



# Public Document Pack

## WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

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**Meeting to be held remotely (via Zoom) on  
Tuesday, 26th January, 2021 at 1.00 pm**

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### **MEMBERSHIP**

Adrian Farley - City of Bradford MDC

Adam Wilkinson -Calderdale MBC

Viv Kendrick Kirklees MBC

Fiona Venner (Chair) Leeds City Council

Richard Forster City of Wakefield MDC

*Note to observers of the meeting: To remotely observe this meeting, please click on the 'View the Meeting Recording' link which will feature on the meeting's webpage (linked below) ahead of the meeting. The webcast will become available at the commencement of the meeting*

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1073&MId=10284&Ver=4>

# A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p><b>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</b></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><b>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></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><b>RESOLVED</b> – 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**

7 - 12

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th July 2020.

(Copy attached)

7

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

To consider any matters arising from the minutes.

8

**HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT**

13 -  
34

To consider a report by the Director of Children and Families which sets out the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire since October 2020.

(Report attached)

**HALF YEARLY REPORT FOR ONE ADOPTION WEST YORKSHIRE**

To consider a report by the Director of Children’s and Families which presents the half yearly report of the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), as detailed in Appendix A of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards 2014.

The purpose of the report is to enable the Joint Committee to monitor the management and outcomes of the service so that they may be satisfied that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or services users; and satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

(Report attached)

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting will take place in July 2021, exact date and time to be confirmed at a later date.

**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.

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## WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 28TH JULY, 2020

**Present:** Councillor F Venner (Leeds) – Chair  
Councillors: A Wilkinson (Calderdale MBC) and C Thirkill (City of Bradford MDC)

**In Attendance:** S Johal (ODWY), J Jenkins (Calderdale MBC) 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**

That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt 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 public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:-  
“The Head of Service Report” – Appendix No.3 of the submitted report were deemed exempt from publication in accordance with Access to Information Rule 10.4 (3) as it included Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). In those circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. (Minute No. 9 referred)

### **3 LATE ITEMS**

There were no late items of business identified.

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

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

### **5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors; R Forster (City of Wakefield MBC) V Kendrick (Kirklees MBC) and A Farley (City of Bradford MDC)

Councillor C Thirkill was attending in place of Councillor A Farley

## **6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were agreed as a true and correct record.

## **7 Matters Arising**

Referring to Minute No. 20 - Head of Service Report - It was reported that a report on Adoption Allowances (financial support for adopters and special guardians) was considered by the Executive Board in Calderdale, thereby aligning with other local authorities

## **8 Annual Report of One Adoption West Yorkshire & Statement of Purpose**

The Director of Children's and Families submitted a report which presented the Annual Report of the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) as required by the National Minimum Standards 2011 (Appendix A referred)

The report requested the Joint Committee to note the revised statement of purpose for OAWY (as referred to Appendix B). The Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standard in order to be able to provide those services.

Addressing the report the Head of Service spoke of the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire from April 2019 to March 2020 which included:

- COVID-19 - OAWY response
- Use of Resources
- Partnership Working
- Performance Management
- Practice, Quality of Provision and Management Oversight
- Continuous Professional and Service Development

Members noted the entire Adoption Team had been working from home since the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, adapting to ensure that families were supported and children's plans progressed as far as possible. Staff had also been supported with a range of measures with flexible working been encouraged.

Members were informed enquiries continued to be received from people interested in adopting. New online information had been created and complemented with regular live Facebook question and answer sessions, replacing other face to face information events. Initial home visits and assessment sessions were also taking place virtually and self-declaration medical assessments had been implemented for adopters in stage one of the process which would allow many applicants to proceed into the next stage of the process. Virtual Adoption Panels had also been introduced with around 7 – 9 panels taking place each month

With reference to Partnership Working, it was understood that the Centre of Excellence Project Team came to an end at the end of March 2020. However,

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021



the local authorities and the clinical commissioning groups within health had agreed to fund an initial 3 year project to implement a multi- disciplinary team within OAWY working across the region.

In terms of Performance Management; 113 adoptive households were approved during the year, within the 113 households, 219 individuals were approved throughout 2019-20. Of these, 21 (10%) were from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds (last year it was 11%).

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

In offering comment Members welcomed the increase in adopter enquiries, noting in one month alone 97 enquiries had been received, noting that Adopters from the Black African, Black Caribbean and Eastern European Communities continued to be an ongoing challenge.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (i) To receive the annual report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), as detailed in Appendix A of the submitted report (as required by the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, pursuant to the Care Standards Act 2000).
- (ii) To note the assurance provided by the Director of Children’s and Families that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or services users.
- (iii) That the updated statement of purpose for OAWY be agreed

#### **9 Head of Service Report**

The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report and provided a summary of the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire since the annual report was completed in April 2020, the developments included:

- Staffing & HR
- Accommodation
- Budget
- Partnership Working
- Financial Support in Adoption
- Performance Monitoring
- Practice, Quality of Provision and Management Oversight

Referring to Covid 19, the Chair queried if any adoption opportunities were being missed for children and young people in terms of decisions that are not been made due to the coronavirus.

In responding the Head of Service referred to the governments amendments to secondary legislation (Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020) which allows flexibilities within the regulations for a number of different situations. For example, one of these is for agencies to consider whether to refer cases to the adoption panel, or proceed to make a decision under regulation 19 without such a referral.

Members were informed the Adoption Panels were being held virtually and to ensure the continuation of approvals of adopters and matches of children, the Management Board had agreed that Agency Decisions could be made outside of the adoption panel process in the following circumstances, only where panel capacity would cause delay for the child or in approving the adopter where children are identified to be matched with them:

- Approval of experienced adopters
- Approval and Match of foster carer adopters
- Approval and Match of sibling adopters
- Approval of adopters who can consider early permanence placements and a child had been identified as a match.

Members noted that the agency would continue to ensure planning for children and adopters was appropriately scrutinised, each local authority having nominated officers responsible for the use of the flexibility (Head of Service level or above). The agency also had a central collation of the circumstances in which the flexibilities that are being used across the 5 local authorities to ensure appropriate oversight by the management board.

Referring to; Practice, Quality of Provision and Management Oversight, the Head of Service said the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement presents some very serious questions regarding our regional adoption service but it also presents an opportunity to address the issues raised.

Members were informed that discussions would be taken forward with staff, our service users and partners to set a reviewed vision of inclusion, diversity and equality for the future. These discussions would feed into a revised equality impact assessment and this would help form a clear action plan about the areas of focus for the next iteration of the 3 year plan.

At this point in the meeting the Committee went into closed session to discuss the Agency's Marketing Strategy.

## **RESOLVED -**

- (i) To note the progress of the agency
- (ii) To Support the progression of these arrangements.

## **10 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – To note that the next meeting will take place in January 2021, exact date and time to be confirmed at a later date.

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Report of Director of Children and Families

Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Subject: Head of Service Report

Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	X No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number: 1	X Yes

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## Summary of main issues

1. This report provides a summary from the Head of Service on the developments in the service since October 2020.

## Recommendations

1. The Joint Committee is requested to:
  - a) Note the progress of the agency
  - b) Support the progression of these arrangements

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire since October 2020.

## **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 on this date.

## **3. Main issues**

### **1. Use of Resources**

#### **1.1 Staffing & HR**

- 1.1.1 Staff have continued to work hard during the pandemic and during December it was clear that staff were tired and morale across the teams was low, no doubt a similar picture in children services more generally. Staff were hopeful at that time of the ability to move back in the New year to being able to meeting in offices and teams and the fact that there has been issues with accommodation in a large part of the region has contributed to their frustrations.
- 1.1.2 Moving into the New Year there are more staff off sick with Covid across the region as well as extended family bereavements as a result of the pandemic. Staff are understandably anxious about the new variant and the second lockdown has brought about more pressures for staff, with the majority of the staff having children at home due to schools being overwhelmed and unable to take all the children of key workers.
- 1.1.3 There has been a number of new staff recruited in the last couple of months which has been positive, particularly for business support and the recruitment teams. Two social workers are expected in the New year within the family finding teams across Calderdale and Kirklees which will help ease some of the pressures in these areas.

## 2. **Partnership working**

### 2.1 **Multi- disciplinary team**

2.1.1 The Early Years practitioner is now in post and appointments have been offered to candidates for the speech and language and occupational therapist positions. The interviews for the psychologist are planned. A partnership board has been set up with representatives from the local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, OAWY, the service provider Leeds Community Health Trust and adopter representation. It is due to meet in early February and will oversee and provide strategic oversight and direction for the team.

### 2.2 **Financial Support in adoption**

2.2.1 The work developing a regional approach to financial support in adoption has been completed and agreed to be progressed by the management board. Calderdale and Leeds have agreed the proposals regarding the implementation of the proposed changes and work is ongoing with the other 3 local authorities to seek agreement to the proposals.

### 2.3.1 **Special Guardianship regional work**

#### ***Financial support***

The work regarding developing a regional approach to support for Special Guardians is being progressed. The approach is based on a welfare principle to deliver better outcomes for children through leaving care in special guardianship arrangements. Calderdale have agreed the proposed arrangements and Leeds have sought legal advice and are progressing with consultation and taking through their governance arrangements. Bradford and Wakefield have taken some legal advice and whilst agreeing with the principals of the proposals there are a number of issues needing to be addressed before taking these through

their local governance arrangements. Kirklees have this booked onto cabinet for discussion.

- 2.3.1.2 The work regarding a new financial assessment tool is completed and ready to use. It has been tested by all LAs (Wakefield is testing next week). Feedback from 4 of the LA's is very positive in that it is more straightforward to use and takes into account more recent changes in welfare benefits. Further testing will be carried out in the next couple of months to consider transferring the existing arrangements to the new approach in light of costs, process and timescale.
- 2.3.1.4 A meeting is taking place with Department of Education next week and the Department of Works and Pensions to look at the benefits issue and the financial assessment and in particular the Child Element of Universal Credit to see if this can be clarified for this to be taken into consideration in the financial assessment.
- 2.3.1.5 One key issue has been capacity to undertake welfare benefit checks on behalf of carers which is critical. Some local authorities have staff who can do this in Kirklees and Leeds, others do not. Grandparents Plus who currently offer a welfare benefits check and budgeting advice as part of their Response service and we are exploring whether they can do this within existing resources as part of the contract and is awaiting a proposal. There are GDPR issues to check around sharing advice with the local authority.
- 2.3.1.6 Local decisions will also be needed on annual reviews, post 18 arrangements, existing SGO arrangements (retrospective challenges), framework for off policy decisions and legal advice. Given the individual needs and stages of the different LAs consideration implementation will need to be carried out in a phased way. The aim of implementation across the region by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 will have to be put back as this is no longer achievable with a target date of October 2021.

#### 2.3.2. ***Other work regarding Special Guardianship***

The SG Support Plan is in the process of being rolled out across the region and feedback is positive.



The Grandparents Plus project is progressing well and we reached our target of 120 families reached using the additional support provided from the ASF Covid 19 funds. The regional Facebook group is growing daily (currently 163 members) which allows us to connect with special guardians in the region and hear their views. We are also exploring an advocacy group for young people with possible involvement from a local youth worker.

### ***Commissioned services***

2.3.3 OAWY has commissioned training in Non-Violent Resistance for the kinship teams across the 5 LAs. Support workers and managers across the region will receive four days virtual training in January with ongoing workshops to support embedding the learning. Two of the workers from Grandparents plus will also attend, adding to the support they are able to give to Special Guardians in the region.

2.3.3.1 OAWY has commissioned a therapeutic parenting programme designed for special guardians and will make a group application to the fund on behalf of the region. The programme is called 'Guiding Guardian's and will run in March, July and October.

## 3. **Performance**

3.1 The third quarter report is due in early February. The half yearly report provides the most up to date performance information.

## 4. **Practice, quality of provision and management oversight**

### 4.1 **Recruitment and Assessment**

4.1.1 The recruitment and assessment teams remain under a great deal of pressure due to the number of people in the assessment process. In January we have begun accepting enquiries again for people considering children under the age of 2 years old and the 3 information

events, held on Zoom are now fully booked. A number of sessional assessors are now in post and have really helped in reducing the backlog of assessments. 4 assessments were transferred to the voluntary adoption agencies who will undertake the assessments and will be provided back to us at a reduced cost as part of the contract.

- 4.1.2 The training available to adopters has increased with the sibling training, EPP training and experienced adopter and foster carer training up and running virtually. The preparation course is currently being re-adapted to move back to a 3 day preparation training on Zoom and work is underway to develop the twilight sessions with birth parents and therapeutic parenting approaches.
- 4.1.3 Medical assessments remain an ongoing issue with GP availability to undertake these. We continue to use the flexibilities within the regulations to move applicants through to stage 2 without these in place.

#### **Adoption panel**

- 4.2
- 4.2.1 Adoption panel capacity has been a challenge and we continue to regularly review this. The fact that we no longer have flexibility in the regulations has caused issues and panels are booked up until April. The managers and panel team constantly problem solve and aim to get items on in timely way. We are operating a new system for those needing an urgent panel space for matches as items sometimes fall off at the last minute. Social workers are being asked to complete all the paperwork and then if an item falls off they can be slotted in. We now have 2 panels a week and generally speaking these are working well on zoom. A trial of panels focussing on approvals only has been beneficial as this means more items can be considered and I can, where possible, attend and observe these, making swift decisions.

#### **Advertising and marketing**

- 4.3
- 4.3.1 The revised website is now live and One Adoption South Yorkshire have gone live on the 1<sup>st</sup> January and have joined the One Adoption Brand, contributing to the costs of the marketing of the brand. I would ask

committee members to review the website and provide any reflections and comments regarding this.

- 4.3.2 It is likely that further funding will be made available from the Department of Education regarding the national recruitment work with OAWY holding these funds on behalf of the Regional Adoption Agencies. It is not clear on the amount of funds being provided but will likely be similar to last year, subject to the national spending review.

#### 4.4 **Family Finding**

- 4.4.1 127 children have been placed for adoption between April and December 2020, this is only a slight reduction in comparison to the number of children placed for adoption in the same period in 2019/20 and is commendable given the pandemic. The staff have continued to work creatively in undertaking family finding and achieving matches for children.

- 4.4.2 Transitions have remained a challenge during the national and local restrictions with individual risk assessments being carried out to do these safely. The staff have continued to be creative in trying to progress transitions and often the anxiety about these are about foster carers circumstances. Discussions have taken place with fostering services across the region to promote transitions and look at how these can continue to be undertaken during the winter months. The Family Finding and Recruitment and Assessment Teams have also held a practice forum to look at how we can creatively continue transitions during the winter months.

#### 4.5 **Virtual Profiling Event**

- 4.5.1 Our latest profiling event took place at the beginning of December with adopters attending from OAWY, local Voluntary Adoption Agencies and a local authority from the Yorkshire and Humber region. 11 children were profiled (including two sibling groups). 6 children (including one sibling group) received expressions of interest with a total of 26 expressions of interest. Two linking meetings have been arranged following the profiling event.

- 4.5.2 From the three previous profiling events during the year, four children have been matched with adoptive families and two matches (sibling group) are progressing to adoption panel.

### **Inter-agency Adoption Placements Service**

- 4.6 The inter agency contract was awarded at the end of May to provide a minimum of 30 placements per year and 27 placements have been identified with 23 (including 1 EPP) children having been placed and 5 booked into matching panel in early 2021.
- 4.6.1

- 4.6.2 The lead for the VAA is engaged in tracking meetings to allow for early identification of children who we will need to access the service and work is ongoing to provide early information of adopters being approved by the VAA's.

### **4.7 Link Maker**

- 4.7.1 We revised our ways of working in relation to Link Maker at the end of the summer with Link Maker being used to share children's profiles with our approved adopters and wider where appropriate, including the voluntary adoption agencies within the region. Further work is being undertaken with Link Maker and the voluntary adoption agencies within the region to refine the visibility of profiles shared with the VAA's in the region.

### **Adoption Support**

- 4.8 We have continued to work over virtual platforms with families for the most part, with risk assessed face to face visits where needed. What has become more apparent over the past couple of months is the impact that restrictions relating to Covid is having on families, meaning workers are often dealing with some complex and quite desperate situations at times. On a more positive note we have been able to resume most of our delivery of support groups via a mixture of face to face in bubbles (stay and play groups across the region, single adopters group) or via virtual means (regional adopter support group, teens/tweens

groups). We have been mindful that whatever we offer has to have flexibility built in at the moment to either be a scaled-down face to face meet-ups and/or delivered via virtual means, depending upon what local restrictions are in place at the time.

4.8.1 We had hoped to deliver an online 'Foundations for Attachment' programme in the Autumn, but take up from families was poor and feedback was that they ideally wanted this to be delivered face to face. We continue to explore delivering other parenting programmes via virtual means including NVR and a new 'Talking Teenagers' programme (based on the old Safebase for Teens programme), both to be offered this spring.

4.8.2 However, families appear to be more interested in short seminars and workshops due to spending a lot of time on zoom with children and home learning and therefore we have worked with Adoption UK who are staging a festival of activities for families in West Yorkshire.

4.8.3 From Monday 18th January they are hosting a week-long festival of fantastic webinars and include topics such as:

- An introduction to FASD
  - Preparing for Primary School
  - Looking at the map of recovery from complex trauma
  - Parenting Teens
  - Life Journey work
- ....and more!

4.8.4 There is also a mid-week meet up for all adoptive parents in the West Yorkshire region to have a chat and unload/support each other.

## 5. **Continuous Professional Development and Service Development**

### 5.1 **Audits**

5.1.1 An independent auditor carried out an audit of 32 prospective adopter files in October and November with 46 % being rated as outstanding or Good. 40% were rated at satisfactory and 12% required improvement. An action plan has been developed to address issues raised from the audits and has been shared and discussed with the management board.

5.1.2 Internal audits have continued with 15 audits completed in Quarter 3.

- 3 (20%) were excellent;
- 9 (60%) were good;
- 3 (20%) were satisfactory.

5.1.3 Joint audits are being undertaken within each LA on the children's and family finding files and the learning from these is currently being collated.

### 5.2 **All staff event**

5.2.1 The Winter conference held in November was timely bringing staff together to consider the Black Lives Matter agenda. The speakers including an academic overview of Black Lives Matters and 3 speakers with lived experience, including two adopted adults and one adoptive parent shared their perspectives with the staff group in the morning. The afternoon session the staff had time to network and reflect on the issues raised and consider this in relation to their work and the organisation and idea and shared view and thoughts as to how we can improve the service. These views were captured and a working group and action plan is in the process of being developed and a report will be provided to the board in due course.

### 5.3 **Forward Planning**

5.3

5.3.1 The 3 year plan comes to a conclusion at the end of March and a review of the plan is attached at **Appendix1**. This includes a revision of the plan which has been developed in consultation with adopters and the

adopteens group and staff and this draft is presented to the board for consideration.

#### **4. Corporate considerations**

##### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with staff and the staff. 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 There are no specific implications for this report but the Black Lives matter action plan will be part of the updated equality impact assessment regarding the service and the organisation.

##### **4.3 Resources and value for money**

4.3.1 At the end of December 2020 there is a projection of a slight overspend of £25k. There are some pressures on the budget with regards to a reduction in income from the Adoption Support Fund and income from families not been matched with children outside the area. This has been challenging and action has already been taken to mitigate this projected overspend whilst being able to ensure a safe and responsive service and we are predicting that the budget will be balanced at the end of the financial year.

4.3.2 The proposed budget for 2021/22 has been recommended by the Head of Service and agreed by the management board and the 5 local authorities, with the revised funding formula arrangement to commence from April. Three additional social work posts have been agreed to help manage the increase in adopters coming forward to the agency for approval. It is hoped that this will result in savings on the Inter agency budget moving forward.

#### **4.4 Legal implications and access to information**

4.4.1 There are no implications for this report.

#### **4.5 Risk management**

There is a small potential financial risk with regards to the budget. However, regular financial monitoring is in place and the management board have good oversight of this

### **5. Recommendations**

5.1 The Joint Committee is requested to:

- a) Note the progress of the agency; and
- b) Support the progression of these arrangements.

#### **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.





<b>Subject:</b>	OAWY 3 Year Plan
<b>Meeting:</b>	Report to the Joint Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2021
<b>Service:</b>	One Adoption West Yorkshire
<b>Report Author:</b>	Practice Improvement & Development Manager
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>
<b>1.1</b>	This report will highlight the key achievements relating to the 218/19-20/21 OAWY 3 Year Plan and introduce the new 2021/22 – 23/24 plan, Appendix 2.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>2.1</b>	In 2018 the OAWY 3 Year Plan was produced setting out the priorities of the agency for that period. With the 3 year period almost complete this report highlights the key achievements so far and introduces the next 3 year plan (2021/22 – 23/24), see Appendix 2.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>3.1</b>	The 2018/19-20/21 3 Year Plan set out the vision, mission and priorities of the agency. Section 4.0 sets out the key achievements relating to the priorities set 3 years ago.
<b>3.2</b>	Appendix 2, section 5.0 introduces OAWY's next 3 year plan starting this April.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Key achievements – current 3 year plan</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><u>Vision</u></p> <p>OAWY's vision is <i>to be a flagship adoption agency that develops &amp; promotes best practice, improving adoption standards nationally.</i></p> <p>In terms of becoming a flagship adoption agency OAWY won the prestigious Excellence in Adoption Practice title achieved at the National Adoption Week Awards in October 2018. In March 2019 OAWY was awarded the Public-Public Partnerships award at the Local Government Chronicle Awards for its successful work bringing together adoption</p>

	<p>services across the five local authorities in West Yorkshire. In June 2019 OAWY received the Full Award - Early Permanence Quality Mark with the independent moderator stating the agency 'is coherently, comprehensive and realistically committed to EPP in the best interests of children'.</p>
<p><b>4.2</b></p>	<p>In terms of promoting best practice for the last 3 years OAWY has organised and hosted a conference each year regarding adoption practice for emerging Regional Adoption Agencies and Local Authorities with the support of Leeds Relational Practice centre, including one around OAWY's experience of becoming an RAA and one around adoption panels and shopfa and medical advisors in 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>OAWY held a conference 'Building an adoption system that respects and values relationships identity' conference in February 2020. This was attended by over 150 social work staff from across the country and the objective was to help the sector move forward on changing practice and culture regarding contact post adoption.</p> <p>Future events on different subjects will be planned to continue to promote best practice.</p> <p>OAWY have also presented at a number of national Coram BAAF conferences and Adoption UK conferences regarding Developing Adoption Support Services, the progress of regionalisation and outcomes for children and families and working with health partners to develop high quality medical advisor support and developing a joint approach to the support for Special Guardians within a regional arrangement</p> <p>OAWY staff have supported other emerging RAA's with policy and practice regarding early permanence.</p>
<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p>Sarah Johal leads on the national recruitment steering group for the recruitment of adopters on behalf of the RAA Leaders Group and OAWY holds and oversees the Section 31 grant provided by the DfE to RAA's for adopter recruitment. Sarah has presented the outcome of this work at a Number 10 Minsters Roundtable event and in a joint symposium with the USA regarding children in care, highlighting the work undertaken across the region as well nationally.</p>
<p><b>4.4</b></p>	<p><u>Priority 1 - Recruit &amp; assess sufficient numbers of adopters to meet the needs of our children</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 the agency ensured that generic marketing campaigns were inclusive i.e. for older adopters. In the same year a specific marketing campaign aimed at adopters from faith backgrounds was delivered. In 2019/20 links were established with faith group leaders/ contacts and OAWY had a presence at regional Pride events and targeted social media campaigns around myth busting and early permanence were delivered. In 2020/21 there had been plans to link with local employers but this has been put on hold due to Covid-19. However, monthly meetings with local and national agencies (Barnardo's, My Foster Family, Be My Family) are in place working towards a regional approach to reach out to Black community groups.</p>

4.5	<p>In 2020 the OAWY website was further developed to allow adopters to access information and forms online. This enables them to move through the assessment process in a timely way. In the same year a new adopter preparation training plan was devised but not rolled-out due to Covid-19. In its place on-line training has been developed to ensure prospective adopters can continue through the process to approval.</p>
4.6	<p>OAWY continues to approve more adoptive households year on year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2017/18 - 69</li> <li>• 2018/19 - 109</li> <li>• 2019/20 - 113</li> <li>• 2020/21 – 120* (projected)</li> </ul> <p>The number of prospective adopters approaching the agency has increased significantly over the last 3 years. Additional R&amp;A staff are in the process of being recruited to ensure we can retain these adopters and continue to increase our number of adopters.</p>
4.7	<p><u>Priority 2a – Work with local authorities and partners to: Improve early identification of children and further develop the use of EPP across the region</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 EPP champion training was jointly delivered with Barnardo's to LA staff. In 2019/20 the Centre of Excellence and the OAWY Adoption Support team offered consultations upon request at early linking stage. In 2020/21 training had been planned with LA staff but has been put on hold until it is safe to deliver. OAWY staff continue to link with LAs re promoting tracking children suitable for EPP. Despite aims to increase the use of EPP this remains inconsistent in some LA's due to issues relating to care planning. This will remain a priority for the next 3 years.</p>
4.8	<p><u>Priority 2b – Work with local authorities and partners to: Develop practice around identity (relationships with birth families &amp; life story work)</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 Twilight training sessions targeted at adopters for identity and contact were developed. In 2019/20 OAWY held a conference, attended by over 150 social work staff from across the country, based upon identity. Additional conferences planned for 2020/21 have been placed on hold but will hopefully be picked up in 2021/22. The contact project and working group is underway with links into Nuffield regarding wider work going on across the country. Linkmaker have agreed work with OAWY to implement a new app for managing contact arrangements and a pilot is due to start in the autumn. This remains a key priority moving forward.</p>

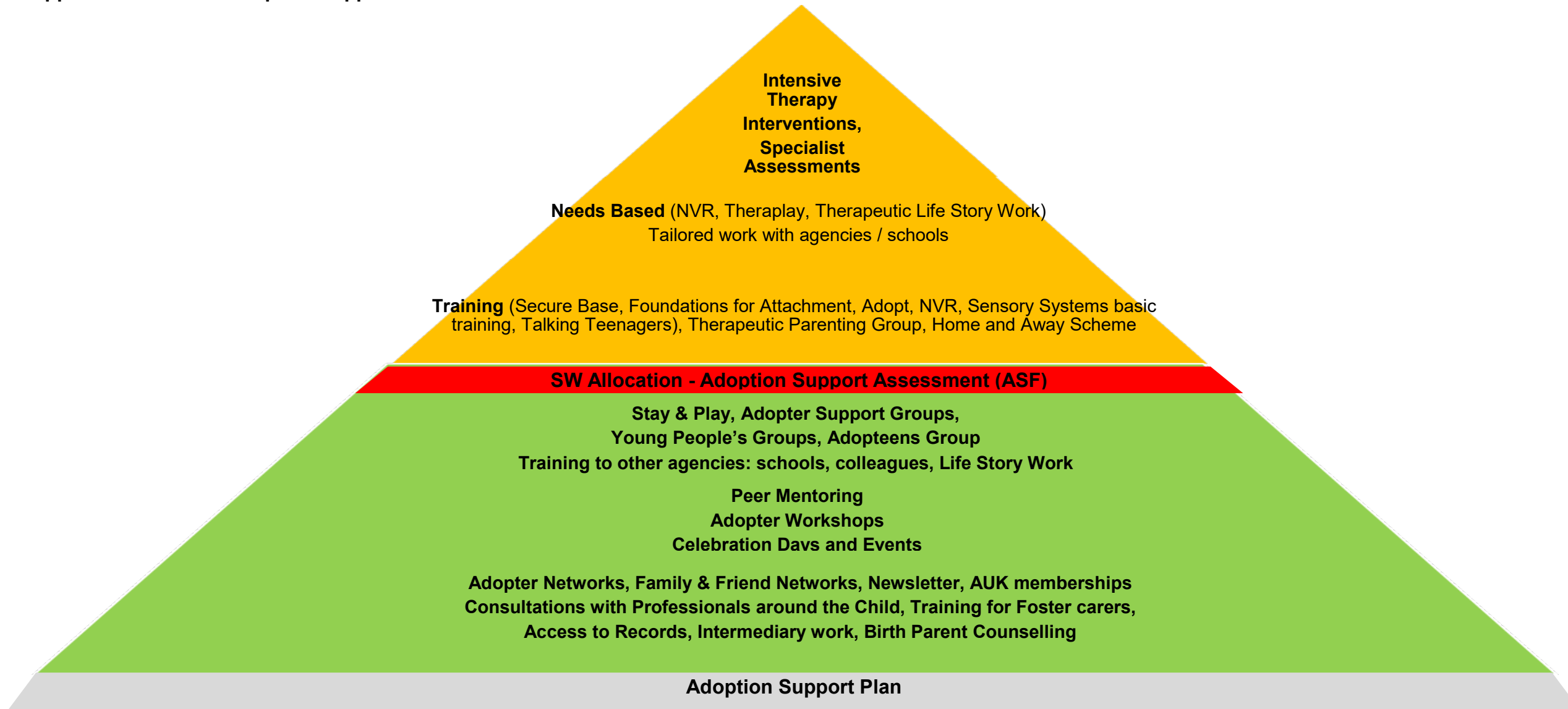
4.9	<p><u>Priority 2c – Work with local authorities and partners to: Develop knowledge and understanding about matching with adopters who are committed, flexible, open communicators and are willing to access support.</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 working groups were established and ‘adoption clinics’ set-up monthly in each LA. In 2019/20 training on unconscious bias was delivered to all managers and panel members. Information, challenge and support continued to be provided to LAs via the clinics. Language was also changed at information events and adopter prep groups to improve adopters understanding and the importance of openness. Covid-19 has prevented workshops on EPP, CPRs and transition planning being delivered in 2020/21. However, drop in sessions, clinics and team managers meetings with LA staff have been delivered virtually.</p>
4.10	<p>The matching project that has been undertaken has sought to harmonise and agree the approach to matching across the region and practice in this area has moved forward. This will no longer be a key priority in the next iteration of the plan, although is still important.</p>
4.11	<p><u>Priority 3 - Develop our staff team &amp; panel members to ensure all our children &amp; families receive consistently excellent service &amp; support</u></p> <p>A great deal of work has been undertaken to develop our staff and this has been detailed and reported in each of the annual reports. The basic theoretical framework that underpins the work of the agency with regards to restorative practice and understanding and developing a trauma informed approach is key for all staff. All social work staff have completed a skills gap analysis with their line manager. This identifies the necessary skills specific to their role and where there is a development need. In addition a skills audit has been completed – this informs OAWY of the range of skills within the agency. The skills gap analysis and skills audit combined have led to the creation of development plan. The development plan roll-out was due to begin roll-out during 2020/21, unfortunately Covid-19 meant training providers were unable to offer what was required. Q4 of 2020/21 is being used to refresh the skills gap analysis and skills audit to take account for new starts / leavers and roll-out will be picked up early 2021/22.</p>
4.12	<p><u>Priority 4 - Implement a consistent offer of adoption support across OAWY</u></p> <p>Shaping the universal, targeting and specialist support over the last 3 years has been a key priority ensuring the availability and consistency of support across the region. A calendar of training, workshops and events is provided for adopters so they are aware of the range of support available and this is reviewed annually and mapped to ensure a consistent delivery across the region. This year support has had to be made virtual where possible such as stay and play. <b>Appendix 1</b> shows the OAWY adoption support</p>

	core offer, please note some of the training/ events are not running due to Covid-19.
<b>4.13</b>	<p><u>Priority 5 - Develop a Centre of Excellence for Adoption Support</u></p> <p>The Centre of Excellence pilot project successfully developed a concept for a multidisciplinary model, a genuine partnership between social care, education and health, situated within One Adoption West Yorkshire. An initial three year period of the model is being jointly funded by local authorities and health commissioners. OAWY will work in partnership with the local authorities, health and education providers to deliver and further develop a joined-up, holistic service to adoptive families across the region. Implementing this new approach will be a key priority over the next 3 years.</p>
<b>4.14</b>	<p><u>Priority 6 - Create new partnerships with organisations that will help us achieve our outcomes</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 partnerships were formed with Cornerstone (Peer mentoring and virtual reality), Grandparents Plus (Special Guardianship), Adoption UK (to develop the community support to adopters) and Arc (regarding their life story app). Partnership work continued in 2019/20 with 4 Voluntary Adoption Agencies with the development of the contract for 30 placements. OAWY Head of Service, Sarah Johal became being part of the West Yorkshire Family Justice Board. My Foster Family received a grant to complete outreach work to increase the number BME adopters recruitment.</p> <p>OAWY work with the Sea Glass initiative who receive grant funding to provide support to our young people through song writing, poetry, drama and a new choir.</p>
<b>4.15</b>	<p><u>Priority 7 - Establish &amp; promote a peer mentoring scheme</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 OAWY, working closely with Adopter Voice, recruited and trained 24 peer mentors. These mentors were then linked to 26 families. In 2019/20 the Peer Mentor scheme was commissioned with Adoption UK taking this forward. To date the total number of families who have accessed Peer Mentoring in the region are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 132 families supported with 1-1 mentoring;</li> <li>• 40 families supported via WhatsApp group support.</li> </ul> <p>The development of the peer mentoring more recently with the use of the ASF Covid-19 funds to expand this to provide support for children experiencing transitions has been beneficial to families across the region.</p>

4.16	<p><u>Priority 8 - Continue to work with Adopter Voice, AT-ID &amp; birth families</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 a pan - regional independent support service was commissioned in conjunction with One Adoption North and Humber and the South Yorkshire local authorities. This included provision for the continuation of the Adopter Voice, AT-ID and birth families. Quarterly meetings we're held in 2019/20 with Family Action to monitor the success of the SLA. It has been planned to capture the voice of birth fathers and siblings utilising the Futures team, PAC UK and participation workers in the LAs but this has been placed on hold due to Covid-19.</p>
5.0	<p><b>Proposed 2021/22 – 2023/24 OAWY 3 Year Plan</b></p>
5.1	<p><b>Appendix 2</b> shows the next proposed 3 Year Plan. Once the plan is agreed the planned tasks will be added to the OAWY strategic SIP with a lead(s) assigned. The strategic SIP is presented quarterly at OAWY SLT to ensure actions are monitored and supported.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
6.1	<p>The management board are requested to note the contents of this report and approve the 2021/22-2023/24 OAWY Plan.</p>



Appendix 1 – OAWY Adoption Support Core Offer







# One Adoption West Yorkshire's plan 2021 – 2024

## What we'll do...

## How we'll do it...

### Our vision

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

### Our mission

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

### 4 outcomes

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

### 3 obsessions

- 1 Increase the diversity of adopters recruited.
- 2 Children move in with their adoptive family without delay.
- 3 Provide high quality and timely support.

### 7 priorities:

- 1 Recruit and assess a diverse range of adopters to meet the needs of the children.
- 2 Work with local authorities and partners to improve the early identification of children needing adoption and the use of Early Permanence and to promote children remaining living within or close to West Yorkshire.
- 3 Work collaboratively with partners to improve the flexibility, variety and quality of contact arrangements.
- 4 Develop and deliver the Black Lives Matter action plan.
- 5 Implement the multi-disciplinary model of adoption support to help parents support their children and build strong relationships.
- 6 Improve the timeliness, accessibility and flexibility of adoption support provision across in the region.
- 7 Collaborate with local authorities to improve the help and support for teenagers and young adults moving towards independence.



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

Increased diversity of adopters approved and matched.

High level of family stability.

Improved outcomes from evidenced based evaluations.

Reduced timescale in which children move in with their adoptive family.

Positive service user feedback.

An increase in the frequency and type of contact between families.

### Three behaviours which underpin everything:

1. Listening and responding to the voice of the child
2. Using restorative practice: Doing with, not for, or to.
3. Using outcomes based accountability: Is anyone better off?



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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: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## Subject: Half yearly Report for One Adoption West Yorkshire

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:		

### Main issues

The West Yorkshire Joint Committee recognise the importance of adoption and want to be updated about the management and outcomes of the service. The report provides an overview of adoption service activity from April 2020 to September 2020. The report is attached at Appendix A.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Joint Committee receives the half yearly report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), detailed in Appendix A of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, pursuant to the Care Standards Act 2000. The report is to enable to committee to monitor the management and outcomes of the service so that they may be satisfied that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or services users.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report asks the West Yorkshire Joint Committee to consider the half yearly report of the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), as detailed in Appendix A of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards 2014. This is to enable the Joint Committee to monitor the management and outcomes of the service so that they may be satisfied that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or services users; and satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The background issues in relation to the half yearly report are addressed in detail in the report itself at Appendix A.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The main issues are contained within the report itself at Appendix A.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 One Adoption West Yorkshire has good mechanisms to consult with and engage adopters and young people in order to develop and deliver service and the annual report contains a report regarding the voice and influence of those using the services.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 There is an equality impact assessment reviewed in 2019. This is in the process of being reviewed in the light of Black Lives Matter agenda.

### **4.3 Resources and value for money**

- 4.3.1 One Adoption West Yorkshire is resourced through a joint pooled budget and underpinned by a partnership agreement. This is discussed more fully in the main body of the half yearly report at appendix A.

### **4.4 Legal Implications and Access to Information**

- 4.4.1 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards 2011 for adoption that the Executive side of the council receives a written report, and all reports are submitted to the West Yorkshire Joint Committee for the regional adoption agency, as a more appropriate forum for this to be received, given this is a regional service.

### **4.5 Risk Management**

- 4.5.1 Not applicable.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report seeks that Joint Committee review the half yearly report, as outlined in Appendix A, and continue to support the work of OAWY to ensure our children receive the best possible support.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.2 It is recommended that the West Yorkshire Joint Committee receive the half yearly report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), detailed in Appendix A of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, pursuant to the Care Standards Act 2000. This is to enable the Committee to monitor the management and outcomes of the service so that they may be satisfied that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or services users; and satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> 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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## Half yearly Adoption Agency report

**Date: 11th November 2020**

### **1. Purpose of this report**

1.1 This report sets out the work and developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire between April 2020 and September 2020.

### **2. Main issues**

#### **Use of Resources**

#### **2.1 Staffing & HR**

2.2 During the last 6 months the staff group have continued to work incredibly hard despite a great deal of pressure across the whole service given the pandemic. There have been a number of vacancies and recruitment to vacant posts has been underway with interviews planned and dates for new starters agreed. There are also 6 members of staff on maternity leave and a small number of staff on long term sick leave with serious health problems.

2.3 Morale within the teams fluctuates and the managers have been working hard to support staff. Children returning to school in September was a relief for many staff but many children have also been sent home for self-isolation due to concern about Covid 19 which created a further pressure for staff. The managers are feeling under pressure with staffing issues and demand high across the services with many of them acting down to carry out casework in order to progress matches.

#### **2.4 Accommodation**

2.5 Staff are continuing working from home with one member of staff in each area collecting the post and some managers going in for the induction of new staff. The managers have been meeting up with staff for 1-2-1's and teams were starting to meet up and look at rota's for resuming work in the offices across the region, until the recent announcement from the Prime Minister.

2.6 However, an added difficulty for staff is that there is currently no accommodation for staff in Kirklees or Calderdale areas due to refurbishment and asset managers in

the LA are trying to identify interim accommodation, pending a more permanent relocation. The completion of the letterbox work and access to files work has been challenging without an office base in these areas leading to a full service not being able to be provided. The letterbox post has been re-directed from Huddersfield office to Leeds creating some delays and staff needing to travel to Leeds to process this work.

## **2.7 Budget**

2.10 At the end of Period 6 there are pressures of £100k on the budget due to a reduction in the income from the adoption support fund given the pandemic for staffing costs. In addition, the pay award was higher than budgeted for adding to the pressure and income from interagency placements has not been realised. An action plan is in place in order to address the pressure, whilst also ensuring a safe and responsive service and the forecast is to achieve a balanced budget.

## **2.11 Duty System**

2.12 Since the start of this year, the duty and advice service has been run remotely and as such we have been able to provide the same level of duty service as we were pre-COVID/ lockdown. The duty managers have operated a collective check-in call at the start of each day with the duty workers, in order to prioritise work for the day and agree how breaks will be managed across the duty team. This has worked well and made up for the fact workers aren't based with each other in an office environment. Some workers have shared that they prefer being able to sit with colleagues when on duty – however others feel a better service has been offered, without the distractions of the office environment.

2.13 At the beginning of August, we implemented a choice system when a member of the public calls the duty and advice line. They can choose option 1 if they are interested in becoming an adopter; option 2 if they have a letterbox or contact query; and option 3 for any other type of call. This has reduced the number of calls to option 3 (which is essentially the 'old' main duty and advice line) and means that callers are able to immediately speak with someone who can better respond to the nature of their call. It also means that we can better understand the amount and type of calls into the service – this will be reported on more fully at year end.

2.14 The total number of calls to the duty and advice line for the first half of the year is 2053. This averages at 79 calls per week. During lockdown when schools were mostly closed we experienced a lower number of calls to the line, but this has since picked up again. There has been a significant increase in callers interested in becoming adopters.

## **2.15 Partnership working**

2.16 *Operational leads group*



2.17 Over the last 6 months this group has met twice looking at interface issues and particularly focussing on the impact of coronavirus upon children's care planning and moving onto adoption. Discussions have also taken place around aligning adoption payments and joint audit work has also been discussed and agreed.

2.18 *Centre of Excellence Project*

2.19 Discussions have progressed with Leeds Community Health trust following a delay due to the pandemic and the final model has been agreed with LCHT for the health posts to work with the existing staff in the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in the table below.

Due to increasing cost the model is reduced overall by the assistant psychologist position which will reduce the ability of the team to evaluate fully the impact of the model. We are looking at other funding streams to evaluate the model but this is not guaranteed and will be a limiting factor in fully evaluating the outcome of the project.

Clinical Psychologist / Psychology Lead ( 0.6FTE)
Psychologist (1FTE)
Occupational Therapist – (2 x 0.6 FTE)
Speech and Language Therapist (0.6)

2.20 Due to the slippage of the start of the contract with LCHT and the delayed implementation of the model there is funding gap between April 23- December 23 and this has been flagged and raised with the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the local authorities.

2.21 A update report is provided at Appendix 1 regarding the progress of the work of the MDT.

2.22 *Meetings with medical advisors*

2.23 The agency continues to meet with Medical Advisors across the region where there is a need to discuss practice issues. A medical advisor protocol has been agreed and there has been a series of peer support and auditing across the region to look at the quality of reports and this is helpful to improve the information provided for adoptive families. There have been challenges as a result of the impact of Covid-19 and the medical advisors have worked hard to ensure that they provide medical information for children in a timely way in order for their adoption plans to progress. Medical advisors have also continued to support adoption panels and have met the demand of the increased frequency in recent months.

2.24 *Virtual school heads*

2.25 The work across the region from our education worker alongside the five virtual school heads (VSH) continues to grow. The helpline is well used and accessed by

adoptive parents, schools and other professionals offering advice and support as needed and developing the services understanding of how best to support our families and to develop online training and tools as needed. We continue to work to increase the awareness of attachment and trauma in West Yorkshire schools by delivered training to school staff and by providing workshops to adopters in partnership with the service delivery teams. Calderdale Virtual School has fully embraced the Secure Base Model and it is now embedded within their Personal Education Plans. Grandparents plus continue to attend allowing further opportunities to share information and knowledge across the region regarding support for special guardians. The meetings have recently focussed on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and shared information which can be distributed across the five local authorities in order to support schools in their understanding of its implications for learners.

#### *2.26 Special Guardianship (SG)*

2.27 The SG Support Plan is being tested by the kinship teams in the 5 LAs with a review planned for 12.11.20. Engagement with managers of the children's teams is ongoing to ensure use of the plan is understood by all the services that may engage with prospective special guardians.

2.28 The Grandparents Plus project is progressing well with further support provided from the ASF Covid-19 funds. Grandparents Plus are being encouraged to resource a moderated regional Facebook group that allows us to connect with a large number of special guardians in the region and hear their views. This group currently has 120 members. OAWY is also exploring with PAC UK/ Family Action an advocacy group for young people on SGOs to develop the voice and influence of young people in these arrangements across the region.

2.29 Training in Non-Violent Resistance for the kinship teams across the 5 LA's has been commissioned. 23 support workers and managers will receive four days training in January with ongoing workshops to support embedding the learning.

2.30 Ways to increase the use of the Adoption Support Fund, to provide much needed therapeutic support to special guardian families, are being looked into. A therapeutic parenting programme designed for special guardians has been commissioned and a group application to the fund on behalf of the region will be made. This work is currently being funded from income received for the national recruitment work up to the end of March 2021 and a discussion has been undertaken with the management board who wish to continue progressing this work moving forward.

### **3.0 Performance Management**

3.1 This is addressed in more detail in Appendix 2 and 3.

### **3.2 Practice, quality of provision and management oversight**

3.3 *Recruitment and Assessment*

- 3.4 The recruitment and assessment teams are under a great deal of pressure due to the number of people entering the assessment process. We are seeing increases in numbers at all stages of the process, which is positive, but also raises concerns regarding capacity. Despite the ongoing challenges relating to staff sickness and vacancies, 56 households have already been approved during 2020/21 and a further 35 approvals are booked into adoption panel before Christmas.
- 3.5 The online preparation training is now complemented with additional online training relating to Building Relationships (4th day), Early Permanence and Adopting Siblings. Additional training for Experienced Parents will be in place by November and following this training for Foster Carers Adopting and Adopter's Support Networks will be developed.
- 3.6 Having reviewed the prospective adopters in the assessment process and the demographic of the children with an adoption plan across the region and the capacity within the current staff cohort, we have just made the decision to temporarily decline enquiries from households seeking to adopt a child under two years; unless they are able to meet the needs of a child with a disability or a child with Black African/Caribbean heritage. This decision will be reviewed in January 2021 when it is hoped some of the assessments will have been progressed and there will be more capacity to bring more adopters into the process for very young children.
- 3.7 *Adoption Panel*
- 3.8 Adoption panel capacity has been a challenge and we continue to regularly review this. Having made use of the amended regulations to allow for decisions outside of panel, this is no longer available, which has further increased pressure on panel capacity. We have moved from 7 to 8 panels per month to increase capacity and are trialling holding additional approval specific panels in November and December to see if this impacts positively on capacity.
- 3.9 Feedback from social workers attending panel has been positive with one stating that they had "*Good communication about virtual panel arrangements*" "*the panel chair was friendly and clear*".

The panels have a quality assurance function and provide feedback regarding the quality of approvals considered. During Q1 and Q2 of 2020/21 96% of these were considered good or outstanding which is a positive picture.

With regards to matching reports presented at panel 76.19% were considered good or excellent and 23.81 % required improvement. Individual feedback is provided to each LA regarding reports relating to children from their LA. The themes regarding improving these relate to missing information, typo's and language needing to be more clear and less negative.

### 3.10 *Advertising and Marketing*

3.11 Progress is being made on the redesign of the website, with final agreement on the draft designs expected to be made shortly with a view to the website being live by the end of October. The website will incorporate photographs which have been commissioned by One Adoption to help our website and marketing materials stand out from other agencies and have more of a local feel.

3.12 One Adoption West Yorkshire received funding in April 2020 of £1million from the Department of Education, held on behalf of Regional Adoption Agency leaders, to be used for national recruitment work. One adoption is actively supporting the national adopter recruitment campaign #YouCanAdopt that has been developed by the national recruitment steering group, with focussed messaging to meet our specific needs around recruiting black adopters.

### 3.13 *Family Finding*

3.14 With 98 children being placed in the first half of the year the staff have worked creatively to undertake family finding and achieve the matches for children.

3.15 Transitions remain challenging with individual risk assessments being carried out to do these safely. The staff have been very creative in trying to progress these and very often the anxiety about these are about foster carers circumstances. As the winter approaches there will be less options for using gardens and outdoor spaces and we are engaging with fostering service managers across the regions to ensure that foster carers and adopters are supported and that the creativity can be harnessed in thinking through individual situations. The University of East Anglia Moving to Adoption model has been utilised where possible to support transitions and has particularly supported the getting to know you phased of introductions.

3.16 Profiling events have been delivered virtually with two events being held in Q1 and Q2 of 2020/21, the initial event engaged adopters roved by OAWY and the second also included adopters from the Voluntary Adoption Alliance.

3.17 *The first event saw seven children being profiled (two children part of a sibling group), four children received expressions of interest and two links were positively explored, one child has subsequently been matched with adopters. 12 children (six children part of a sibling group) were profiled at the second event, with 10 children (six children part of a sibling group) received expressions of interest from adopters. Two links (including a sibling group) are progressing to panel. One comment from an adopter stated:*

- *“The information provided was informative and interesting and was lovely to hear each SW give a personal account of the children, it gave much more insight than a standard profile”*

- 3.18 OAWY has commissioned the Voluntary Adoption Alliance within the region to provide placements, this contract commenced at the end of May with 25 placements being provided in the first year, at the end of September, 19 placements have been utilised in the first half of the year. A project lead has been appointed by the Voluntary Adoption Alliance and working together arrangements have been established to enhance the knowledge of the needs of children requiring external placements through the contract.
- 3.19 *Adoption Support*
- 3.20 The teams adapted very quickly to the pandemic and their first concern was the well being of families they support and ensured that families were aware quickly about support available. The teams have continued to work with families via virtual means and also undertake risk-assessed home visits where it is considered to be necessary from a well-being point of view, in addition to those where there is a risk of breakdown or potential safeguarding concerns. As part of the virtual contact with families we have been able to continue to complete Adoption Support Assessments as well as keeping in touch calls. As we anticipated we have seen an increased number of calls to the duty and advice line since the schools re-opened in September. Comments from adopters about the way the teams have adapted has been positive:
- *The fact that this support was offered so quickly was fantastic;*
  - *It felt very reassuring to know we weren't on our own & if we needed additional support, we knew we could ask & we knew who to ask.*
- 3.21 The Adoption Support Fund COVID packages have proved popular with families, in particular workshops in relation to Child to Parent Violence, support to adopted teens, Adoption UK webinars and support groups and the offer of EMDR sessions to parents. We still have a number of free memberships to Adoption UK and National Association of Therapeutic Parenting available as well as some sessions with Relate and now the deadline for use of these specific-funded packages has been extended to the end of December we are hopeful they will all be utilised. It is anticipated that through these additional packages we will have been able to provide support to over 2,500 families.
- 3.22 Applications to the Adoption Support Fund have continued to be made by workers. Some of the therapy provided to children, young people and families has been able to be delivered by providers via virtual means and where this hasn't been an appropriate method, therapy has paused by agreement and the therapist has had a minimum contact to keep in touch and maintain relationships. Some providers have been able latterly to explore with families safe means for therapy to be delivered face to face again.
- 3.23 The Foundations for Attachment programme has been adapted as a virtual model and had been planned to be delivered this Autumn – the bonus of offering an online version means that locations is no longer a barrier to access – however early indications are that families aren't wanting to take up online training programmes at present; alternative means of delivery are being considered. Online versions of

NVR and the AdOpt programme are also being planned at present. A small scale resumption of Stay and Play support groups, focussing on the newly formed families (those matched since March) has commenced via meeting up in small groups outdoors. The single adopters group has resumed, with a mixture of outdoors meet-ups and online support. A virtual support group is being considered for trialling in November and then to be rolled out across the region if successful.

3.24 Access to records work virtually ceased at the start of the lockdown and the archivist has been working with the information governance teams across the areas to review this and make arrangements with offices being closed and practical arrangements are now in place. A revised protocol has been agreed and shared with the local authorities.

3.25 The Letterbox service has been impacted and there is a delay in processing this work due to COVID-19 with issues in accessing the post, accommodation availability and staffing issues. Much of this has been moved to electronic exchanges where possible. There are 75 exchanges waiting to be progressed and the staff are working through these as quickly as possible.

### 3.26 *Audits*

3.27 29 audits were completed across the service during Q1 and Q2 by Service & Team Managers. The result of each audit is recorded as either excellent, good, satisfactory or requires improvement. Any actions identified from the audit are feedback to the worker to support improvement. Of the audits:

- 16 (55.17%) were good;
- 11 (37.93%) were satisfactory;
- 2 (6.9%) required improvement.

3.28 An independent auditor has been appointed to undertake specific audit work across the recruitment and assessment teams to ensure that the quality of the casework, decision making and management oversight is safe and appropriate. The work carried out to date has provided some reassurance about this and this work is ongoing. A report will be provided to management board in due course.

## **4.0 Continuous Professional Development and Service Development**

### 4.1 *Feedback*

4.4 Annual adopter survey - in the last quarter the annual adopter survey has returned. In summary:

- 59.77% of respondents are satisfied with the services that have been provided by One Adoption West Yorkshire, this is up 9.77% from 2019. 26.44% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 13.8% are dissatisfied.
- 63% of respondents were satisfied with the content of the adopter's newsletter, 36.36% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 1.14% dissatisfied.

- 50% of respondents were satisfied with the support provided by OAWY during COVID-19, 34.78% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 15.22% dissatisfied.

Comments from adopters state:

- *You do what you say you are going to do and you're good at keeping in touch*
- *Social Workers appear to relate to our problems and are approachable and supportive*
- *If there are more support workers support could be offered quicker and timely to help children and stressed parents*

4.5 Annual staff survey – in summary the results of 8 of the 12 questions we ask staff each year have improved. The questions with the most significant levels of improvement are:

- I feel supported by my manager, up 13.34% to 94.37%;
- I feel I have access to high quality training and development, up 11.97% to 61.12%;
- I enjoy working for One Adoption West Yorkshire, up 11.78% to 85.92%;
- I am proud to be part of One Adoption West Yorkshire, up 11.54% to 86.11%.

4.6 The results of 4 of the 12 questions we ask staff each year show a less favourable result. However, only 1 question's result had a significant drop:

- I feel I can put children at the heart of what I do, down 6.32% to 83.33%

4.7 When asked 'what do we do well?' the top theme from responses was – Supportive environment; caring, friendly, flexible.

4.8 When asked 'what could we improve on?' the top theme from responses was – more specific training.

4.9 The report card regarding the voice and influence of adopters and children is attached at Appendix 4.

#### 4.10 *Staff Skills Development*

4.11 Staff development during the first 6 months of the year has been challenging. The focus with staff has been on self care and emotional well being for themselves and the families they are working with. A staff event was held in June and featured guest speaker Lisa Cherry. The focus of the day was relationships, trauma and adversarial growth. The next event is scheduled for November and the focus will be Black Lives Matter agenda and hearing from those with lived experience and how we can improve our practice as well as support staff regarding these issues.

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**One Adoption West Yorkshire – Multidisciplinary Team  
Team Update Report  
Period: 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30 September 2020**

**Purpose of this report**

This report sets out the work and developments within OAWY Multidisciplinary team between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 30 September 2020.

**1. Summary**

As with all sectors and services, the global pandemic had an impact on the team's ability to perform against set targets, but the team responded quickly to the challenge and shifted focus from face to face work to developing and delivering on-line support and training.

The pandemic also delayed the negotiations between OAWY and Leeds Community Healthcare as LCHT paused the development of all new external business between March and July. The discussions were picked up in July and following positive progress, the current target for the new health staff to be in positions and for the service start is now 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

**2. Staffing**

During this period the following staff have worked for the team:

- 1 WTE Operational Manager
- 1 WTE Social Care Team Manager
- 1 WTE Education Consultant
- 2 WTE Business Support Officer (1 WTE new starter July 2020)
- 0.55 WTE Clinical Psychologist
- 0.2 WTE Therapeutic Social Worker

**3. Setting up the Team**

The discussions with Leeds Community Healthcare were stopped in March 2020 due to Covid -19 and resurrected in late July 2020. The agreement of the team set up and the costs has now been reached and the staff should be in place for January 2021.

The recruitment of Early Years Practitioner and Therapeutic Social Worker was commenced and the interview of the candidates took place in early October 2020.

The team has also worked on setting up the objectives and key performance indicators for the service, which will be finalised as part of the contract negotiations with Leeds Community Healthcare Trust.

**4. Output**

Following the Covid -19 pandemic and the national lock-down the team demonstrated great agility and quickly converted all work from face to face contact to on-line provision. Multi-disciplinary consultations, both formal and informal, which are offered to staff at OAWY, local authority and equation settings and families, continued without disruption using video conferencing platforms, which in some cases proved to work even better than face to face sessions as people did not need

to travel to take part. The consultations have been used by social workers in particularly during the early stages of family finding and matching process to provide additional insight into the needs of the children. As part of the adoption support the consultations have been able to review the situation from a systemic point of view and propose support not only for the child, but for the whole family. In some cases the MDT has reviewed proposals for continuing therapy or cases where specialist assessment has been proposed. All people who participate the formal consultations are invited to participate in a feedback survey and the feedback from workers, parents and carers who have received support during this time, has continued to be very positive, the average score of the feedback being 4.1 out of 5.

The team continued to provide assessment support and training to OAWY social work teams, both team and individual training sessions have continued during this period. The team developed the HOME assessment so that it could be conducted using video links without compromising the quality of the assessment. The HOME is a core instrument in the assessment framework and focuses on how a child's day to day experiences are relevant to different aspects of their developmental needs. The instrument traditionally uses interview and observation to explore the key themes during a one hour home visit to the family. Throughout the interview and visit the interaction between the child and main care-giver is carefully observed. Using videophones and tablets the team worked with OAWY social workers and carers to create "virtual home visits", which meant that the vital assessments were not delayed during the pandemic. Likewise the MDT was able to continue the staff training programme on assessment tools that was started before the lockdown.

The team has also continued to deliver assessment framework training for social work teams, again utilising on-line platforms. Outcome measure training is currently being updated and converted into electronic self-learning form and the modules to guide how to use goal based outcomes and other outcome measures are currently in the testing phase.

In addition the team have been working closely with the OAWY service delivery teams to trial a new sibling assessment model developed by Coram BAAF.

The education specialist created and developed an on-line video to help with lock-down and home schooling. In addition on-line videos were created and published on One Adoption YouTube Channel to provide information about FASD aimed at schools and returning to school for parents. In August a webinar for 50 parents with school age children provided guidance on returning to school. The feedback from the parents was very positive; the participants appreciated the content of the session and the fact that it was hosted on-line, which made it easier for a larger number of parents to participate.

Since the easing of lockdown measures, the team has re-engaged in developing face to face support, which were paused at the beginning of the pandemic, and are now ready to commence with group and individual assessments and support work in line with guidance and restrictions. For example a multi-agency working model with Leeds Therapeutic Social Work Team was developed to provide support for children who are moving from fostering to adoption. Outdoor meetings were set up for a specialist Occupational Therapist led support group to build underdeveloped sensorisystems (BUSS) engages both professionals and children's carers / parents to assess what each individual child's needs are and provide practical home exercises for the carers / parents. Not only do these exercises help to build children's sensori systems, but also help to build and strengthen the attachment between child and the carer/ parent.

The MDT clinical psychologist and the education specialist were attending the groups to explore how the multidisciplinary element could be utilised as part of these groups. The clinical psychologist was, for example, able to identify where children needed neurodevelopmental assessment and the education specialist was able to plan how to support the children so that their start in school would be as smooth as possible. Planning is now underway to build a BUSS group with added multi-disciplinary aspects to provide support for children and parents as soon as the children are placed with their new families.

The Covid -19 is still having an impact, for example the planned cognitive and other in-depth assessments have been delayed, however, the team has utilised the time to plan how the multidisciplinary model could be delivered in the future utilising both on-line and face to face approaches.

The following activities were recorded during the reporting period.

<b>Apr - Sep 2020</b>	
<b>Formal consultations (number)</b>	<b>45</b>
Children supported in consultations	58
<b>Informal Consultations (number)</b>	<b>38</b>
Sibling Assessment	3
Home Assessment	10
Match Funding	1
Psychology Support	4
Social Care Support	11
Multidisciplinary Support	5
School Training	2
Framework Training (Group)	2
<b>Specialist Assessment Reviews</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total Consultations and SA reviews (number)</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Education Help Line calls (number)</b>	<b>90</b>
Parents	53
School	5
Virtual School	1
SENCO	4
Social Worker	27
<b>Total hours of education HL calls</b>	<b>39.4</b>

## 5. Case Study

*M (4 years old) and A (3 years old) were a girl/ boy sibling pair living in foster care with a plan for adoption. Their OAWY Family Finder Social Worker had raised concerns about the children's sibling relationship and felt that an earlier sibling assessment had not thoroughly explored each child's individual vulnerabilities or needs nor the dynamics of their relationship. The SW felt that for this reason it was not possible to carry out effective transition and placement planning nor prepare prospective adopters sufficiently. When the case was brought to MDT for consultation a number of risk factors and concerns were identified relating to the children's circumstances and their current presentation, which merited further assessment. It was agreed that to inform placement planning the MDT would support the Family Finding social worker and carry out an updated and more thorough assessment of the sibling relationship, including their individual needs, utilizing a new sibling assessment approach developed by*

*Coram BAAF and currently being pilot across the country, including OAWY with involvement from the MDT.*

*Multi-agency consultation and co-working approach was agreed between OAWY MDT, the Family Finding SW, the LA children's Social Worker and the children's foster parents. Using co-working approach the MDT was able to support the social workers to broaden their knowledge of the assessment tools they were less familiar with. The in depth knowledge of child and neuro-development provided by MDT clinical psychologist combined with the knowledge of the impact of early adversity on children, helped the team to develop a deep and holistic understanding of each child and their presentation, their needs and likely outcomes. The multi-disciplinary approach helped to create a plan for a prospective placement and an evidence led plan of the support the children are likely to require in the future.*

*The MDT worked to engage the foster parents' in the process, acknowledging their critical role in having supported the children's development and in the future success of transition to adoption. The MDT and the SWs used the knowledge from most recent research from University of East Anglia to plan for the transition from foster home to adoptive family. The MDT education specialist was also able to offer advice about education planning including transition into settings and potential support to school.*

*This case demonstrates the effectiveness of the multidisciplinary model; the team was able to identify need in the children and provide support early in the adoption process. The approach reached beyond OAWY to the partner agencies promoting systemic, co-ordinated support around the child. The MDT approach incorporated latest evidence-based practice and new ways of working, utilising the knowledge from health, social care and education to provide integrated support. The feedback from the social workers was positive, both reporting that they had found the approach very helpful; the children's social worker was able to develop her skills in carrying out more robust sibling assessments and the family finder felt more confident in the being able to identify the right adopters for the children. Most importantly, the match for the children involved is now being progressed with a good, robust support plan in place.*

## **5. Partnership working**

The team has continued to work in partnership with other adoption multidisciplinary teams in England, in particular with Birmingham Children's Trust and Adoption Counts in Salford and Manchester. In August Birmingham Childrens Trust psychology team and OAWY MDT Occupational Therapist hosted a series of joint workshops focused on supporting children with the return and reintegration to school for adopted parents, which received excellent feedback.

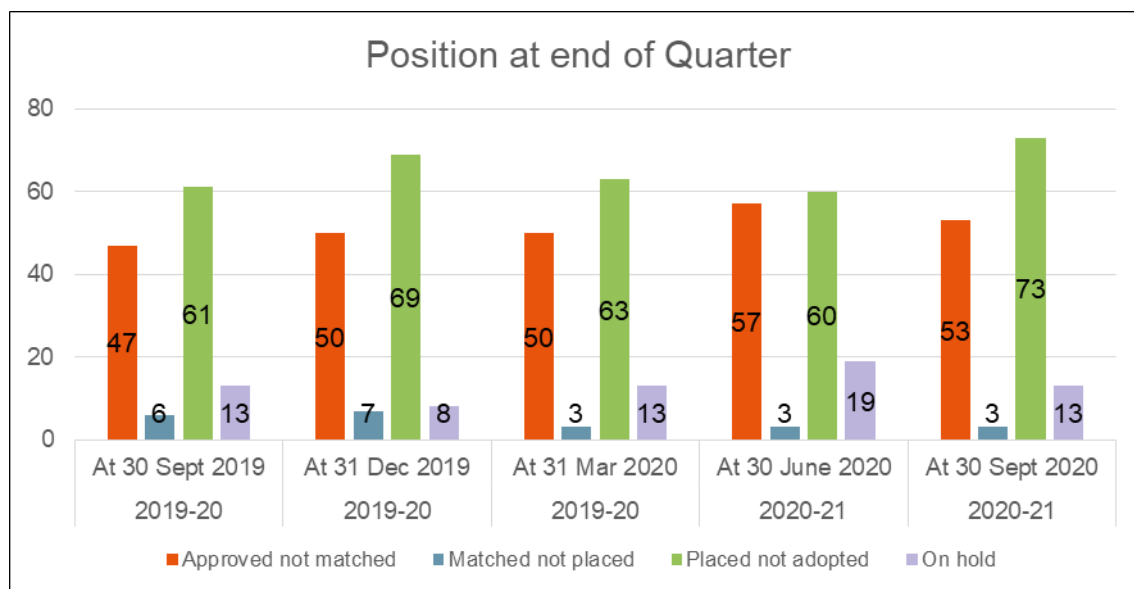
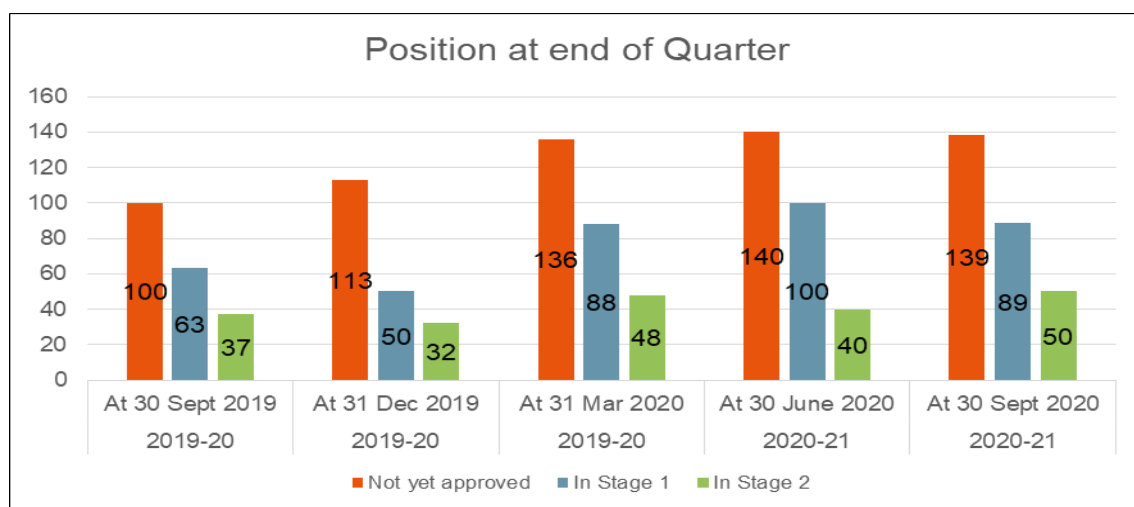
The team has continued to explore future joint care pathways with a number of health providers across the WY region. Positive meetings were held with both Bradford and Kirklees CAMHS and in principle, it may be possible in the future that the OAWY MDT neurodevelopmental assessments could be accepted in both Bradford and Kirklees as part of the diagnostic decision making process, meaning that the child could join the local care pathway. The details of the arrangements needs to be discussed and agreed. The discussions with the other local areas are continuing.

The MDT clinical psychologist is a member of a new West Yorkshire & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership complex childhood trauma task and finish group, whose ambition is to have a regional strategy in relation to complex trauma including workforce training in awareness and basic response and better continuity and engagement between services at every level.



**Highlight Report on performance as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020– last 5 quarters**

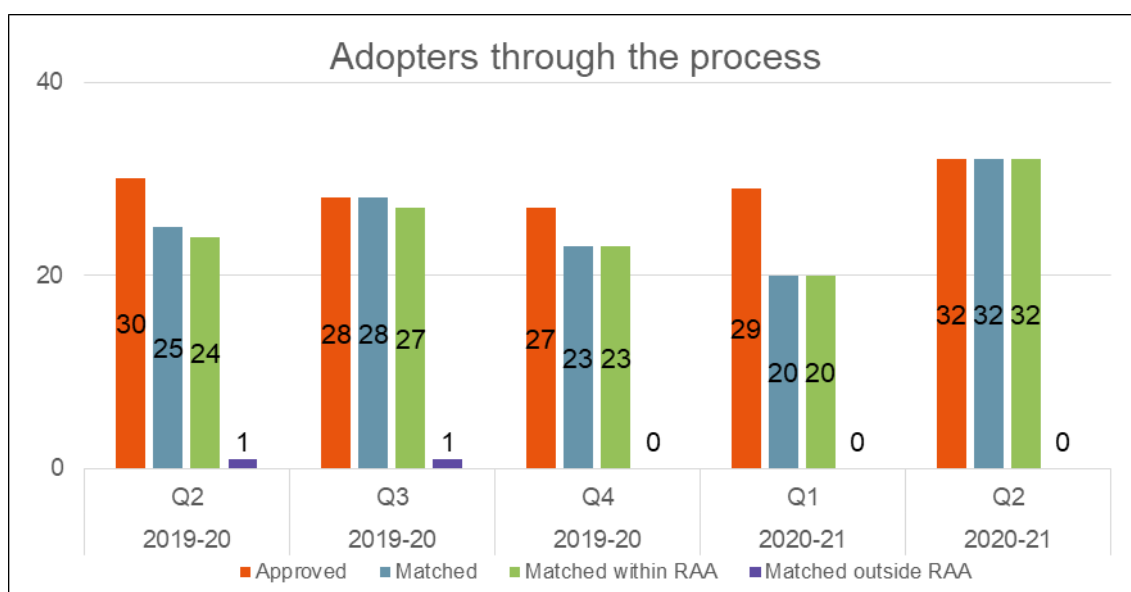
**a) Sufficiency:** Are enough of the right kind of adopters being recruited and approved to meet the needs of the children waiting?



## Adopters

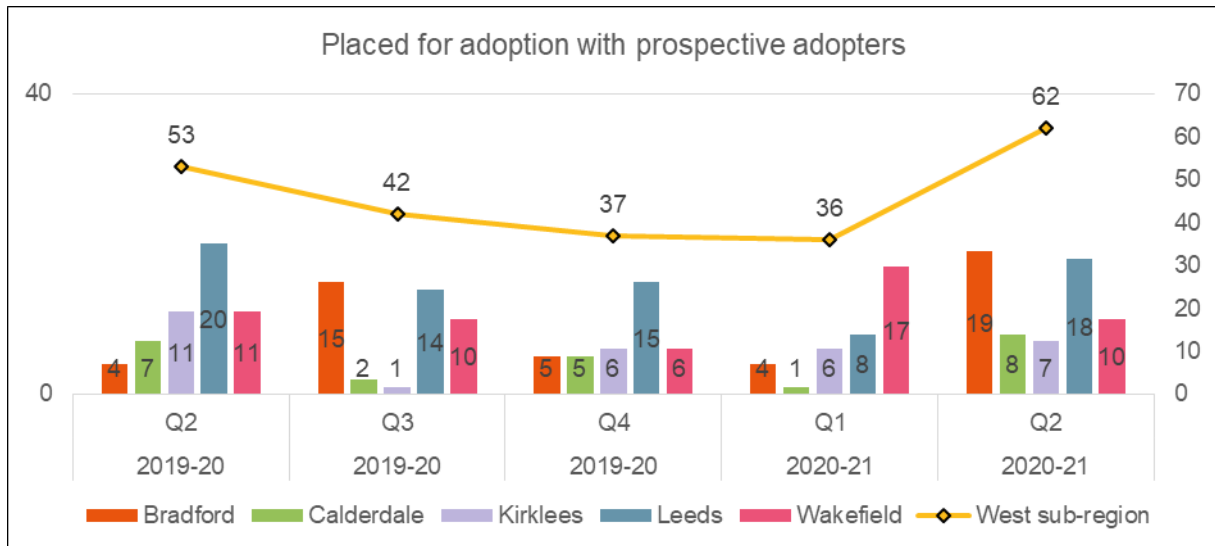
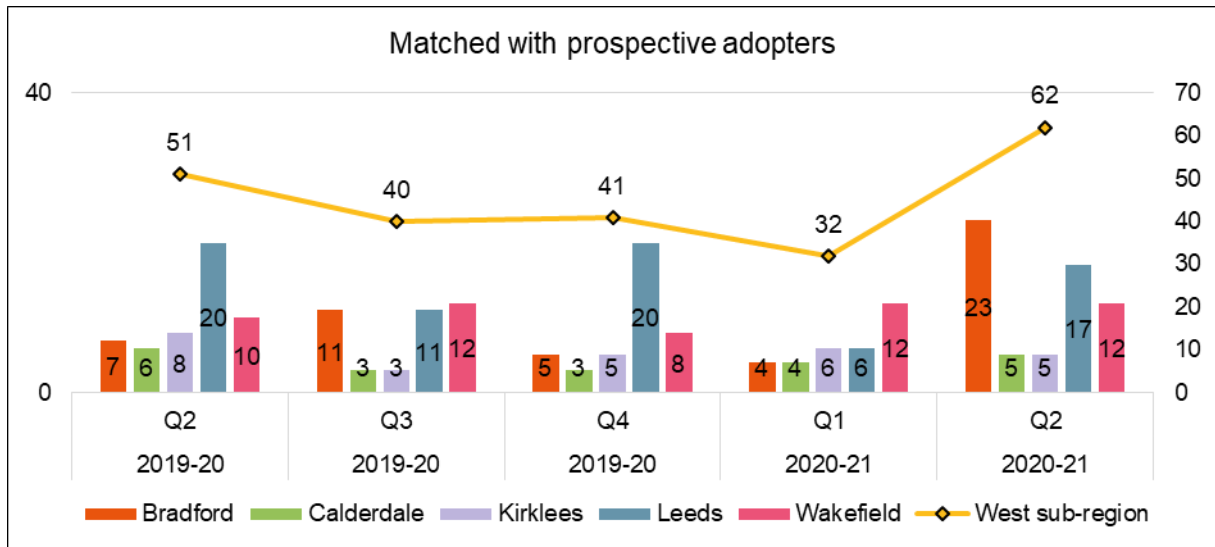
In the first 6 months of 2020/21:

- 87 adoptive families ended Stage 1 in the first 6 months of 2020/21 of which 58 were in Stage 1 for more than 2 months;
- 61 adoptive families were approved of which 15 were in Stage 2 for more than 4 months;
- 52 adoptive families have been matched with children, all of these being with children from the West Yorkshire region.



Within the 61 approved households (112 individuals), 12 individuals (11%) are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. 9 (15%) households were approved for sibling groups and 16 (25%) households were open to an Early Permanence Placement.

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



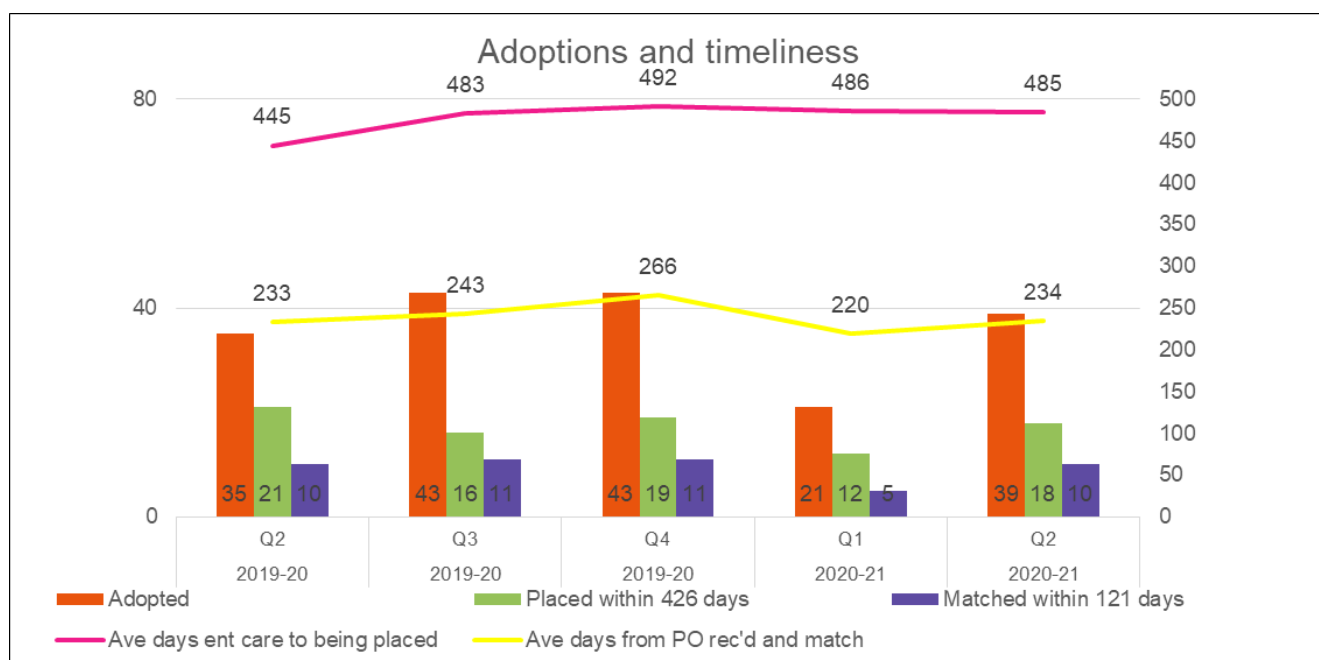
In the first 6 months of 2020/21:

- 94 children were matched;
- Of which 55 (59%) were children who wait longer due to their needs (e.g. over the age of 5 years, sibling groups, BAME & children with disabilities).
- There was a delay due to the pandemic in placing children during the first quarter.

The graph below is with regard to children adopted in the period. The A1 scorecard indicator for the 60 children adopted in the first 6 months of 2020/21 is 485 days which is above national indicator of 426 days.

The A2 scorecard indicator for the same children is 229 days which is still above national indicator of 121 days.

Of the 60 children adopted in the first 6 months of 2020/21, 33 (55%) were classed as children who wait longer, this affects the overall average timeliness.

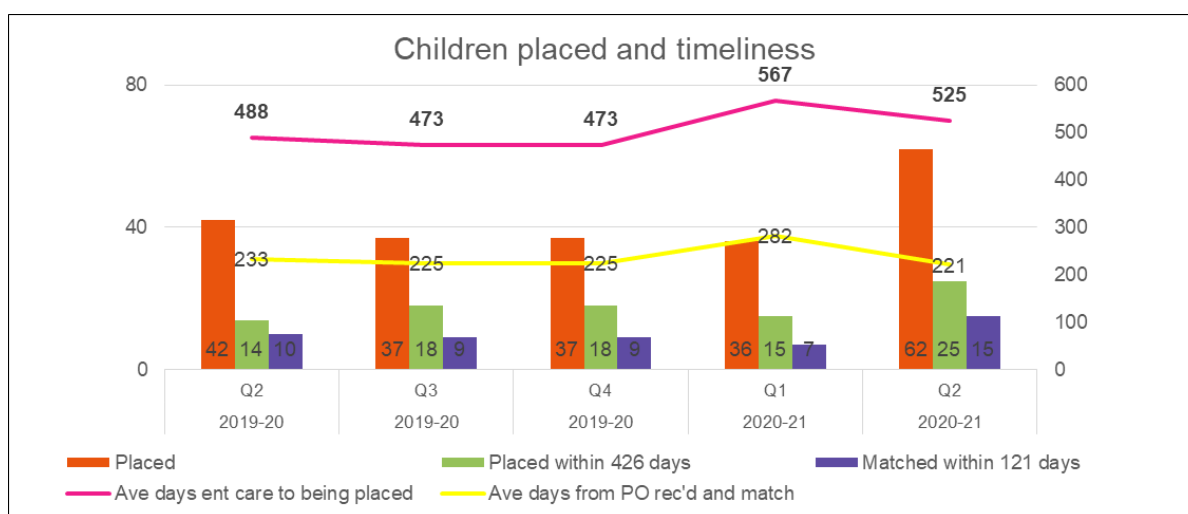




The graph below is with regard to children placed in the period. The average time from entering care to being placed was 540 days for the children placed in the first 6 months of 2020/21.

Of the 98 children placed, 46 children took more than 500 days between entering care and being placed. If we remove these 46 children from the calculation it brings the average down to 346 days.

The average time from obtaining a placement order to being matched was 243 days for the same children.



Case examples of all the children placed (98) in the first 6 months of 2020/21:

59 were children who wait longer (e.g. classed by the DfE as harder to place children):

- 8 were aged 5+ years;
- 43 were part of a sibling group;
- 26 were Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME).

**A2 indicator of the children placed:**

**76 of the 98 children took more than 121 days from Placement Order to match:**

- Of the 76, 49 were children who wait longer.

**At the end of September 2020, 61 children have been waiting for at least 18 months since entering care and are not placed:**

Of these 61 children, 3 entered care between 2015 and 2016 – this is apparent in 1 LA and 1 child has been matched. 13 children entered care in 2017 – this is apparent in all LA's, none of these 13 children have been matched.

44 of the 61 children are children who wait longer (5+years old, sibling group, disability, BAME), of which 26 have more than one of these characteristics, thus 17 of the 61 children are not children who wait longer therefore further exploration to understand the issues of these 17 children is underway.



**One**  
Adoption  
Agency  
WEST YORKSHIRE

# One Adoption West Yorkshire Quarterly performance report

Page 59

2020 – 2021  
July to September

## **Introduction/summary**

This is the second quarterly report for 2020-21, providing an update on One Adoption West Yorkshire.

This report is based in the premise of how much work has been undertaken in the period, how well and what difference has it made. The report is a simple and concise report, with detailed tables in appendices. The report contains a number of tables and charts.

## Children

This section of the report provides headline figures relating to children and young people at various stages of the adoption process within West Yorkshire. Greater detail, including a breakdown by the five local authorities, is contained within the graphs on the following page. The figures in bold are for the current quarter and those in brackets are for the same quarter of the previous year.

### How much did we do?

#### During the quarter

- **324** (285) children left care, **39** (35) were adopted  
*During 2019/20 174 children were adopted, average 44 per quarter*
- **47** (61) children had an ADM decision made  
*During 2019/20 220 children had ADM decision made, average 55 per quarter*
- **49** (61) placement orders were granted  
*During 2019/20 180 placement orders were granted, average 45 per quarter*
- **62** (51) children were matched to an adoptive family – **33** (26) inter agency placements **53%** (51%)  
*During 2019/20 169 children were matched, average 42 per quarter*
- **62** (53) children were placed with an adoptive family  
*During 2019/20 168 children were placed, average 42 per quarter*
- **3** children in new EPP (Decision for EPP)
- **6** (6) children in new EPP (placed in EPP)  
*During 2019/20 16 children were placed in new EPP, average 4 per quarter*
- **21** (9) Children had a change of plan away from adoption  
*During 2019/20 37 children had a change of plan away from adoption, average 9 per quarter*
- **2** (1) Child had an adoption disruption  
*During 2019/20 7 children had an adoption disruption, average 2 per quarter*

### How well did we do it?

#### Statutory Scorecard Data

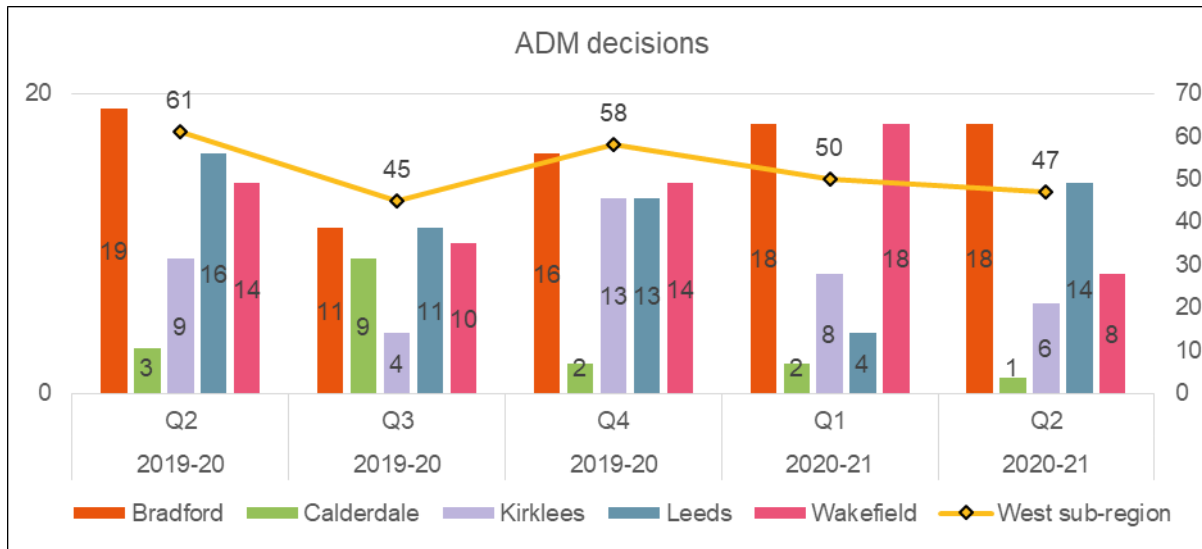
For the **39** (35) children who **were adopted** during quarter 2 2020/21, it took an average of:

- **485** (445) days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (National Indicator is 426 days) (NI to be changed to A10)
- **234** (233) days between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (National indicator is 121 days) (England average is 178)
- **18** (21) were placed within 426 days of entering care, this is **46%** (60%)
- **10** (10) were matched within 121 days, this is **26%** (29%)

For the **62** (53) children who **were placed** during quarter 2 2020/21, it took an average of:

- **525** (506) days between a child entering care and moving in with their adopter family – \*(29 of the 61 children took more than 500 days)\* if these 29 children were taken out of the equation the average number of days would be **371**
- **221** (247) days between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family – (46 of the 61 children took more than 121 days) if these 46 children were taken out of the equation the average number of days would be 57
- **25** (24) were placed within 426 days of entering care, this is **40%** (45%)
- **15** (15) were matched within 121 days, this is **24%** (28%)
- **12%** (13%) of children leaving care were adopted, (England average is 12%)

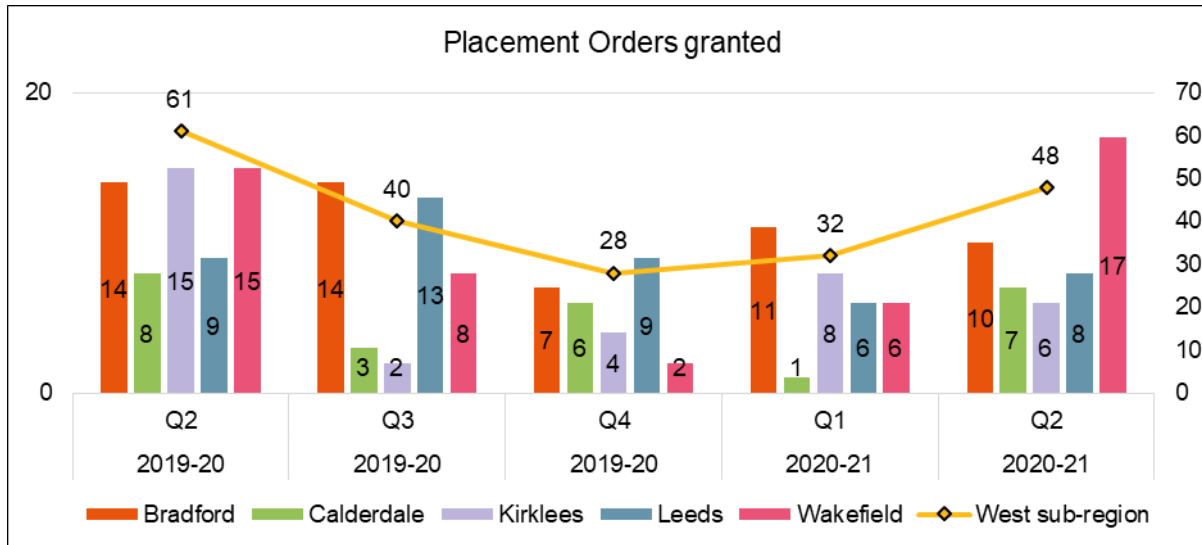
<p><b>How much did we do?</b></p> <p><i>At the end of the quarter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>181</b> (209) children have an ADM decision but not yet matched</li> <li>• <b>191</b> (218) children have an ADM decision but are not yet placed</li> <li>• <b>137</b> (180) children have a placement order but are not yet placed. Of these, <b>61</b> (66) have been waiting for at least 18 months since entering care. <b>82</b> (109) children have been waiting more than 121 days since the placement order was made</li> <li>• <b>11</b> (14) child with an ADM decision has a potential match identified</li> </ul>	<p><b>How well did we do it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been an increase in the number of children leaving care through adoption in Q2, although court hearings for some adoption hearings have been postponed to a later date and it is likely this number will increase as the year progresses.</li> <li>• There has been a slight reduction this quarter in the number of ADM decisions made.</li> <li>• Within the quarter there has been an increase in the number of placement orders granted.</li> <li>• There has been an increase in the number of children match and placed with adoptive families this quarter.</li> <li>• There has been an increase in the number of children whose plan has changed from one of adoption; there is a proactive approach in ensuring that the plan of adoptions continues to be the right plan for individual children and this work continues with local authorities across the region</li> <li>• The number of children placed EPP has remained consistent with the last quarter.</li> <li>• Despite the continued challenges of the Covid-19 restrictions with varying regional restrictions transitions have progressed informed by individual risk assessments</li> </ul>
<p><b>What would we like to do better?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would like to ensure that children are placed in a timely manner and whilst we are able to do this for some children, others take longer</li> <li>• Increase the number of children placed within the Yorkshire and Humber region</li> <li>• Continue to promote the use of early permanence placements where appropriate and to increase the number of early permanence placements</li> <li>• Understand the key factors of disruptions to inform future practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>What difference did we make?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the 39 children adopted in Q2, 20 were children who wait longer due their individual and more complex needs and it is positive that these children have been adopted.</li> <li>• Of the 62 children matched, 35 were children who wait longer</li> <li>• Online profiling events continued during the quarter, with 1 virtual profiling event taking place, with in-house and VAA adopters in attendance, 12 children were profiled (including 2 sibling groups of 2 children) 14 expressions of interest were received for 8 children (including 2 sibling groups of 2 children), 1 link is progressing and 1 link is still being explored.</li> <li>• Continued to utilise early permanence placements</li> </ul>



**Commentary**

This graph shows numbers of children who had an ADM decision over the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year

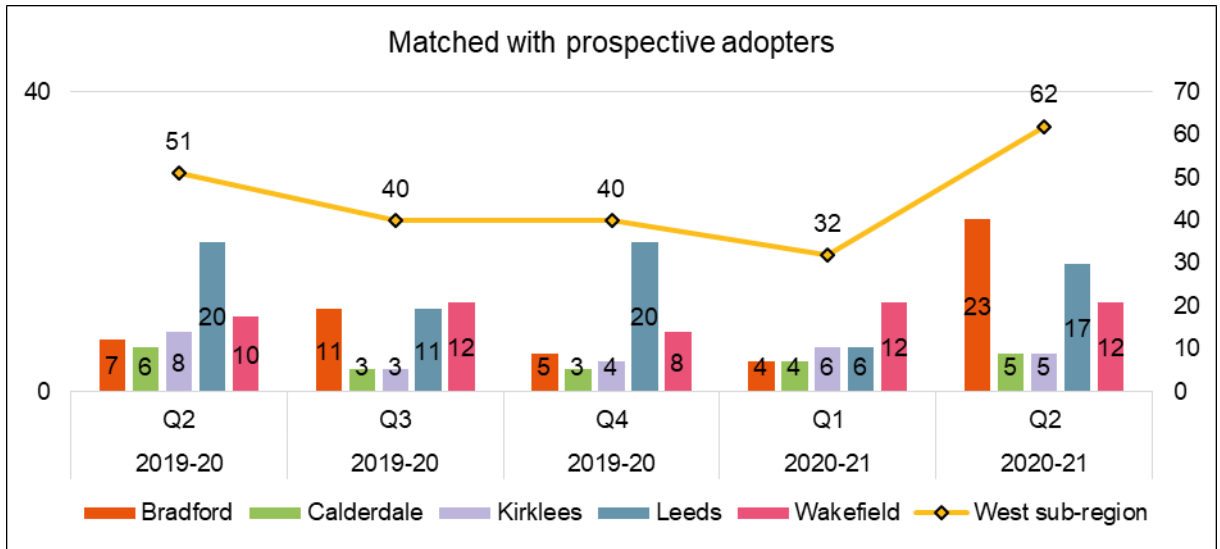
Quarter 2 has seen a slight overall reduction in the number of ADM decisions, with one authority seeing a significant increase on the previous quarter, two seeing a slight reduction and one with a more pronounced reduction on the previous quarter.



**Commentary**

This graph shows numbers of children who had a placement order granted over the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year

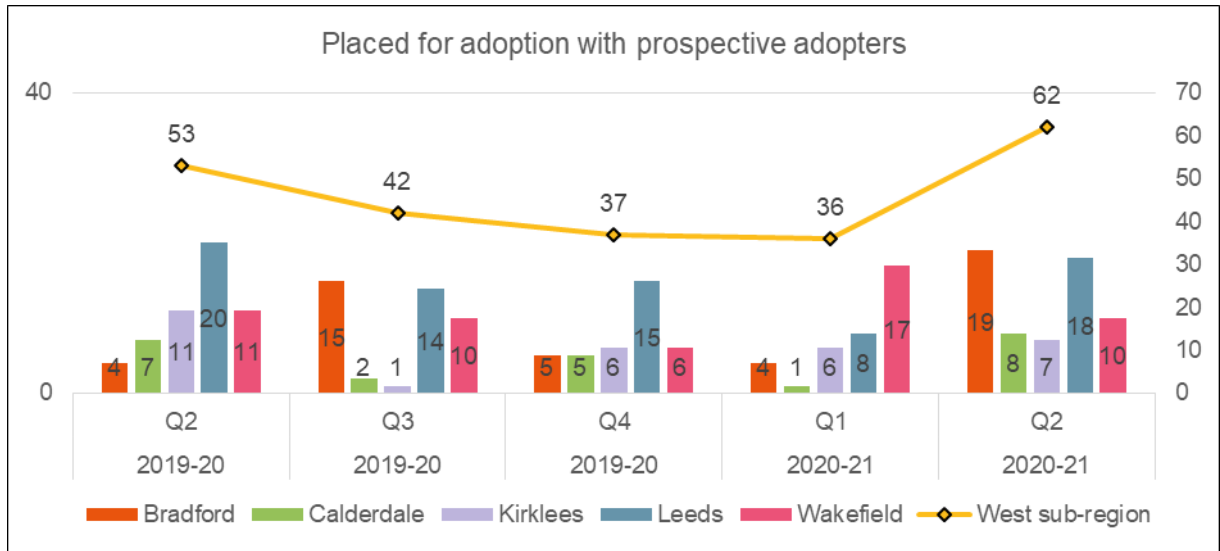
There has been an overall increase in the number of placement orders granted in the region, with 3 authorities seeing an increase and 2 a slight decrease.



**Commentary**

This graph shows numbers of children who were matched over the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year

There has been a marked increase in the number of children matched with prospective adopters in quarter 2, with two areas having a significant increase on the previous quarter. This is likely to be related to the pandemic and introductions being delayed in Q1.



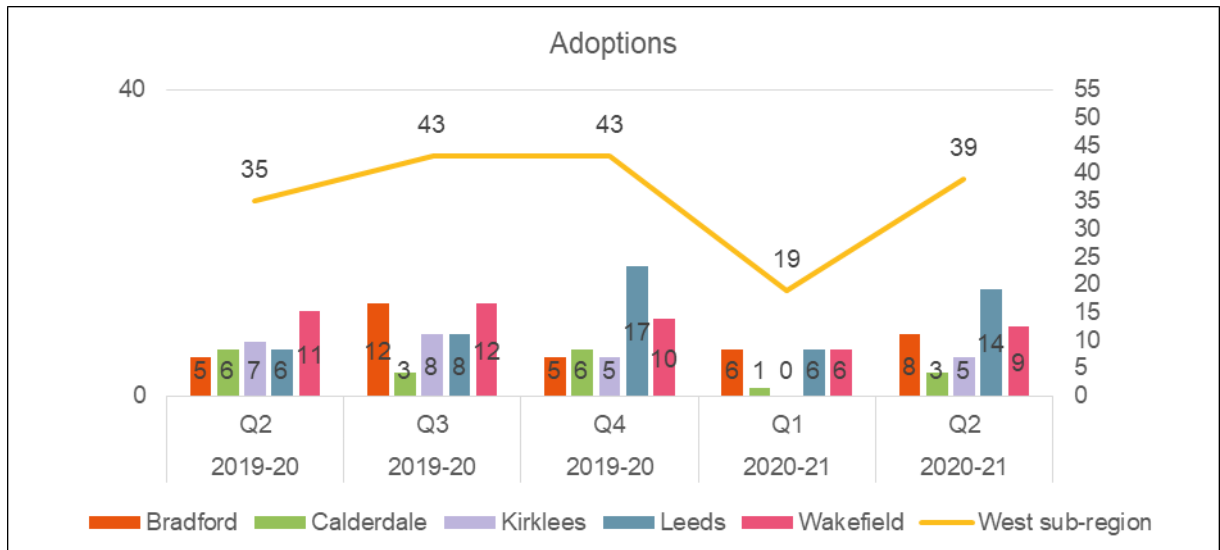
**Commentary**

This graph shows the number of children placed over the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year.

The number of children placed for adoption with prospective adopters has increased in quarter 2, with 4 individual authorities seeing an increase in the number of children placed for adoption in the quarter.

There was an overall reduction in the number of children placed for adoption in quarter 1; due to the Covid-19 pandemic some introductions were unable to proceed at that time due to the individual vulnerabilities of those party to introductions.

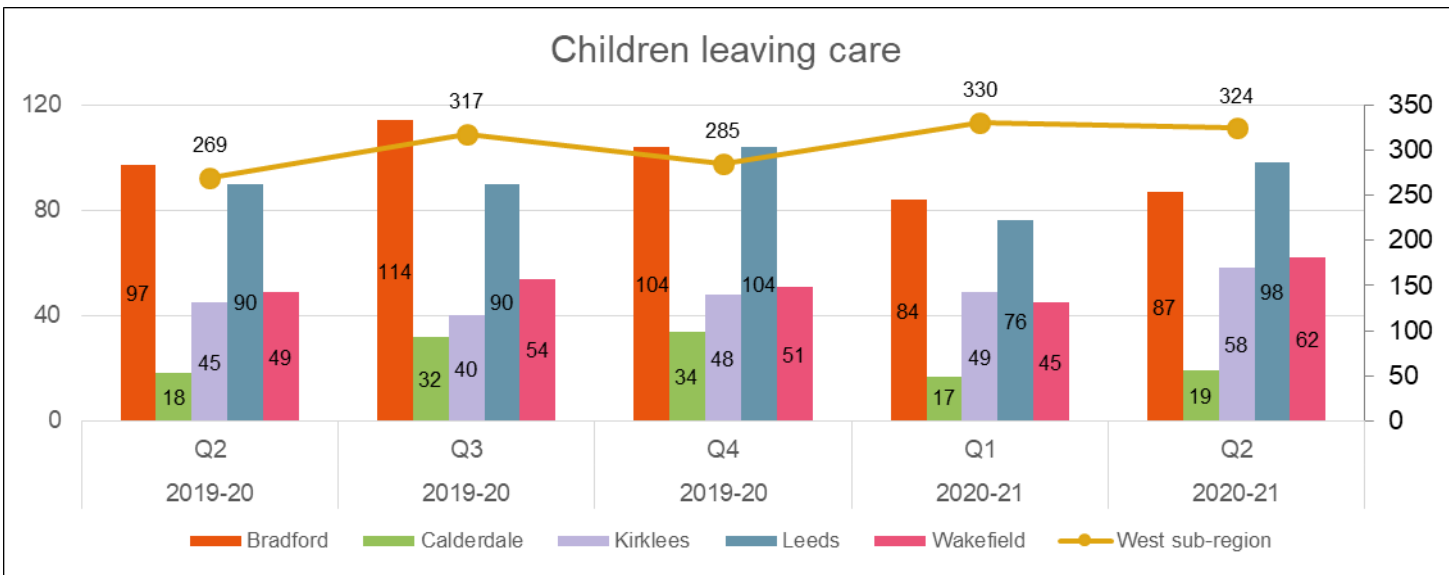




**Commentary**

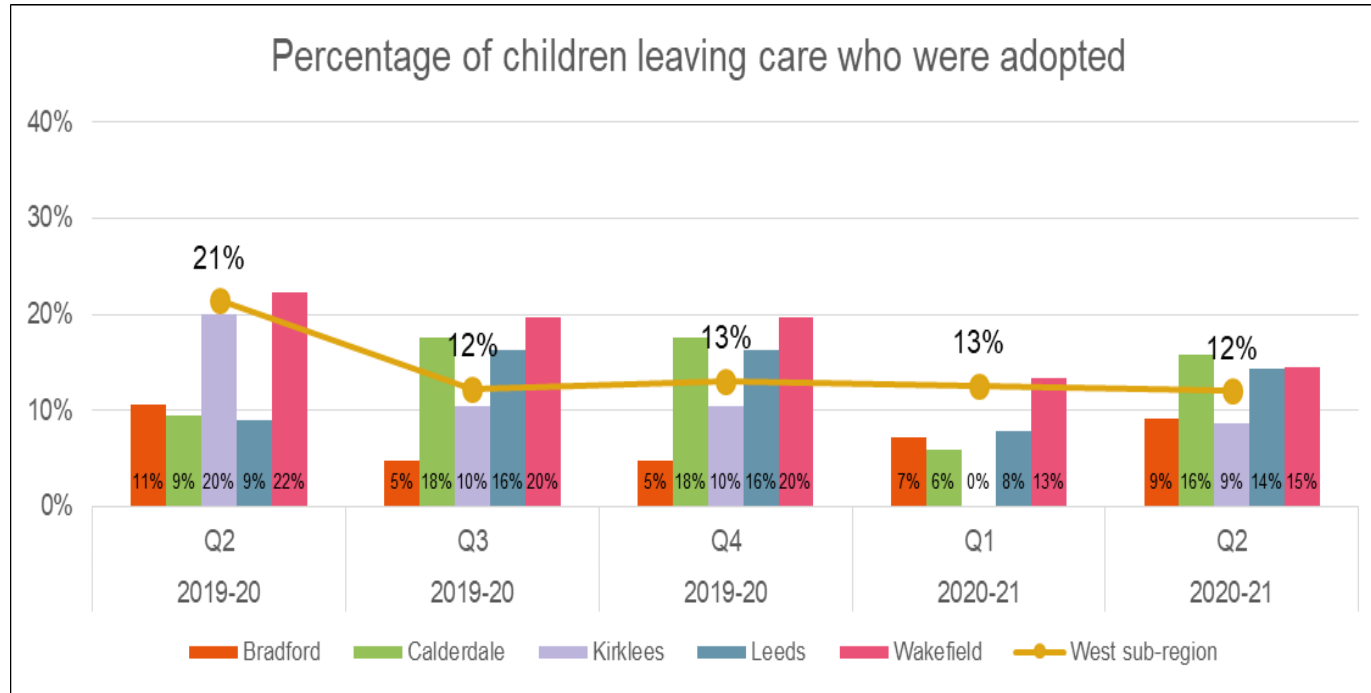
This graph shows numbers of children who were adopted over the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year

There has been a significant increase in the number of adoptions against the first quarter, where there was an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic with some court cases not progressing to adoption orders at that time.



**Commentary**

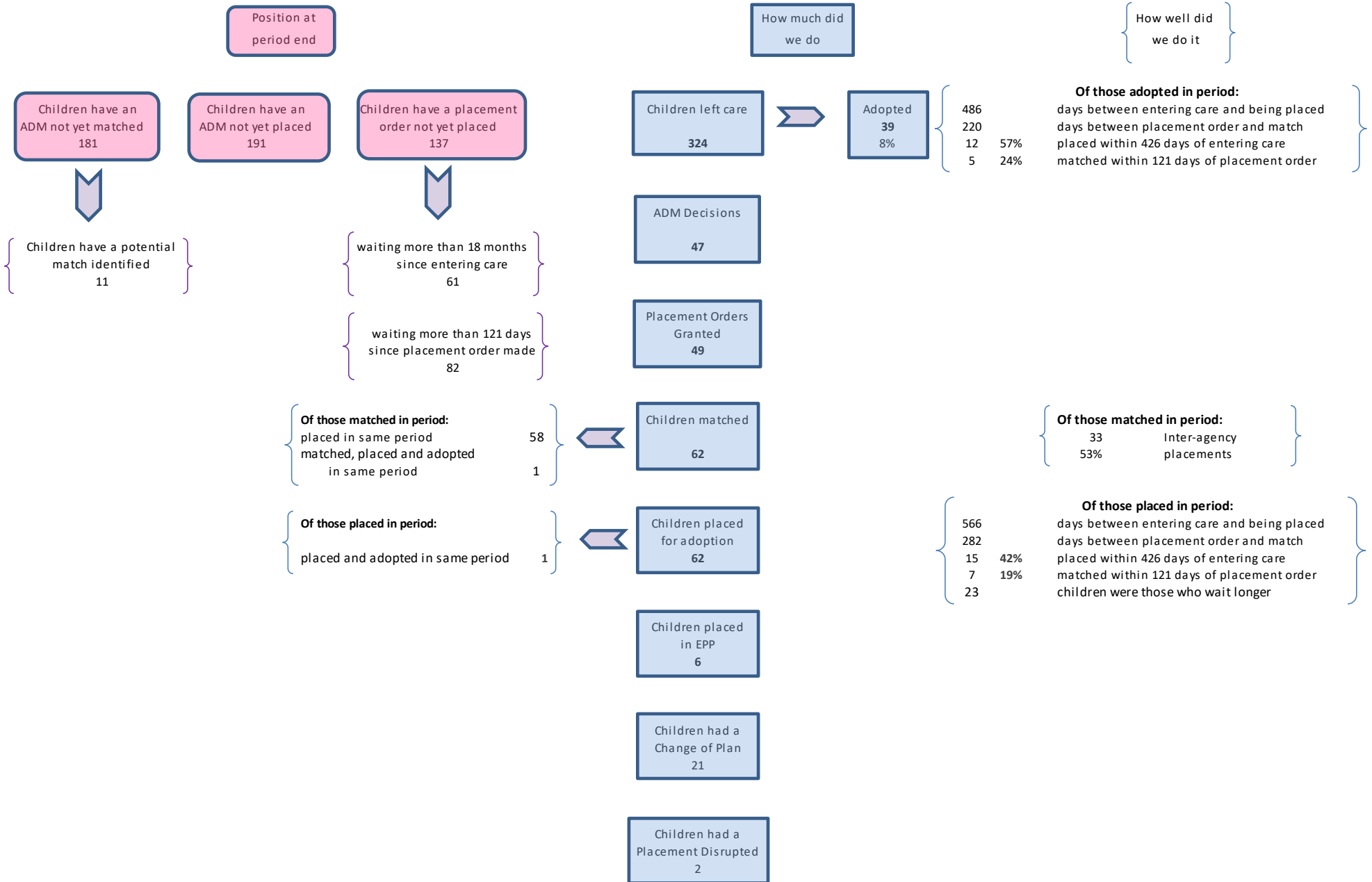
This graph shows the number of children leaving care over the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year



### Commentary

This graph shows the percentage of children leaving care who were adopted in the last 5 quarters, thus showing figures for the same quarter in the previous year

# Performance Overview - Children



## Adopters

This section of the report provides headline figures relating to prospective and approved adopters at various stages of the adoption process in One Adoption. Appendix two contains figures for the last 5 quarter to give comparison between same quarter in the previous year. Figures in bold are for current quarter, those in brackets are for the same quarter in the previous year.

### How much did we do?

#### During the quarter

- **243** (108) prospective adoptive families attended information sessions  
*During 2019/20 435 prospective adoptive households attended information sessions, average 109 per quarter*
- **42** (51) prospective adoptive families started Stage 1  
*During 2019/20 195 prospective adoptive families started Stage 1, average 49 per quarter*
- **59** (31) prospective adoptive families attended preparation training  
*During 2019/20 129 prospective adoptive families attended preparation training, average 32 per quarter*
- **37** (27) prospective adoptive families started Stage 2  
*During 2019/20 119 prospective adoptive families started Stage 2, average 30 per quarter*
- **32** (30) prospective adoptive families were approved, of these, 6 (2) families were Foster Carer Adopters  
*During 2019/20 113 prospective adoptive families were approved, average 28 per quarter*
- **32** (25) prospective adoptive families were matched, of these, 0 (1) families were matched with children outside the RAA and **32** (24) were matched with children from within the RAA  
*During 2019/20 102 prospective adoptive families were matched, average 26 per quarter*
- **33** (27) prospective adoptive families had a child(ren) placed, of these, 0 (1) families had children placed from outside RAA and **33** (26) had children placed from within the RAA  
*During 2019/20 103 prospective adoptive families had a child placed, average 26 per quarter*
- **24** (27) adoptive families adopted a child/young person  
*During 2019/20 99 adoptive families adopted a child/young person, average 25 per quarter*
- **11** (14) prospective adoptive families withdrew from the process  
*During 2019/20 39 prospective adoptive families withdrew from the process, average 10 per quarter*

### How well did we do it?

- Of those prospective adoptive families who ended Stage 1 (51) in the quarter, they were in Stage 1 for an average of **5** months
  - **24%** were within timescales (Lowest was **0** month, highest was **14** months)
  - Those still in Stage 1 (89) at the end of the quarter have been in Stage 1 for an average of **4** months
  - **38%** are within timescales
- Of those prospective adoptive families who ended Stage 2 (32) in the quarter, they were in Stage 2 for an average of **4** months
  - **81%** were within timescales (Lowest was **1** months, highest was **21** months)
  - Those still in Stage 2 (50) at the end of the quarter have been in Stage 2 for an average of **3** months
  - **84%** are within timescales

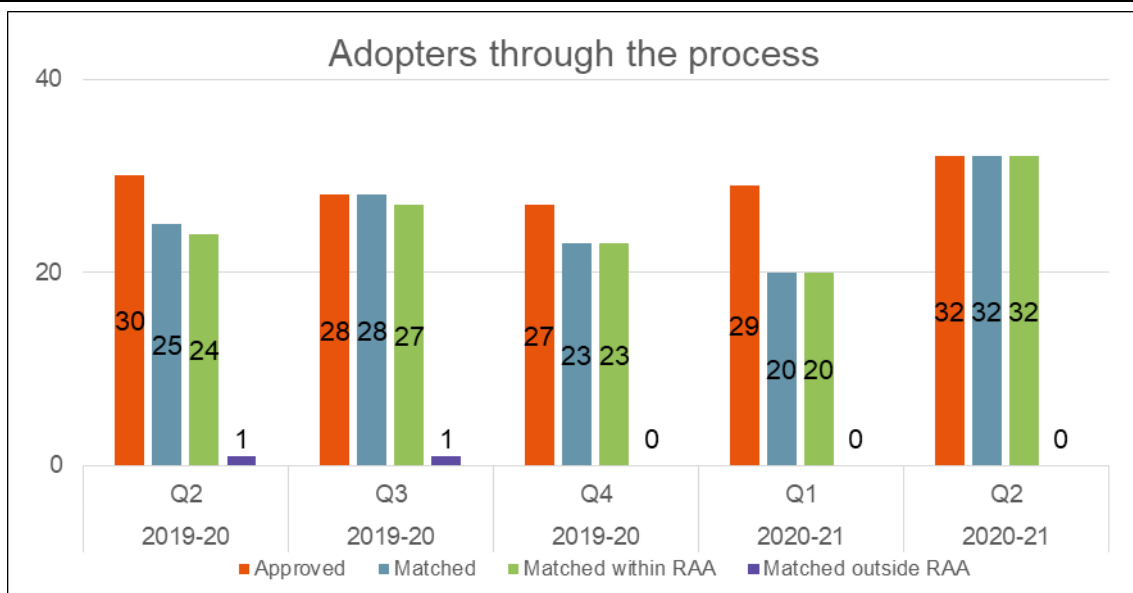
Of those approved 8 months was the average time between registration of interest and approval.

**15** (16) adoptive families were matched within three months of their approval; **17** (8) were matched after three months of their approval

The average time taken from approval to matching was **6** (3) months



<p><b>How much did we do?</b></p> <p><i>At the end of the quarter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the <b>102</b> (100) individual approved adopters (not yet matched), <b>51</b> (47) are female and <b>51</b> (42) are male. <b>14%</b> (24%) are from a BME background</li> <li>• <b>139</b> (100) prospective adoptive families are not yet approved</li> <li>• <b>89</b> (63) prospective adoptive families are in stage one; <b>50</b> (37) are in stage two</li> <li>• <b>53</b> (47) approved adoptive families are yet to be matched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>7</b> (8) of these families have been waiting more than six months</li> <li>○ <b>18</b> (14) of these families have a matching panel booked</li> <li>○ <b>12</b> (0) of these families have a match identified but no panel date booked</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>10</b> adoptive families have children placed in EPP</li> <li>• <b>13</b> (13) prospective adoptive families are on hold</li> </ul>	<p><b>How well did we do it?</b></p> <p>There continues to be a higher number of prospective adopters within the assessment process than in the same period last year, which is a positive reflection of the recruitment and engagement of enquirers.</p> <p>From Quarter1 to Quarter2 we have seen a slight decrease in the number of people in stage one, and an increase of those in stage two. This demonstrates the progress of applicants through the adoption process. We now have a high number of people in stage two of the adoption process.</p> <p>Covid-19 restrictions have continued to impact upon the timeliness of applicants progressing through the adoption process due to changes in personal circumstances, the ability to complete the necessary checks and the circumstances of One Adoption staff.</p> <p>We have increased the number of available adopters for children in West Yorkshire, with 6 more families being available than in the same quarter in the previous year.</p> <p>We have seen a reduction in the number of approved and available adopters from a BME background.</p>
<p><b>What would we like to do better?</b></p> <p>We would like to move people through the adoption process in a more timely way and avoid any delays in either stage of the process. We have increase our assessment capacity through the appointment of sessional workers and have requested funding to increase the number of R&amp;A social workers within the agency.</p> <p>We need to increase the number of BME adopters, in particular Black African and Black Caribbean adopters, to meet the needs of our children. We are working with partners from the voluntary sector to address this,</p> <p>We would like to increase the number of adopters open to siblings due to the demographic of the children needing adoptive families. We have recently introduced specific training for prospective adopters to encourage them to consider the benefits of adopting a sibling group.</p>	<p><b>What difference did we make</b></p> <p>We have developed our training and preparation offer to prospective adopters to include online preparation training, EPP, Adopting Siblings and will soon be providing training to Experienced Parents Adopting, Foster Carers Adopting and People Connected by Adoption. This has ensured that adopters are better prepared to meet the needs of adopted children.</p> <p>We have continued to increase the number of approved adopters and increased our capacity to respond to the increased demand for assessment.</p> <p>We have increased Adoption Panel capacity to respond to the increased need for approvals and matches to avoid delay for children and families progressing through the process.</p>

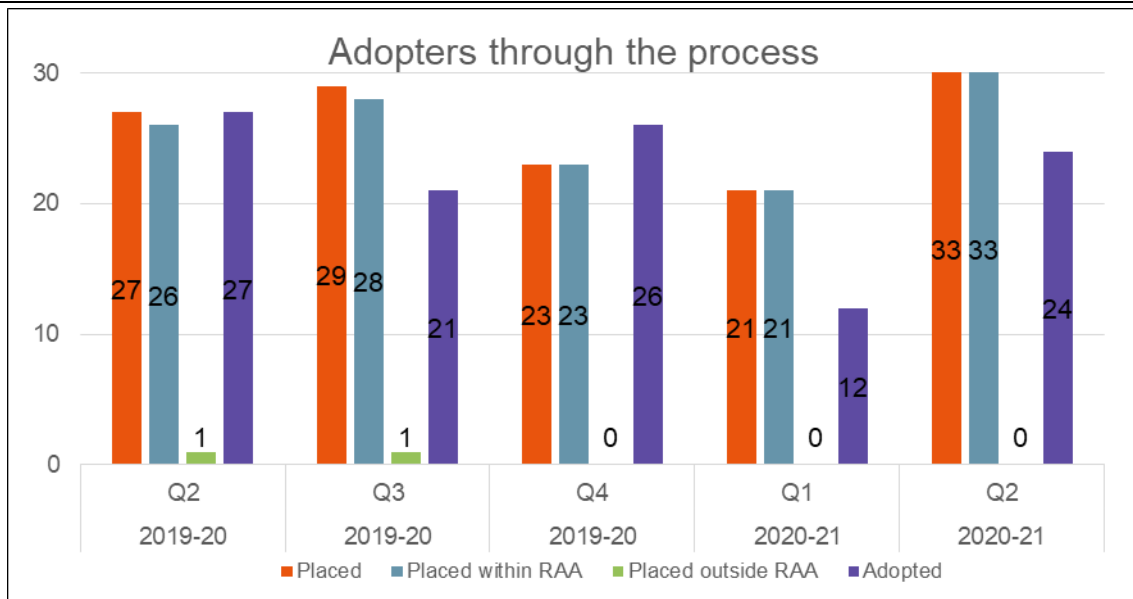


### Commentary

This graph shows numbers of adopters going through the process from 2019-20 Quarter 2 through to 2020-21 Quarter 2

This provides a comparison of the same quarter in the previous year

This Quarter we have approved more adopters than during the same quarter last year, and than in any other quarter subsequently. This is a positive indicator of the progress of families through the adoption process, and of the number of families able to provide adoptive families for children within the region.



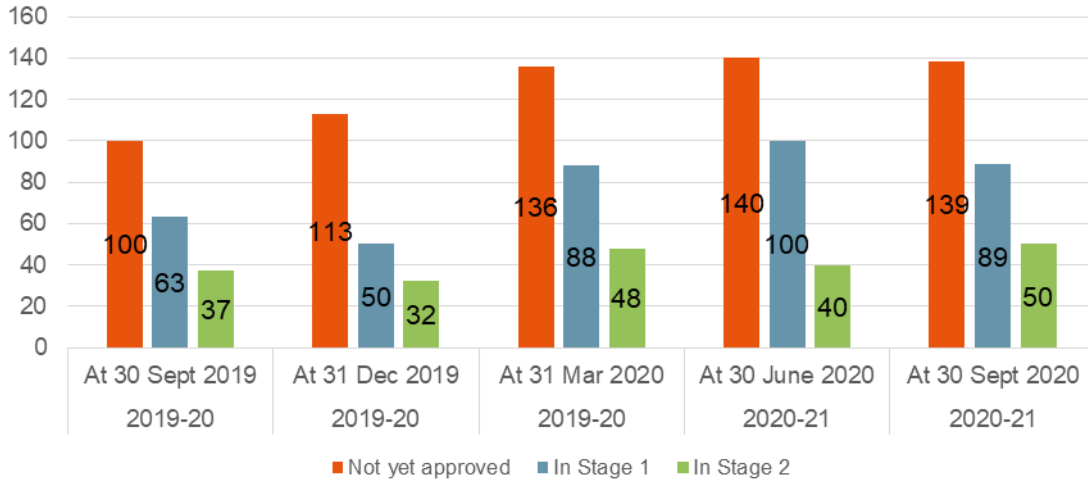
### Commentary

This graph shows numbers of adopters going through the process from 2019-20 Quarter 2 through to 2020-21 Quarter 2

This provides a comparison of the same quarter in the previous year

There has been an increase in the number of adopters having children placed with them, all of who have been children from within the RAA. There has been a slight decrease in the number of adoption orders, which is a reflection of current court capacity, but it is positive to see that this has increased significantly from Quarter 1.

### Position at end of Quarter

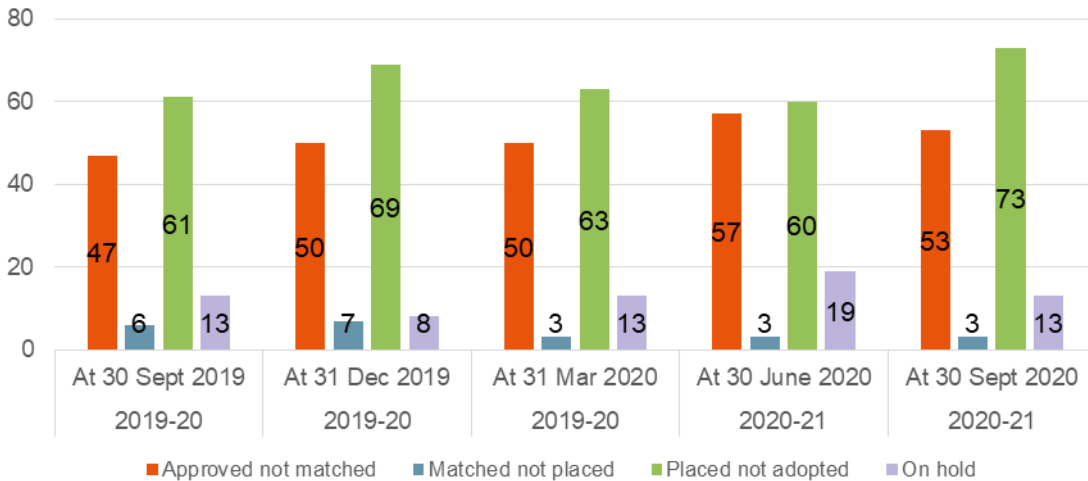


### Commentary

This graph shows the number of adopters at various stages in the process at the end of each quarter. It shows the last 5 quarters so we can compare the same quarter in the previous year.

There continue to be significantly higher numbers of adopters within the process than in the same quarter of the previous year. The numbers have remained consistently high for the last three quarters. In Quarter 2 there are more adopters in Stage Two than in previous quarters, which is a positive indicator for the number of approved adopters in Quarters 3 and 4.

### Position at end of Quarter



### Commentary

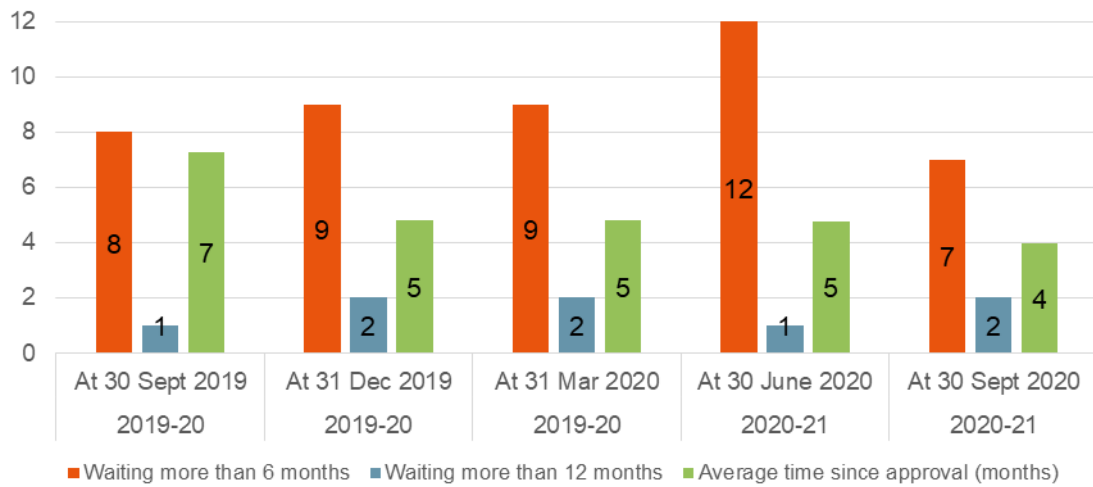
This graph shows the number of adopters at various stages in the process at the end of each quarter. It shows the last 5 quarters so we can compare the same quarter in the previous year.

The number of families with children placed, not yet adopted, have continued to rise over the course of the year. In many cases applications are with the Court and are awaiting a hearing date when court capacity allows.

The number of approved and available adopters remains higher than in the same quarter last year. The number of children matched not placed remains low, which demonstrates how children have continued to be moved to their adoptive families despite the Covid19 Pandemic.



Position and timelines at end of Quarter

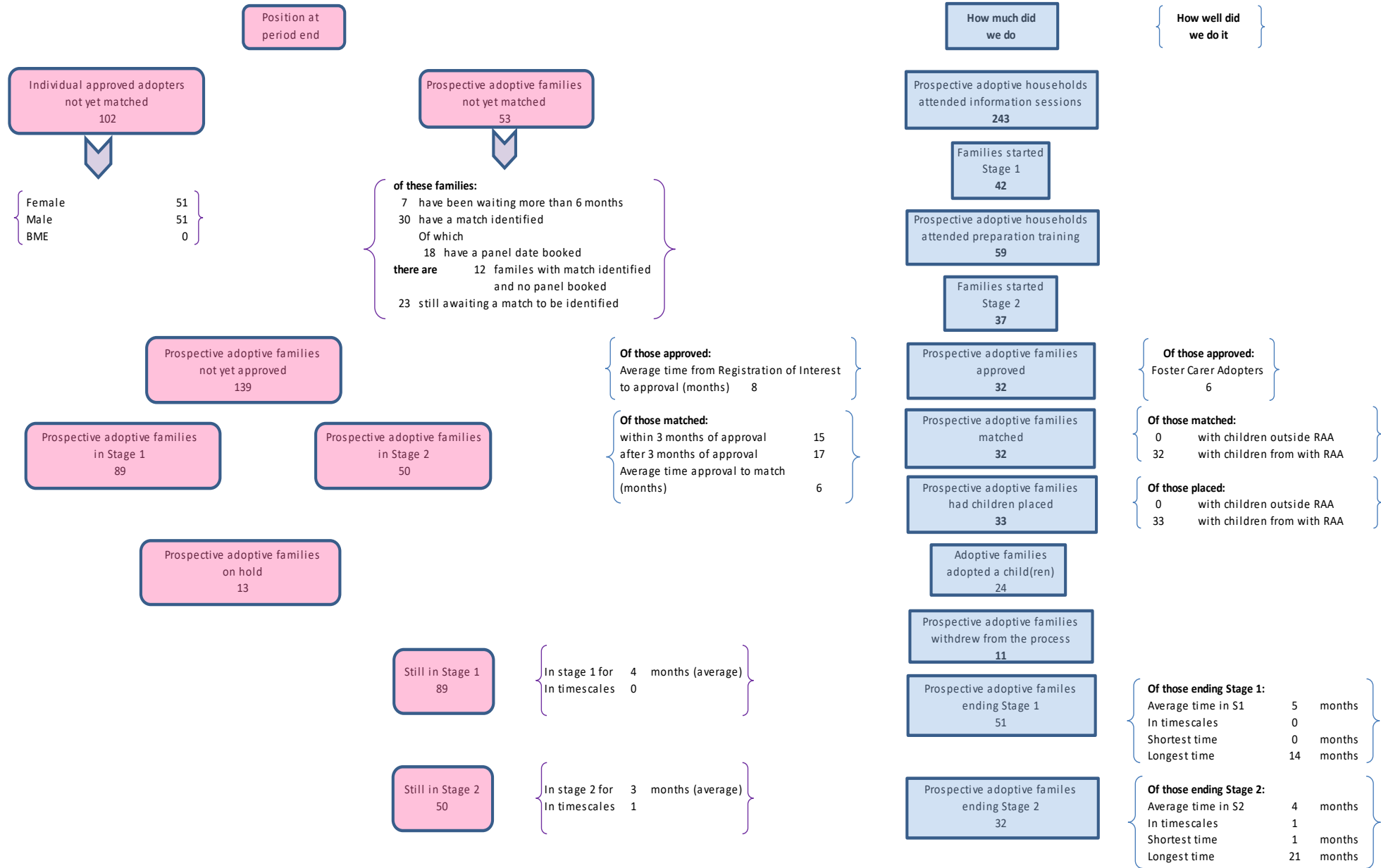


**Commentary**

This graph shows the number of adopters approved and not matched at the end of each quarter and the timeliness. It shows the last 5 quarters so we can compare the same quarter in the previous year.

The average time adopters have waited to be matched have decreased in the last quarter, which reflects the hard work of the social workers in progressing plans for children and families. There are fewer families waiting more than six months to be matched than in previous quarters, which is also positive. Some of these families have children already placed with them via Early Permanence Placements and are awaiting the outcome of Court Proceedings before a match can be considered.

# Performance Overview – Adopters



## Snapshot Figures

This section of the report looks at characteristics of prospective adopters who are approved but not yet matched and those characteristics of children still waiting to be matched as at the end of the quarter.

### Characteristics of those adopters who are approved and not yet matched

Ethnicity	Number of individuals
African	2
Any other White background	10
Caribbean	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	7
White and Black Caribbean	1
White British	78
White Irish	2
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>102</b>

Religion	Number of individuals
Christian	53
Muslim	8
No religion	31
Other	10
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>102</b>

### Characteristics of children who have a decision but not yet matched (182), of these, 128 have a Placement Order

Ethnicity	Number of children
African	1
Any other Black background	1
Any other ethnic group	11
Any other Mixed background	4
Any other White background	11
Gypsy/Roma	6
Indian	1
Information not yet obtained	7
Pakistani	1
Traveller of Irish Heritage	1
White and Asian	6
White and Black African	1
White and Black Caribbean	1
White British	129
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>181</b>

Children who wait longer (more than one characteristic)	Number of children
Part of a Sibling Group	93
With a Disability	3
BME	34
Aged 5 years +	24
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>154</b>

**36** Children have 2 of above characteristics  
**4** Children have 3 of above characteristics

Of those above

**ADOPTERS**

Certain characteristics specified	Number of Households
Potential Match	30
Not specified any age group	48
Specified 0-4 years	47
Sibling groups	12
Specific Gender	7
Open to EPP	21

**How much did we do?**

***During the quarter***

- **131** Adoption Support enquiries received
- **161** cases were allocated
- **51** Adoption Support assessments were started
- **56** Adoption Support assessments were completed
- **80** Adoption Support cases were closed

***At the end of the quarter***

- **744** Active cases
- **86** cases were awaiting allocation

**How well did we do it?**

- For those cases allocated in the quarter it took an average of **152** days
- For those assessments completed in the quarter it took an average of **117** days from start of assessment to completion (this is for OAWY workers only)
- Of those cases closed in quarter
  - **1** was aged 0-23 months
  - **4** were aged between 2-4 years
  - **54** were aged 5+ years
  - **20** were adults (1 other, no DOB recorded)

Of the active cases at the end of the quarter

- **17** were aged 0-23 months
- **110** were aged 2-4 years
- **540** were aged 5+ years
  - 376 were aged 5-11 years
  - 164 were aged 12-17 years
- **77** were adults

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## Voice and Influence of Adopters, Children & Young People report Card April 2020 to September 2020

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

# Best ideas - what has worked?

## Support during Covid-19



OAWY have offered adopters a range of additional support during COVID-19. Here are some of the comments received:

- *The fact that this support was offered so quickly was fantastic;*
  - *Lots to access...*
  - *Proactive – haven't accessed much but good to know all there and happy to be contacted;*
- *OAWY kept in touch with us throughout Covid19 - with emails about support services & personal emails asking how we were doing;*
  - *It felt very reassuring to know we weren't on our own & if we needed additional support, we knew we could ask & we knew who to ask.*

## The 2020 OAWY Annual Adopter Survey

An on-line survey was sent to all OAWY adopters to gather their views on the service we provide. We asked adopters to tell us what we do well, here are some of their responses:



- *Friendly approachable team - always made to feel very welcome;*
- *Social Workers appear to relate to our problems and are approachable and supportive;*
- *Social workers supporting adopters are excellent and really helpful/ proactive and caring;*
- *Brain based parenting training is beyond excellent;*
- *Support workers are knowledgeable and emphatic.*

- *Variety of training & support options;*
- *You do what you say you are going to do and you're good at keeping in touch;*
- *Make good use of Adoption Support Fund to help our two children.*

We also asked adopters what we need to improve on. One of the main themes picked up was wait time, see comments below:

- *If there are more support workers support could be offered quicker and timely to help children and stressed parents;*
- *Timescales...when we went through the process we found both ours and our little girls' social worker to be very over worked!*
- *Provide support quickly when it is needed, to prevent further trauma;*
- *More team members to be able to provide more timely support.*



## Online Profiling Events

Online profiling events have replaced face to face events with 2 events held in Q1 and Q2 of 2020/21. 16 profiles were featured (19 children) which has so far resulted in 28 expression of interest, 1 match, 1 match progressing and 1 match being considered for a sibling group of 2.



The events have been well received by prospective adopters. Here is some of the feedback from those who attended the events:

- *Informative and nice to see video clips of the children and hear the Social Worker give their view on the child;*
- *It was good, it was our first event so we were not sure what would really happen but both felt it was what we expected;*
- *The information provided was informative and interesting and was lovely to hear each SW give a personal account of the children, it gave much more insight than a standard profile;*
- *The videos added a sense of reality and was very much welcome.*

There were also some comments regarding technical issues at the first event which have been addressed.



# ADOPTTEENS

## FORMERLY KNOWN AS AT-ID

### Adopteens Lockdown Pack

At the start of the pandemic Adopteens wanted to make sure people felt they hadn't been forgotten about, they were conscious of people feeling isolated and disconnected so they wanted to try and help people feel held in mind and also we wanted to send a little joy. So they we put together a lockdown pack.

They successfully sent out 115 packs to young people who were signed up to their project. They have thought about sending packs out to new members after lockdown and possibly doing annual mail outs to all members as a way of reminding them what our service has to offer. For many families receiving the pack has encouraged them to re-engage with the service.

The packs were greatly received by young people and parents alike. This is some of the feedback received:

- *I just wanted to say thanks a million for the mailing;*
- *It injected a bit of excitement and interest into our Saturday and beyond;*
- *The boys have started working on their Covid 19 time capsules and seem to be quite into it!*
- *Thanks for the activity pack. \*\*\*\*\* and I enjoyed looking through it and he really enjoyed getting the post. We talked through the time capsule sheets which prompted a good conversation;*
- *Thanks for the tea bags for \*\*\*\* and I, we are just about to have a cuppa, and thanks for the activity packs.*

## Online Information Events



Due to Covid-19 face to face information events had to be cancelled and replaced with an online alternative. Prospective adopters registering an interest are sent a link to a pre-recorded information event video. In the first 6 months of 2021/21 there were 564 requests made with 3 events held.

Here are some of the comments from those who took part:

- *We believe the content was on point, it was nice to see all aspects of the process and to hear from the children and other adoptive parents;*
- *Really positive information and good to know the support is there throughout the process;*
- *Clear, concise and covered any questions I initially had;*
- *Very good substitute for a face to face discussion.*

## Best ideas - what next?

### Webinar Information Events

Information events have been delivered by a pre-recorded video link in Q1 and Q2. From Q3 this will be replaced with interactive webinars with prospective adopters registering to attend.





## Adopters Newsletter



A quarterly newsletter is emailed to adopters. OAWY have asked adopters for their views on the newsletter. Below are the findings and some comments:

- 88% of adopters asked receive the newsletter;
- 63% are satisfied with the newsletter, 36% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 1% are dissatisfied;

When asked how we could improve the newsletter:

- *Easier to read on a mobile device;*
- *More suggestions for reading would be good. Perhaps a free virtual 'lending library' open to adopters and foster carers;*
- *Include information for older children.*

The comments have been feedback to the team that produce the newsletter so that improvements can be considered.