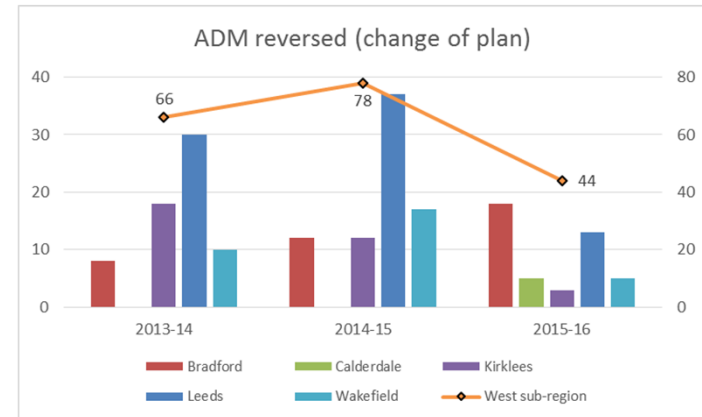


REVERSALS AND DISRUPTIONS

Fewer reversals; disruptions stable

The number of ADM decisions reversed is a third lower in 2015-16 than in 2013-14, although there was a rise in 2014-15.

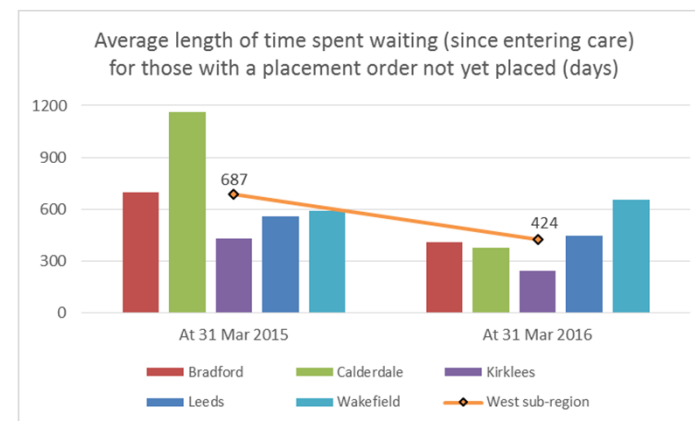
Disruptions in 2015-16 were at the same level as in 2013-14. In 2014-15 there was only one disruption. Data for 2016-17 will help indicate if there is a longer term trend.



CHILDREN IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS

Less waiting for children to be placed

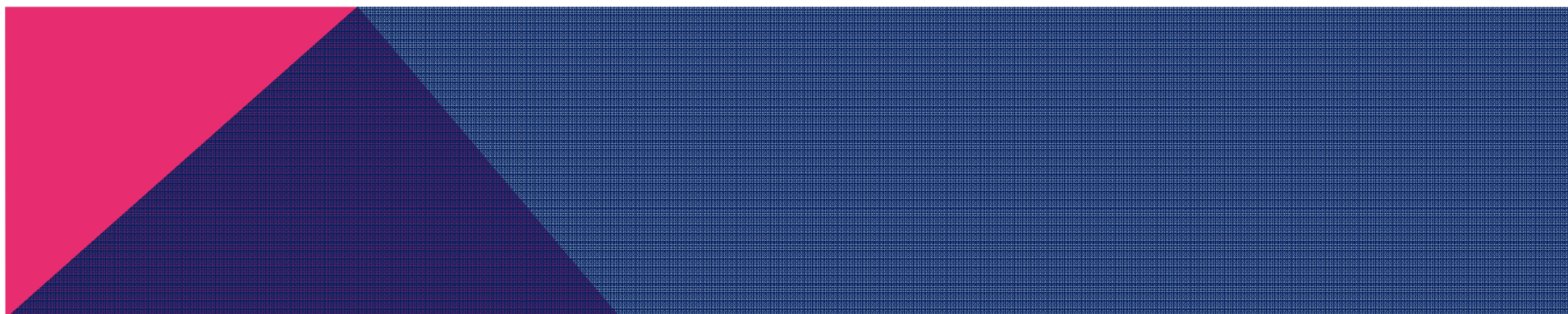
Fewer children are being held up within the adoption process, and the average length of time children wait to be placed reduced by 263 days in one year.



	With a decision not yet placed		With a placement order not yet placed			With a placement order not yet placed (18 months or more since entering care)	
	At 31 Mar 2015	At 31 Mar 2016	At 31 Mar 2014	At 31 Mar 2015	At 31 Mar 2016	At 31 Mar 2015	At 31 Mar 2016
Bradford	45	30	63	26	16	15	x
Calderdale	20	..	52	21	6	20	..
Kirklees	25	20	36	12	11	x	0
Leeds	65	60	85	45	37	15	10
Wakefield	35	30	27	25	4	5	10
West sub-region	190	140	263	129	74	55	20

.. Data not returned - note that some items have been returned but suppressed due to data quality concerns

x Suppressed due to low numbers – where a count is 5 or fewer

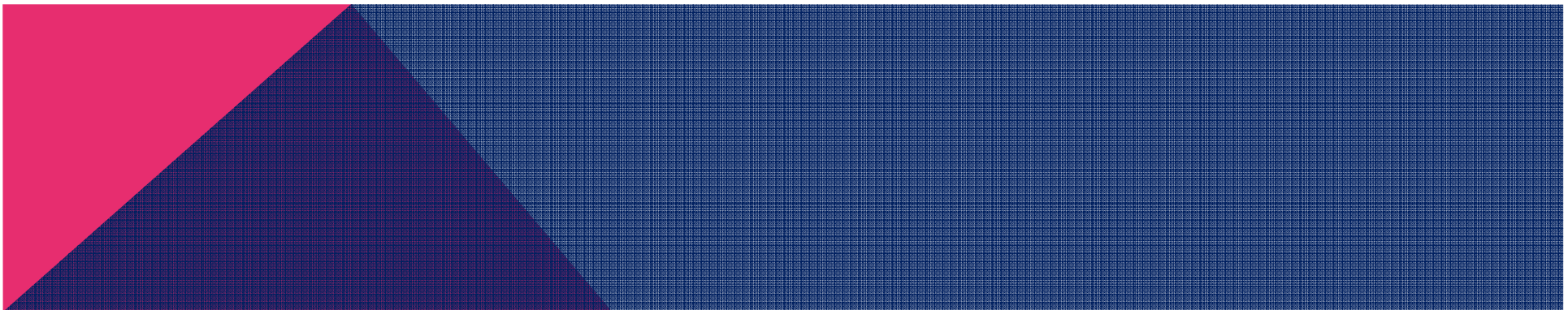
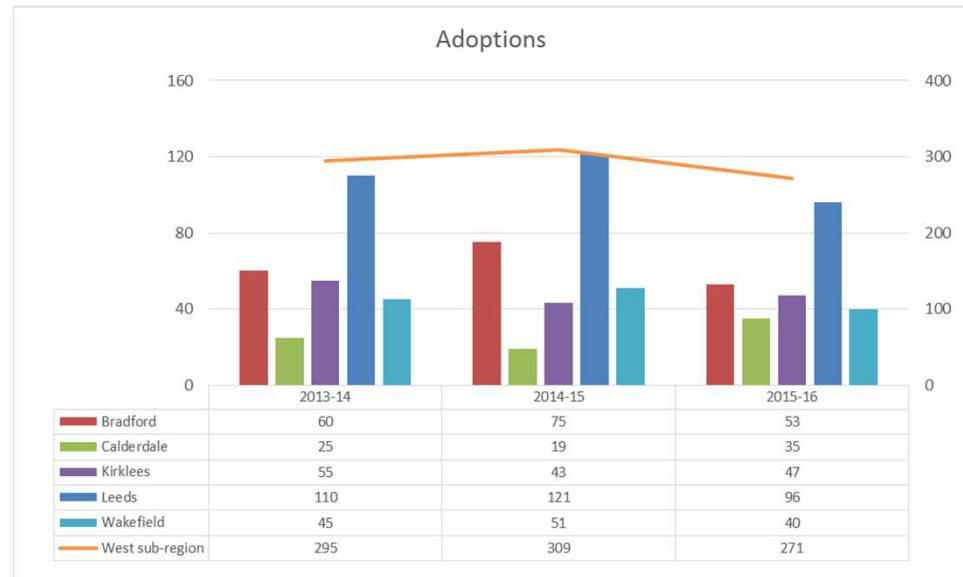


ADOPTIONS

A reduction in the number of adoptions

875 children have been adopted across the five local authorities between 2013-14 and 2015-16.

There were eight per cent fewer adoptions in 2015-16 than in 2013-14, compared to a seven per cent reduction nationally.



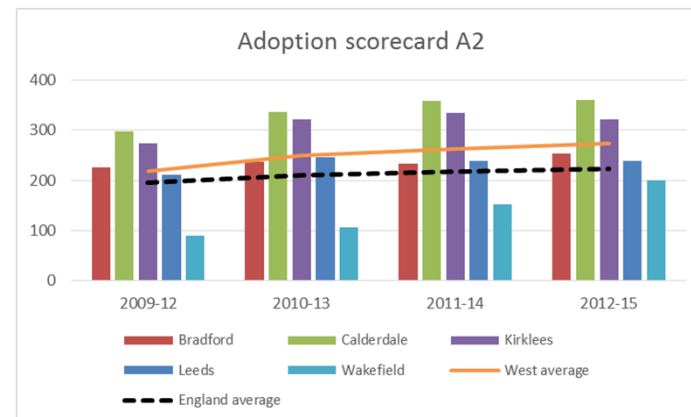
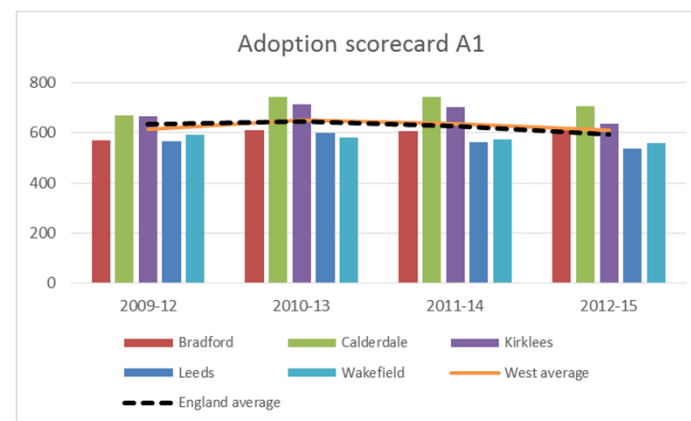
ADOPTION SCORECARD PERFORMANCE

Regional performance not as strong national

The region is broadly in line with national on A1, with performance improving over the last three years.

There is a steady increase in the length of time taken for children in the region to be matched to a family following the granting of a placement order.

For both indicators, there is significant variation in performance across the five local authorities.

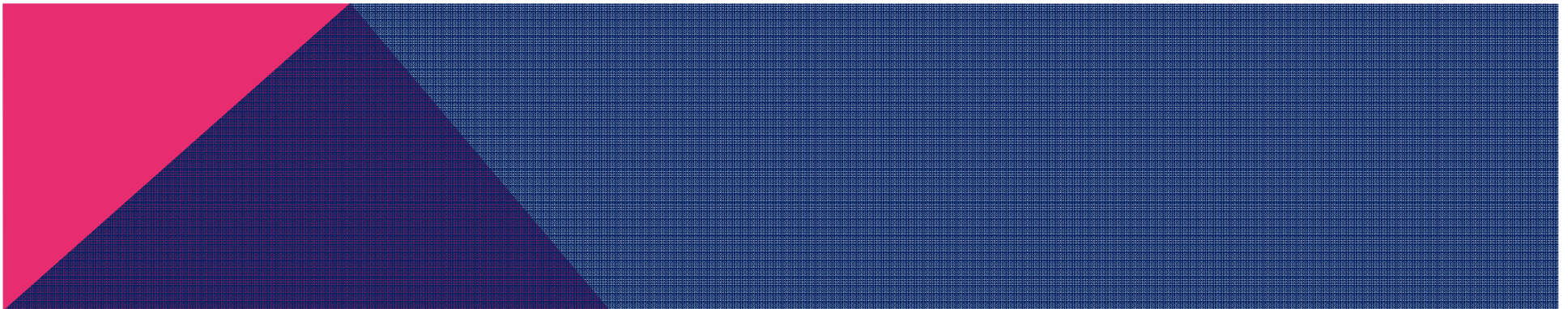


A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)
A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)

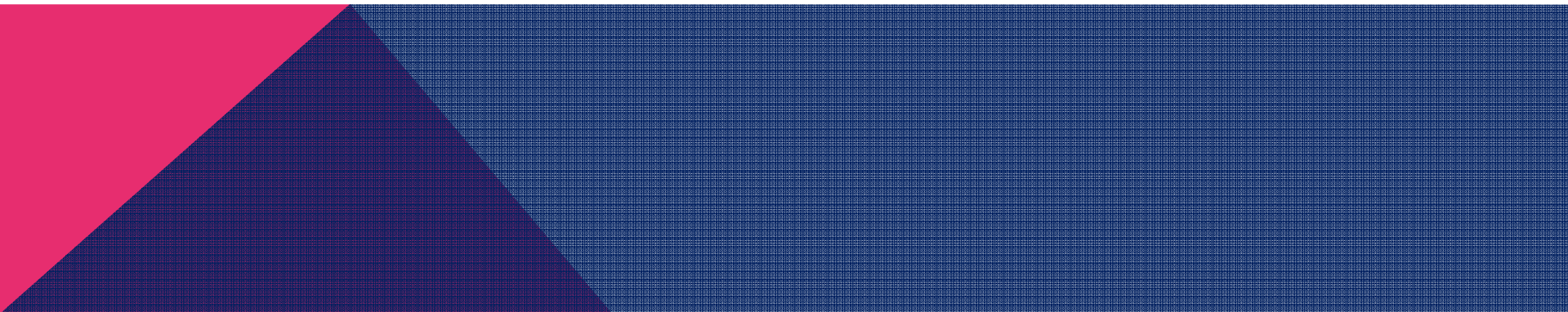
Q&A



One
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WEST YORKSHIRE



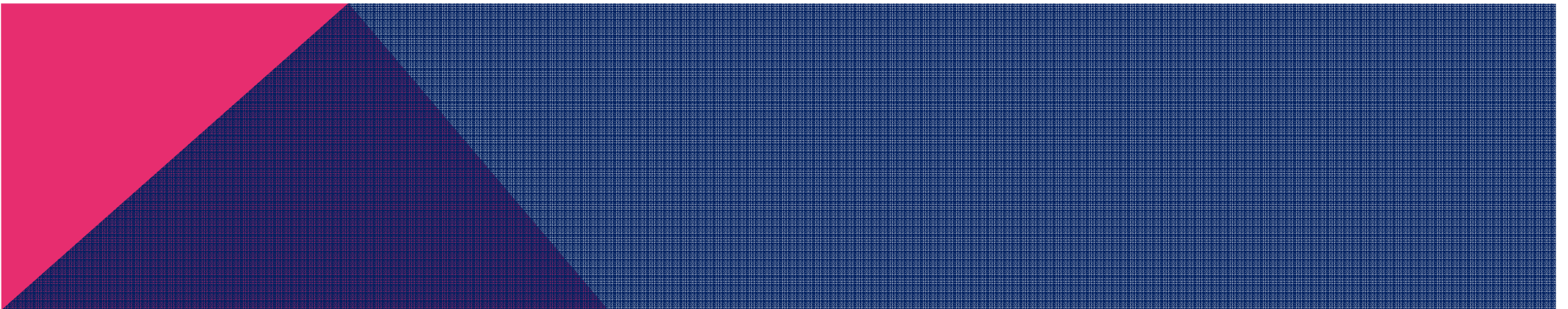
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