



# Public Document Pack

## WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

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Meeting to be held in the Civic Hall, Leeds on  
Thursday, 1st August, 2019 at 11.30 am

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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

# 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**

1 - 6

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

(Copy attached)

7

**MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

To consider any matter arising from the minutes.

8

**HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT**

7 - 30

To consider a report by the Director of Children's and Families which provides a summary from the Head of Service on the developments of the service since the last report to the committee in March 2019.

(Report attached)

9

**ANNUAL AGENCY REPORT AND REVISED STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

31 -  
102

To consider a report by the Director of Children's and Families which presents the Annual Report of the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) as required by the National Minimum Standards 2011 (Appendix A refers)

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

(Report attached)

10

**PERFORMANCE REPORT**

103 -  
122

To consider a report by the Director of Children's and Families which sets out details of the quarter 4 and reconciled data of the year for 2018-19 in (Appendix No.1 refers)

(Report attached)

11

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT**

To note that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 1.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds.

**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.

2

a)

b)

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## WEST YORKSHIRE ADOPTION JOINT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2019

**Present:** Councillor L Mulherin (Leeds) – Chair  
Councillor M Swift (Calderdale MBC) and Councillor V Kendrick (Kirklees MBC)

**In Attendance:** S Johal (ODWY), M Green (Wakefield MDC), J Andrew (LCC), J Pocklington (LCC) and J Grieve (LCC)

### **23 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

### **24 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. 30 referred)

### **25 LATE ITEMS**

There were no late items

### **26 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

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

### **27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: A Farley (City of Bradford MDC) and R Forster (City of Wakefield MDC)

### **28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 3rd July, 2019

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were agreed as a true and correct record.

## **29 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Head of Service Report (Minute No.20 referred) – With reference to Resolution No. (iii) and the request by a Member of this Committee to be provided with details about the delay in providing Children’s medical checks so that he may take up the matter directly with the health partners. Members were informed that the necessary information had been supplied, however, the issue remained unresolved. Officers reported that the matter would now be escalated further with both the Commissioners and the Providers.

Referring to Resolution No.(iv) Members were informed that the structure/ Governance arrangements for both the Management Board and the Joint Committee had been circulated to the Service Director for Children’s Social Care at Wakefield.

In respect of Resolution No. (v) Members noted that the agenda and minutes for meetings of the One Adoption West Yorkshire: Management Board appeared elsewhere on the agenda of this meeting.

## **30 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 last report in December 2018, which included issues around:

- Staffing & HR
- Accommodation
- Information Technology
- Budget
- Partnership Working
- Performance Management (Separate agenda item)
- Practice, Quality of Provision and Management Oversight
- Family Finding

Referring to the issue of accommodation, the Head of Service reported that the team from the Wakefield office were transferring to the Bradford office. Plans to transfer staff from the Halifax office to the Huddersfield office were still progressing. It was noted that in both instances staff would still have a presence in the Wakefield and Halifax offices.

With reference to the Budget implications Members were informed that the additional contributions from each local authority in light of the increase in Inter agency fees had been agreed for this year and for 2019/20. However, in February 2019 the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies announced an inflationary increase in their inter agency fee from June 2019. Members noted the inflationary increase was not as significant as the previous increase.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 3rd July, 2019



Members received a progress report on Peer Monitoring which offered support to adopters from Stage 1 to Post Order support, offering emotional support to families and signposting to resources and /or services.

Members welcomed the progress made.

A brief discussion took place about changes of plan for children away from adoption and the reasons for this. Some children return to extended family members and others move towards long term fostering and may even move onto Special Guardianship arrangements with their current foster carer.

Members requested some detail about the numbers and reasons for a change of plan for the next meeting so this could be explored in more detail.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (i) To note the continued progress of One Adoption West Yorkshire
- (ii) To support the progression of the arrangements
- (iii) To note the dashboard for this financial year as referred to in Appendix No.1
- (iv) That the Agenda and Minutes of the “One Adoption West Yorkshire Management Board” held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 be noted (Appendix No.2)
- (v) To note the details of the Marketing Strategy, as referred to in Appendix No. 3 of the submitted report (Exempt from publication)
- (vi) To bring a report to the next meeting of this Joint Committee regarding children where there is a change of plan away from adoption

### **31 Performance Report**

The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report which provided the Quarter Three performance statistics of the regional agency.

The Head of Service said the report provided the basis for performance across the region with an aim to improve practice internally and across the partnership.

Members were informed that the approval of adoptive parents had increased over the last two quarters which was encouraging. However, this is not as high as it needs to be in order to meet the needs of children waiting. Attracting a wider range of people to consider adoption is a key priority, with additional

marketing and more targeted advertising underway this week with LGBT Adoption & Fostering awareness week this month.

In offering comment on the targeted advertising, Members suggested that it was important to get the language and the message right.

The Chair requested that a further update on the targeted marketing and advertising could be provided at the next meeting regarding attracting adopters from the BME and faith communities.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (i) To note the proposed performance information
- (ii) To support the further development of this work
- (iii) That a further update on marketing and advertising be provided at the next meeting regarding targeting BME communities.

### **32 Education Work with Virtual Schools - Update**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an update on the Education Work being undertaken across West Yorkshire between One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) and the five Virtual Schools to implement the new statutory duty to provide advice and guidance to children and young people previously looked after children and young people who are adopted.

The Chair introduced and welcomed Jancis Andrew, Head Teacher Virtual School Looked After Children, Children & Families and Julie Pocklington, Practice Improve & Development Manager, Children & Families who delivered a presentation "Education – Work with Virtual Schools – The Journey So Far" explaining:

- Virtual Schools have a New Statutory Duty to provide advice and guidance to previously looked after children
- The Development of a Partnership Approach
- Adoption Education Advice Line
- What we don't know about Previously Looked after Children
- West Yorkshire School Survey
- Virtual Schools Strategies
- Individual Authorities Contributions

Referring to the Adoption Education Advice Line, Members suggested it may be beneficial to advertise the advice line telephone number more widely and to also include the number within these minutes. ([Adoption Advice Helpline \(0113\) 5351931](#))

Reference was made to a video the Joint Committee had viewed in January 2018 – “Finding Families for Older Children” which was one of a series of five themed videos produced to assist in the recruitment process and provide more in depth information to adoptive families.

It was suggested such videos may be a useful aid in working with Virtual Schools.

It was also discussed that the designated teacher was a statutory role and that the need for a designated governor was not a statutory requirement. However, Members could recommend that schools appoint a designated governor for children previously looked after as well to ensure that the needs of children adopted were met with the education setting.

Members requested that training be offered to school governors to ensure that they were aware of the new Statutory Duty and that they could therefore ensure their schools were being held to account for implementing the duty effectively.

The Chair pointed out that a number of new Members had joined the Joint Committee and it may be a good opportunity to view the video or a similar themed one again at a future meeting.

Officers confirmed the necessary arrangements would be made.

Commenting on the Virtual Schools Strategies, Members suggested that the development of a Regional Adoption Agency had been a really positive step forward and had created strong links with the Department for Education (DfE)

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance and presentation.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the contents of the report and presentation be noted.
- (ii) To support the further development of this work.
- (iii) That arrangements be made to view a promotional video, produced to assist in the recruitment process at a future meeting

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

**RESOLVED** – To note that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2109 at 1.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 3rd July, 2019





Report author: Sarah Johal

Tel: 0113 2783623

## Report of Director of Children and Families

## Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019**

**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:	X No

### Summary of main issues

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 and One Adoption West Yorkshire formally opened.
2. This report provides a summary from the Head of Service on the developments of the service since the last report to the committee in March 2019.

### Recommendations

1. The Joint Committee is requested to:
  - a) Note the progress of the agency; and
  - 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 the last report in March 2019.

## **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**

### **Use of Resources**

#### *3.1 Staffing & HR*

- 3.2 Interviews have taken place to cover for Mandy Prout and discussions are underway regarding the secondment of the member of staff from Barnardo's. The gap is causing increasing pressure on other service managers and myself, particularly with Ofsted's presence in the region at the present time. This has reduced the ability to drive forward service improvements in family finding, in particular, as well as managing the interface between the LA's and OAWY when issues arise.

#### *3.3 Accommodation*

- 3.4 Agreement in principle has been made for space in Huddersfield regarding staff moving from Halifax. A date has not yet been agreed for the move, dependent upon staff moving elsewhere in the building but we aim for this to be August. This has been escalated to the assistant director to address barriers in this progressing.

- 3.5 The increase in staff at Kernel House in Leeds is causing pressure on space. Discussions are underway with colleagues and asset management to address the need for space for One Adoption and the looked after children's teams.

#### *3.6 IT*

- 3.7 The work regarding accessing the local authority systems and taking a snapshot of the letterbox database from a portal on the Leeds laptop remains outstanding with Bradford and Kirklees. It would be helpful if board members would ensure that this work is prioritised with the relevant IT services so that time can be agreed to prioritise this work and resolve the issue as staff are still using different systems and computers to undertake their work.

### **3.8 Partnership working**

#### *3.9 Centre of Excellence*

3.10 This project is progressing and the report from Suzanne Whiteley, project lead is attached (Appendix 1). Additional funding of £100k has been agreed by the DfE to extend the project to the end of March 2020. This will enable discussions to take place regarding funding options for the sustainability of the centre of excellence for the budget setting for 2020/21. The team have almost completed the multi-disciplinary model of adoption support and this will be shared once completed.

#### *3.11 Medical advisors*

3.12 A medical advisor protocol has been agreed and was implemented in March 2019. This has been circulated to operational leads and medical advisors in the region and has been helpful for discussions with commissioners. Discussions have been ongoing with health in Bradford and Wakefield regarding medical advisor capacity as children have experienced some delay and partners are working hard to remedy the issues

#### *3.13 Special Guardianship*

3.14 The project is progressing well. The referrals to the service are to be expanded to cover referrals from other sources than just the fostering and SG teams in the areas, looking at early help teams and the front door.

3.15 The regional work regarding the special guardianship is underway with work carried out to create a standardised policy and approach regarding support and financial support. Task and finish groups are underway and the variations amongst the LA's regarding the offer for special guardianship is wide. An audit tool, templates and guidance have been drafted regarding support plans and a draft means test has been developed. This will need further testing with the finance teams across the LA and this work is ongoing.

3.16 A full report will be provided regarding Special Guardianship at the next committee meeting in the autumn.

#### *3.17 Performance Management*

3.18 This is addressed as a separate report.

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

#### *3.20 Recruitment and Assessment*

3.21 There are a number of service developments underway with a full review of the information events, adopter preparation training and additional training ongoing. There are plans to develop and deliver training for applicants able to consider adopting siblings as this has been identified as an area of need within One Adoption

West Yorkshire, with many of our sibling groups being placed externally some distance from the area. We plan to build on the success of our Early Permanence Training and develop a training package which will ensure adopters are more prepared and confident in meeting the needs of siblings.

- 3.22 We held a staff development day on 22nd May for recruitment and assessment staff where we explored the content of Initial Home visits to prospective adopters, exploring the purpose of the visit, consistency and how to make them supportive to those entering the adoptive process. The Brain Based Parenting session for Prospective Adopters was also delivered to staff on that day; so they are aware of the information shared with their families, but also generated discussion regarding the content of other training delivered to prospective adopters and their families. This added to the focus on helping adopters be aware of the need to have a therapeutic approach to parenting in order to meet the needs of children.
- 3.23 We have received notification that we have achieved the quality mark for Early Permanence Placements for the OAWY with Coram Baaf. This will assist us in attracting adopters and assisting with our vision of becoming a flagship adoption agency (**Appendix 2**).
- 3.24 At the last Joint Committee meeting members had discussions about the marketing strategy and asked to see the work that was underway regarding a focus on attracting more BAME adopters and those from a faith back ground. This strategy is discussed in more details at (**Appendix 5**)
- 3.25 *Family Finding*
- 3.26 The profiling events are very successful and building on from this we trialled a first activity day on the 16th June. This took a lot of planning and preparation with children from across the region attending with their carers. Adopters from other agencies are invited as well as our own adopters in stage 2 to consider some of the children waiting for adoption.
- 3.27 We have trialled our first meetings with the VAA's being involved in the linking meeting. We have had a very productive meeting with the VAA's in the region to look at how we can think about more of our children remaining in the region. Consideration is being given to commissioning 30 placements for children in the region with the
- 3.28 *Adoption Support*
- 3.29 This area of work has been discussed in-depth in the annual report. Work regarding the development and agreement of an early help offer during the first three years of placement is almost completed. This will be presented at the next board in the autumn.
- 3.30 *Training*



3.31 OAWY undertook as training session for other Regional adoption agencies on adoption panels and Shopba decision making across a regional agency in March. This was well received. Plans are underway to provide a training event around adoption support in an RAA and to look at putting on a conference in the spring regarding identity and lifelong relationships for social work professionals in the region in conjunction with the Leeds relational centre.

### 3.32 *Skills development*

3.33 OAWY senior leadership team have identified a range of skills social workers require for their specific role. During supervision, staff have worked through this list of skills with their line-manager to determine what level of development, if any, is required for each skill. Once all staff have completed this activity the returns will be collated and a training plan produced. The plan will then be rolled out based on priority and need.

### 3.34 *Surveys*

3.35 The OAWY staff and adopters surveys have been developed and have been emailed out early June.

### 3.36 *Changes of Plan*

The committee asked for some further information regarding the numbers of children whose plan moved away from adoption and the reasons why these plans had changed and the outcomes for these children.

This is addressed at **Appendix 3**.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with staff who have transferred in to the agency as well as formal consultation with the trade unions regarding accommodation. 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 implications for this report. An Equality Impact assessment has been completed and is attached to the annual report being addressed by a separate report within the meeting.

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

4.3.1 At the end of period 2 the budget remains in line with projections. A full report will be provided at the end of quarter 3. The outturn report for the last financial year is attached and (**Appendix 4**).

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

4.4.1 There are no implications for this report.

#### **4.5 Risk management**

4.5.1 There are potential financial risks with regards to the budget and the inter agency spend and demands within adoption support. Regular financial monitoring is in place and the management board are meeting in the next two months to discuss budgetary issues further.

#### **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.

Annex J – Sample Progress and Final reporting form

**Leeds City Council/One Adoption, Adoption Support Centre of Excellence – Practice Improvement Fund Round 2 - GR1000350**

A completed annex J must be provided with each quarterly claim covering the activities for that period.

**SECTION 1: GRANTEE INFORMATION**

<b>Grant reference number</b>	<b>GR1000350</b>	
<b>Total Grant Funding</b>	<b>£ 500,000</b>	
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Leeds City Council/One Adoption, Adoption Support Centre of Excellence – Practice Improvement Fund Round 2</b>	
<b>Grantee organisation</b>	<b>Leeds City Council</b>	
<b>Person submitting this report</b>	<b>Suzanne Whiteley</b>	
<b>Contact number</b>	<b>07933500761</b>	
<b>Are you the primary contact?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>If No, what is your role in the project?</b>		
<b>Report type</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
<b>Actual period covered in this report</b>	<b>From January 2019 to March 2019</b>	

## SECTION 2: SUMMARY

Provide a summary of progress to date, approximately 200–500 words (cover the life of the project if this is your final report)

### **Assessment Framework and multi-agency CPD programme, for adoption practitioners/professionals**

During the fourth quarter in 2018/19 the project team, alongside One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) Service Delivery teams continued embedding the new assessment framework, which went live in February 2019, into social work practices and the case management system. The project team has been providing hands-on training to workers to enable them to use the new framework and tools to support assessments.

The project team has also been creating bespoke training to further support the workers involved in the assessment processes (across Adoption Services i.e. from recruitment and assessment through to adoption support). Training sessions will take place across the West Yorkshire area between April and June 2019, and in North and Humber between July and September 2019. Places have been offered to the Voluntary Adoption Alliance to ensure a unified approach from agencies from the Yorkshire and Humber area to Adoption Support Assessments. There are continuing discussions with agencies within South Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire around the implementation of the assessment framework.

We have created online training focussed on 'Secure Base' for staff. This is being finalised with the testing phased having been completed this quarter with a view to going live within the first quarter for 2019/20.

The CoE has been building the standardised assessment training framework, this will be supported by online goal based outcomes training and has an intended go live date in Q1 of 2019/20.

### **Multi-disciplinary model of assessment and support**

The Project Team has spent time analysing and evaluating different approaches to multi-disciplinary models. Utilising a SWOT analysis the Project Team and OAWY SLT have agreed to further explore the in-house delivery model as this offers more flexibility for delivery and it is likely to be the most sustainable option.

The project team continues to pilot the use of multidisciplinary consultations to explore the potential of this way of working and using the feedback to refine and modify the approach.

During the reporting period we have continued to train our staff to use a screening tool developed to identify children with underdeveloped sensory systems and to run sensory processing assessment and support courses.

We are continuing our work with the 5 virtual schools in the region. Our education specialist is providing a helpline for schools and adopted parents, and our web site will imminently provide an additional source of information for adopted parents. We continue to work to increase the awareness of attachment and trauma at West Yorkshire schools.

Working closely with our adoption community remains a priority. Adoption Development co-ordinators are working alongside the project team, and offer invaluable insight to evaluate new developments and for example to develop the One Adoption regional website to enable greater access to information and resources for families.

The Social Care sector specialist has undertaken an information session with Health Colleagues within the Paediatric services at the Leeds General Infirmary to inform their knowledge when working with children around Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma informed care.

## SECTION 3: ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Provide a summary report of progress and achievement to date, against the specific key performance indicators and objectives agreed to in the grant funding agreement.

**Key Activity completed in this period:**

### ***Objective 1 – Standardised Adoption Support Assessment Framework***

#### **New Assessment Framework templates, tools and resources**

The project team has continued to develop staff training to support the implementation of the new assessment framework. The project team aims to deliver training that will:

- Support workers to revise/ develop knowledge of the main tools and approaches
- Encourage better use of workers' use of one another to share knowledge and experience across the functions of OAWY
- Enable workers to know how to find out more about less commonly used tools and approaches when needed
- Enable workers to have a clear sense of how the parts of the process fit together and how these tools are likely to work in practice

The Assessment framework went live in February 2019 and has been embedded in the case management system. The good practice guidance issued across the region.

Dates have been set for the training delivery across West Yorkshire, these are:

30<sup>th</sup> April & 1<sup>st</sup> May – Leeds  
8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> May – Bradford  
5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> June – Huddersfield

In the North and Humber training will be delivered:

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> July - York  
11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> September – York

Two further training sessions will be delivered in One Adoption North and Humber area (Hull) once room availability has been confirmed.

We are working closely with our colleagues in One Adoption North and Humber to plan the implementation of the framework across that region. A member of the OAN&H management team will attend the first OAWY training sessions and once this has been undertaken we will refine the training delivery to take account of local differences.

### ***Objective 2. Development of a multi-disciplinary model***

#### **Development of a multi-disciplinary model of specialist assessment and therapeutic support to inform: a) pre-placement preparation and support and b) post-placement support for families at risk of disruption**

The project team has focussed its work on the development of a multi-disciplinary model of specialist assessment and therapeutic support to inform

- a) pre-placement preparation and support
- b) post-placement support for families at risk of disruption

Utilising a SWOT analysis we have compared a CAMHS based adoption support team, a broader childhood adversity service, an in-house (RAA) multi-disciplinary model and a combined CAMHS/RAA model. Alongside the OAWY SLT it has been agreed to explore the in-house

Provide a summary report of progress and achievement to date, against the specific key performance indicators and objectives agreed to in the grant funding agreement.

delivery model as it offers more flexibility for delivery and it is likely to be the most sustainable option.

The key elements of the SWOT that supported the selection of the in-house model include the challenges in engaging Health in prioritising working with adopted children through mainstream service provision, ability to enhance the skills and knowledge of OAWY staff and future proofing sustainable support provision to families.

The Centre of Excellence is piloting the use of two types of multidisciplinary consultation to explore the potential of this way of working, to refine the approach, and to gain feedback from workers who participate in a consultation.

Pilot 1 is open to staff involved at the stage of matching, introductions and transition of children with higher levels of complexity;

- Older children (who have started in reception at school)
- Children with more complex presentations (combined neurodevelopmental, developmental trauma, attachment, physical health issues)
- Prospective adopters with complex issues
- Placement of sibling groups
- Interagency adoptions

Using the Rethink Formulation framework, consultations aim to provide a reflective space for those involved to share and make sense of information, in order to develop a shared understanding of a child's situation. The consultants' stance is of collaboration with workers, bringing additional minds and other perspectives to the discussion. 9 consultation dates have been arranged across the West Yorkshire region to take place between April and August 2019. 4 Consultations have taken place between January and March 2019. The Centre of Excellence undertook an initial review following the implementation of staff consultations which led to revised guidance being provided to staff, this has enabled staff to attend subsequent consultations with more focussed analytical lens.

Pilot 2 is aimed at families who have sought adoption support. The consultations are targeted in respect of the skills of staff within the Centre of Excellence and the appropriate resources (e.g. psychology, social work, education/occupational therapy?) are deployed following a review of the referral form. The meetings are led by the adoption support delivery teams. There are 10 family consultations being delivered between April and July 2019 with further dates being set in the coming weeks.

Initial themes from 3 consultations are that the adoption support needs have been focussed on children's behaviour, school transitions and blocked care. The sessions have enabled the examination of what the child might be thinking by bringing the child into the room, enabling adopters to reframe their thinking about the child's behaviour; examining this as a symptom and identifying where other professional input may be required, e.g. health and education.

The consultations will be evaluated towards the end of Q2 2019/20. The aims and objectives of the consultations include increase the knowledge and skills of staff involved in assessment, planning and intervention, bring multi-agency/discipline to assessments and interventions, and provide further evidence to inform the multidisciplinary model.

## **Creating joint working models and care pathways in Education and Mental Health and independent service sector**

### **Education Sector**

Following an agreement with all Virtual Schools in West Yorkshire to unify ways of working, the CoE education specialist has been providing helpline support to schools and adopters in the

Provide a summary report of progress and achievement to date, against the specific key performance indicators and objectives agreed to in the grant funding agreement.

region. Between January and March 2019, the helpline received 70 contacts from families, education providers and staff. Of these 56 were contacts from parents. The main reasons for contacts were information about pupil premium plus and special education needs of children.

The project team has continued to build Attachment & Trauma aware schools by promoting attachment awareness assessment tool and PAC-UK attachment and trauma training. In addition we delivered 12 training sessions to school staff in the West Yorkshire region during Q4, with appropriately 20 school staff members per training session.

The Education specialist from the CoE has developed an education focused Secure Base training tool, which has been shared with the Virtual School heads from West Yorkshire. We will trial the approach in Wakefield in the coming months.

The 'moving a school age children' protocol has been developed during Q4 and is being tested in Calderdale during Q1 2019/20.

We continue to plan for a regional strategy for education psychology for the previously looked after children and this work is ongoing.

### **Health Sector**

- Shared resources with Leeds Community Health (CAMHS provider) to develop understanding and communication between Health and Social Care.
- Ongoing discussions with health partners across the region regarding developing their future in mind plans to meet the needs of adopted children

### **Independent providers – Develop a specific RAA commissioning framework, which supports the multi-agency adoption support**

- Working closely within the region and the supportive procurement team (North Yorkshire) to:
  - Recruit more providers on the regional Approved Provider List
  - Implement our region wide work to implement outcome measures / better quality regime.

### ***Objective 3 - Engagement with Adopters***

#### **Engage with Adopters across the Y&H region in the development of the project**

- Adoption Development Co-ordinators working with project team to build satisfaction surveys (following therapeutic interventions)
- Adopters represented in both project reference group and board.

#### **Develop and implement tools for gaining adopters, adopted children and young people's views**

- Working closely with VAAs, Adopter Voice and Adoption Development Coordinators in the region to develop a tool to gain adopters, adopted children and young people's views.

### ***Objective 4 – Development of a multi-agency continuing professional development programme***

#### **Basic Staff Training**

- Please see Objective 1

Provide a summary report of progress and achievement to date, against the specific key performance indicators and objectives agreed to in the grant funding agreement.

### **Objective 5. - Project Management**

#### **Set up project management and governance**

Project Quality Assurance Plan – internal quality assurance protocol established and continuing:

- External (research based) project outcome quality plan agreed with UEA. It was agreed that UEA will populate project baseline information based on the previously conducted Adopter Survey. Due to the longer than anticipated training / implementation timescales, it was agreed that the project evaluation will now take place in 2020. This will allow the RAA to fully implement the improvements before evaluation takes place.
- UEA will engage with RAA & ASF evaluation projects to avoid duplication of effort.

### **Objective 6. - Key Outcomes**

- Project Evaluation plan agreed with University of East Anglia. An **interim report will be issued by the end of October 2019** publishing the initial findings from the evaluation of adoptive parents, comparing the retrospective data from people using the service before the change with responses relating to the delivery of the new assessment. The final report will be published in October 2020, 12 months after the project closure to allow evaluation to capture the longer term impact of the project.

#### **Evidence:**



#### **Progress on objectives/delivery plans:**



#### **Please provide details of any slippage in delivery plans and reasons for this if applicable:**

The development of the Multidisciplinary assessment and support model is well underway, but is taking place later than originally planned. This was due to delays in engaging the appropriate staff. We will be able to deliver the design and testing elements of the model before September 2019, albeit the pilot phase being shorter than that in the original plan.

We have agreed with the senior leadership team in One Adoption West Yorkshire about how the Assessment Framework training plan is incorporated into the wider CPD plan for OAWY staff training and development and a completion date will be agreed through this process.

#### **Is there anything else you would like to raise in this report?**

We would like to again highlight the need to strengthen the importance of working together with health and education colleagues as highlight in the previous reports and discussion.



Provide a summary report of progress and achievement to date, against the specific key performance indicators and objectives agreed to in the grant funding agreement.

NHS England have approached the West Yorkshire Integrated Care system to work closely with them to create a single commissioning approach for the full children and young people's mental health pathway in West Yorkshire. We have engaged in the initial discussions and there is an acknowledgement that the cohort of children adopted and looked after children are a particular group of children and young people where a west Yorkshire approach may be beneficial for families. A stakeholder meeting across partners in the region took place in February. This may offer an opportunity to provide an integrated approach to improve the quality of assessment and support for adoptive families.


**Issues/challenges: What (if any) problems have you encountered and how have you dealt with, or how do you intend to deal with them?**

It has been difficult to engage with the Educational Psychology services across West Yorkshire, this is due to the low number of educational psychologists in the region and their availability (partially due to their roles being a traded service), and we have a further meeting scheduled with regional educational psychology forum which has been re-established.

Engagement with the Health sector continues to be challenging. We have and continue to explore different regional NHS / Health collaborations in the mental health sector. We have achieved some traction, but feel that the current changes in the sector mean that our health colleagues are not in a position to fully engage with the project as yet. We will continue develop new working practices on a local level.

**SECTION 4: DECLARATION**

I, Suzanne Whiteley, Project Lead, declare that the information provided in this progress report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any omission or false statement may result in the grant being terminated and previous payments recovered, or future grant applications refused.

Signed	
Date	28/03/2018

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## Quality Mark Early Permanence Moderation Panel

<b>Name of Applicant Agency:</b> One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY)
<b>Type of Award:</b> Full Quality Mark
<b>Date of Moderation:</b> 7 June 2019
<b>Decision:</b> Full Award – Early Permanence Quality Mark

### Reasons for Decision

An application received from One Adoption West Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency on 10 May 2019 for the Early Permanence Quality Mark Full Award. It was assessed by independent moderation. The application from OAWY was viewed as a strong application that was well evidenced against all the quality mark descriptors for Early Permanence Services receiving positive moderation comment including that the application showed the agency 'is coherently, comprehensive and realistically committed to EPP in the best interests of children' with the following highlights noted:

1. OAWY is able to evidence positive outcomes in terms of achieving Early Permanence for children and seeking to be as inclusive as possible. In 2018/19, One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) placed 18 children through Early Permanence Placement (EPP). Three children were BME and there are currently 6 BME adopters in OAWY able to consider EPP. They have used EPP for 2 sibling groups, each of two children. To date, they have not yet placed a child with very specific developmental challenges; however, EPP is explored for all children where appropriate.
2. There is a whole systems approach from senior management to practitioners on the front line to the roll out and maintenance of the application of EPP in all the local areas. There is a culture of a whole team around the child approach with different roles and responsibilities and with a clear symmetry of understanding.
3. There is a strong emphasis on providing consistent training on EP across the LAs and for OAWY as well as all Children's Social Work Teams and panel members on role in matching processes. OAWY has a strong commitment to the training and development of its staff, but also to the sharing of good practice in order to achieve good outcomes for children. The agency has been involved in delivering training in relation to EPP to children's social care staff across West Yorkshire and to other agencies across the country. Clinics in each of the Children's Social Care Offices across west Yorkshire are held to support social workers considering EP as a plan for the child (as evidenced appendix 8).
4. The agency is forward thinking and keen to be involved not only in improving practice but also in contributing to research to evaluate outcomes locally and nationally. OAWY was involved in a CoramBAAF Event regarding Early Permanence Practice. Recently the agency has been involved in a planning event with partner agencies and the Centre for Child and Family Justice Research at Lancaster University to consider questions for evaluating the

effectiveness of the use of Early Permanence in the North West and Yorkshire and Humber regions.

5. The agency is supportive of rapport being developed between carers and birth families whenever possible. This demonstrates a sound and open commitment to supporting all the relationships for a child and the elements which form part of their experience and identity. This reflects the view of the agency that this is a significant and important time for a child which needs to be supported by the key people they have relationships with. It is also significant for the future if the Early Permanence Carer becomes the child's adoptive parent.
6. OAWY has already won an award in March 2019, One Adoption West Yorkshire - the LCG Award for Public/Public Partnership for bringing together the adoptions service of 5 Local Authorities and working in partnership with Health and Education services across West Yorkshire. This award did not only relate to Early Permanence but the commitment to partnership working within the agency is already nationally acknowledged.
7. There is excellent and engaged approach in the use and involvement of existing EPP carers to spread the word and to inform recruitment as well as practice.
8. There is a wide ranging media and communication strategy to advertise and promote EPP. Details of information events are shared nationally via First4Adoption and New family Social websites and attendees are signposted to these sites for further information about adoption.
9. There is a clear system in place for the monitoring and evaluation of performance. This is regularly reported to the management board. The management board receives performance information on a quarterly basis (Appendix evidence 21) with EPP being part of the report (see highlighted elements in that report). It is notable that Ofsted is clear that leaders across the region are clear in their commitment to early permanence (Appendix evidence 4).
10. The degree of consultation and involvement with all parties is exemplary. There is a clear Practice Evaluation and Improvement / QA system in place which takes account of arrange of indicators to measure and improve practice. This is well evidenced by Voice and Influence of Children, Young People and Adopters Report Card April 2018 to September2018. The principal sources of feedback used are:
  - Views of Children and Families: The views and experiences of children & young people, adoptive parents, birth parents, adopted adults.
  - Performance Data: Any statistical data that helps judge the quality and effectiveness of professional practice.
  - Practice Wisdom and Knowledge: The practice wisdom of those staff who work with children young people and families, adoption panels & learning from disruptions.
  - The findings of external and internal inspections, audits and evaluations of practice
11. Clear processes and systems are in place for children who have been identified as needing EPP including tracking meetings for children (evidence flowchart appendix 7)
12. The agency works closely with VAAs for the supply of EP carers and is exploring ways of continuing working processes to enable effective EP outcomes for children where it is the plan.

**A key aim of the quality mark is to mobilise innovative and sound practices and continuing service development.**

It is recommended given the strong and vital commitment and robust infrastructure OAWY will continue to deliver effective EPP services within its three year plan for the RAA building on consistency and coherence across the services of the partner local authorities and contributing VAAs.

### **Appendix 3 Change of Plans (April 2018 – March 2019 data)**

Each year there are a number of children with a plan for adoption whose plan moves away from adoption. This report is a summary of the reasons for the change of plan over the last year.

#### **Overall Summary**

36 children had a change of plan during the year:

17 children went on to remain with their current carer or move in with another long term foster carer.

8 children did not have a placement order made and returned home to live with family.

10 children (subsequent to placement order being made) returned to relatives

1 remains in short term care pending reunification with parent

#### **Individual local authority details:**

##### **Leeds City Council**

###### **6 children with a change of plan in the year**

3 children remained with their foster carers (including a sibling group of two)

1 remained with carers with a view to reunification with birth mum

2 placed with relatives

##### **Wakefield**

###### **11 children with a change of plan in the year**

3 children court did not make a placement order – child returned home

5 children moved to relatives ( 2 still to move)

3 children stayed with carers in long term fostering as prospective adopters could not be found

##### **Bradford**

###### **9 children with a change of plan**

3 children moved to live with relatives

2 children the court did not make a placement order and children returned home

3 children remained with foster carers who have gone onto long term foster the children 1 child - long term fostering

1 child has moved to a long term fostering placement

##### **Calderdale**

###### **1 change of plan**

1 child where the Court did not make a placement order (Court agreed on a plan of Long Term Fostering )

## **Kirklees**

### *8 children had a change of plan during the year*

6 children in sibling groups of 2 all placed with foster carer long term with two children moving to new long term foster carers

2 children: The Court did not make a placement order and children returned to family members.

## **One Adoption West Yorkshire**

### **Summary Outturn Report – 2018/19**

#### **Overall**

The final outturn position for OAWY was an overall pressure of £858k, this was mainly due to the pressures around the new payment arrangements (set up by the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA)) for Inter Agency placements and staffing capacity issues in the service.

#### **Staffing**

Net position of staffing was an overall underspend of £13k. OAWY did identify capacity issues in the service and consequently recruited over and above the budgeted structure. However, four of these posts were funded directly from the DfE's Centre of Excellence project of which OAWY is approved, income stream for this was £225k.

#### **Inter-Agency Placements**

Budget £1,508k vs Spend £2,162k – Overspend £654k

77 Placements (46 solo, 14 sibling group of 2 and 1 sibling group of 3)

New arrangements that came into effect from 1st April 2018 were ,firstly, increased fee rates and secondly that the new system set up by the CVAA that LA's/Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) are required to pay the Voluntary Organisations (VO) the full fee in year of placement. This is a change to previous years where the fee would be split over two years (2/3rd's to 1/3rd split).

LA's and RAA's have agreed to continue to split the fee for their placements. This double effect of increased fee and paying the VO's the full year has significantly impacted on the financial position of OAWY which resulted of an overspend of £654k.

Inter-Agency Income - a shortfall of £246k in 18/19 due to less OAWY adopters available to be being matched with out of area children.

#### **Adoption Support Fund**

Actual spend and corresponding income for ASF was £1,340k for 18/19.

#### **Commissioning**

Budget £387k vs Spend £390k

No major pressures in the service contracts. New post-adoption support contract worth £236k came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2019 and this will see an amalgamation of 4 contracts into a single supplier framework with Family Action.

#### **Action**

Note that the above position was discussed at the OAWY Management Board and the West Yorkshire Joint Committee. Respective Chief Officers have agreed to increase their contributions to mitigate the pressures outlined above and respective invoices have been raised for payment.

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## One Adoption West Yorkshire

### Community engagement strategy:

### Finding adopters for Black and Asian Minority Ethnic children ( BAME)



**One**  
Adoption  
Agency  
WEST YORKSHIRE

#### 1.0 Introduction

There are currently over 200 children who have a plan for adoption across West Yorkshire who are not yet matched with an adoptive family and 24% of these come from BAME backgrounds; predominantly Black African, Black Caribbean, mixed heritage or Eastern European. However only 11% of adopters approved within the past year identified as being from BAME backgrounds. In order to address this shortfall, it has been identified that a dedicated project be undertaken to focus on improving the number of BAME adopters. Whilst we will not rely on matching children with regard to ethnic identity as an overriding factor, it is important that we keep a focus on ensuring that we approve a full range of adoptive families to meet the range of children requiring placements.

#### 2.0 Insight

Research carried out for the DfE by Kindred in 2014 identified that one of the characteristics people with the highest propensity to adopt includes those who actively practice a religion. Therefore it has been identified that one way to attract more adopters from BME communities is to raise the profile of One Adoption West Yorkshire within faith communities and organisations whose members match the backgrounds of the children we need to find families for.

Informal research from discussions with an existing adopter from the Black African community identified a lack of trust in 'social services' especially within first and second generation immigrants, as one reason people from their community do not come forward to adopt. The adopter suggested that building relationships with church groups attended by community members would help with building this trust – and that marketing alone will not suffice.

Some marketing campaign work has already taken place to target people who actively follow a religion. Between July and September 2018 a Facebook campaign targeting people who actively follow a religion, and those who may adopt for more altruistic reasons was carried out. The imagery on two of

the adverts for OAWY contained people of Black African Heritage. The campaign as a whole reached 92,000 people and over 1200 people clicked on the advert to find out more, which is a click through rate of 0.52% and a cost per click of £1.11. This is comparable to ads targeting different demographics.

### 3.0 Community engagement

A working group has been formed to take a lead on community engagement to establish links with relevant community leaders and influencers.

One Adoption's unique position within the five West Yorkshire authorities will allow us to access existing expertise for engaging with harder to reach communities in each area. Including identify organisations with good practice around engaging with faith communities and approach with a view to establishing a partnership/ joint campaign work. Other community links and expertise we will seek to work with include:

- Local councillors
- Local Authority area support teams
- Local Authority area committees
- Local authority employee networks – BAME and Faith
- Community networks
- One Adoption West Yorkshire staff with links to communities
- Existing BAME adopters
- Local Authority fostering teams – pool knowledge and resources

One Adoption will also engage with key community-based representative groups and organisations directly to develop an understanding of the issues around the reluctance to adopt.

- Parish and town councils
- Voluntary, community and faith organisations - the initial focus would be on Baptist and Evangelical churches and groups to reach the Black African and Black Caribbean communities, and Catholic Churches within areas with a high Eastern European population.
- Community groups and residents associations
- Local Dioceses

A variety of engagement activities will be undertaken including:

- community forums;
- community events;

- newsletters;
- meeting councillors.

#### 4.0 Marketing and activity plan

Targeted marketing alone will not be sufficient to reach, engage and challenge misconceptions within the targeted communities, therefore all marketing activity will run alongside the community engagement work being carried out by the service.

The marketing and communication activities which will be undertaken are:

- A targeted digital marketing strategy will be delivered using the existing OAWY channels – Facebook, Google Ads, Instagram and Twitter, building on the campaigns previously undertaken. Targeting people who meet the required demographic and have an interest in faith/ religion or charitable work.
- Advertising or editorial to be placed in faith publications which are distributed in churches and other relevant organisations. Research will be undertaken to ascertain which publications are most relevant in terms of content, audience and cost.
- New posters and other marketing collateral will be distributed across churches in the areas which have high Black African/ Black Caribbean or Eastern European attendance.
- OAWY staff will attend community events / festivals/ carnivals to ensure OAWY is visible in the communities and able to speak directly with residents and distribute marketing collateral.
- New case studies for the website and social media of existing BAME adopters – these could also be used for PR and media work, including interviews.
- Imagery of adopters and children which meet the target demographic will also be used as part of other campaign and marketing work to ensure that we demonstrate an ongoing need for adopters to meet the needs of a wide range of children.

#### 5.0 Key messaging

By engaging with community and faith leaders and influencers we want to ensure that they develop an understanding of the needs of the children that we have to place, as well as the differences between voluntary agencies and statutory organisations like OAWY. This is with a view that they will pass this on to their communities and congregations and help build trust in One Adoption as an agency.

The general One Adoption key messages are:

- One Adoption is the adoption service for your local council
- Lots of people like you have already adopted - and you can hear about their experiences
- Adoption is challenging, but rewarding and fulfilling
- You don't just adopt a child, you create a family for life
- One Adoption provides support right through the application and approval process and beyond

In addition to these the specific key messages for this project will be:

- Children from your community need loving families
- Children from your community wait longer than others
- Lots of people of faith have already adopted a child with One Adoption



Report author: Sarah Johal

Tel: 0113 2783623

## Report of Director of Children and Families

## Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019

## Subject: Annual Agency Report and revised statement of purpose

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? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

1. Elected Members across West Yorkshire recognise the importance of adoption and want to be updated about the management and outcomes of the adoption service in the region. The report provides an overview of adoption service activity from April 2018 to March 2019. The report is attached at Appendix A.

The report also provides an update of the revised Statement of Purpose for One Adoption West Yorkshire and the Statement of Purpose for the service is attached at Appendix B. The Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standards in order to be able to provide those services.

### Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Joint Committee note the minor amendments to the Statement of Purpose and the annual adoption report and continues to support the work of One Adoption West Yorkshire to ensure children receive the best possible support.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report asks the Joint Committee to consider the annual report of the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), as detailed in Appendix A of this report, as required by the National Minimum Standards 2011.
- 1.2 This report seeks the committee to note the revised statement of purpose for OAWY attached at appendix B. The Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standard in order to be able to provide those services.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services, that each adoption service produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide a comprehensive adoption service.
- 2.2 Children's service adoption services are inspected against these standards by Ofsted. The Statement of Purpose attached give an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide adoption service. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins the work and shows how the welfare of children will be met. It also demonstrates the systems which we have set in place to recruit, assess, prepare and support adopters and to family find for children with a plan for adoption.
- 2.3 The background issues in relation to the adoption annual report are addressed in detail in the report itself at Appendix A.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The statement of purpose is updated annually was last updated in July 2018. The main issues of the annual report 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.

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

- 4.2.1 OAWY completed a full Equality Impact Assessment in 2018 and is an appendix to the annual report.

### **4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 This report contributes to the delivery of the Best Council Plan outcome for everyone in Leeds to 'be safe and feel safe'. In addition, the Children and Young Peoples Plan identifies Looked After Children as one of the three priority

'Obsessions'. OAWY is integral to these plans to provide stable and secure placements for looked after children.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 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 annual report at appendix A.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no implications in this report.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 Not applicable

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 This report seeks that the Joint Committee notes the annual report, as outlined in Appendix A, and continues to support the work of OAWY to ensure children receive the best possible support.

5.2 This report also seeks the Joint Committee to note the revised statement of purpose for One Adoption West Yorkshire. The Statement of Purpose for the service is attached at appendix B. The Statement of Purpose is required as part of the national minimum standards in order to be able to provide those services.

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 It is recommended that the Joint Committee note the Statement of Purpose for One Adoption West Yorkshire. It is also recommended that the Joint Committee notes the annual adoption report and continues to support the work of OAWY to ensure children receive the best possible support.

### **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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**Report of the Director of Children & Families**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Subject: One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

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 and One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) formally opened. OAWY was the first Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) to open in the country.
2. This report provides a summary on the developments of the service from April 2018 to March 2019.

**Recommendations**

1. That the Executive Board receive this annual report and continues to support the work of One adoption West Yorkshire to ensure our adopted children receive the best possible outcomes and support.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire from April 2018 to March 2019.

## **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.
- 2.2 The government continues to drive forward with the structural reform programme regarding regionalising adoption and there are now 15 regional adoption agencies (RAA's) covering a third of all local authorities and another 15 scheduled to go live between April and June 2019.
- 2.3 There are a number of challenges in the adoption system nationally with a decline in adoption decisions for children (ADM), new placement orders granted, children placed for adoption and adoption orders granted. However, at the same time there has been an increase in the number of children waiting with a placement order and the number of children waiting with a placement order 18 months or more.
- 2.4 There has also been a national increase in the average length of time for children waiting with a placement order but not yet placed, between entering care and moving in with adoptive parents (National scorecard Indicator A1) and the local authority receiving a court authority to place and deciding on a match (National scorecard Indicator A2).
- 2.5 The recruitment of adopters nationally is also declining and the gap between the number of children waiting (increasing) and approved adopters waiting (decreasing) is widening. At the same time the government suspended the requirement for agencies to place their children and adopters on the National Adoption Register from the end of March 2018, pending a review to also consider the issues raised in the fostering stocktake about a national register for foster carers.
- 2.6 While it is still early days for regionalisation, a range of qualitative data is becoming available, from Ofsted inspections and the Inception and Scoping Report from Ecorys UK / the Hadley Centre. There are positive indications about improving recruitment, reducing delay and improvements in timeliness in some RAA's. The latter report found that there are signs of positive adopter feedback, and improved adopter recruitment. Linked to this, some RAAs have been able to improve the support for adopters.
- 2.7 The future of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) remains uncertain and the Secretary of State announced in December 2018 £6m additional funding for the current year and an additional £6m for 2019-2020. The Government is aiming to work closely with the sector to consider long-term children's services funding as part of the 2019 Spending Review, when the government will set out its long-term spending approach.

### **3 Main issues**

#### **3.1 Use of Resources**

##### **3.1.1 Staffing**

The staff group remains largely stable but there has been a changeover in the three service managers within the service with Mary Brudenell emigrating in November, replaced by Michelle Rawlings. One of our other service managers is on long term sick leave and we are in the process of recruiting to fill this post on a temporary basis. There have been some new managers recruited and there has been additional staff recruited in adoption support to meet the demands of the service.

Julia Pearmain, one of the independent adoption panel chairs, has reduced the number of panels she is able to chair and we have therefore recruited a new Panel Chair to provide more flexibility in covering the panels. Andy Stott is an experienced manager with local authorities in the North West and more latterly as the operational manager for Barnardo's across Yorkshire and Humber has joined us for this role.

##### **3.1.2 Duty System**

Following the rollout of Enterprise Voice technology a revised Duty system came into effect on 2nd July 2018. This means that duty is now rotated between the 3 main office bases in Bradford, Huddersfield and Leeds on a weekly basis. This has reduced the time staff spend travelling to Kernel House and there has been no adverse impact upon the ability to take calls and respond effectively. In fact, it has had a positive effect with staff feeling more positive about this approach with a growing feeling of connectivity across the bases.

##### **3.1.3 Accommodation & service delivery**

Following a review of the service last year work and taking feedback from staff we have progressed on moving from 5 office bases to 3 locations with touch down space in the other two offices. The staff from the recruitment and assessment team based in Wakefield moved along with other staff from Bradford in February 2019 from Sir Henry Mitchell House to the Margaret McMillan building. At this time formal agreement has not yet been reached about space at Huddersfield regarding staff moving from Halifax. The issue has been escalated to address barriers in this progressing.

Each of the local authorities retain a key service manager and a team manager who link in with the local authority and in family finding the role of the Advanced Practitioner is key in tracking and providing advice to the agency regarding children's planning as well as looking at practice improvement with local authorities. There are also key family finding staff that will maintain established links and build new relationships with teams. However, across the region workers will be deployed flexibly, collapsing boundaries where appropriate and required. OAWY has increased the management capacity from within existing resources to create additional teams in Recruitment and Assessment, Family Finding and Adoption Support. These teams are based

out of the Leeds office to reduce travel time, being closer to Wakefield than the Bradford office in the original set up and also reflecting the increased needs across this part of the region in children requiring adoption.

The increase in teams at Kernel House in Leeds is causing pressure on space and constructive discussions are underway with colleagues and asset management to address space for One Adoption and the looked after children's teams

### 3.1.5 Information Technology

The IT project team is continuing to work with the teams on developing business processes and integrating forms into the mosaic workflow as well as developing improved reporting from the system. The new adoption support workflow has been implemented to make recording easier and to improve reporting. A monthly reporting meeting is now in place to look at prioritising the development of reports for use within the service, good progress is being made.

The work regarding accessing the local authority systems from a portal on the Leeds laptop remains outstanding. A project manager remains in position to ensure that this work is driven forward and there has been a number of technical and resource led issues that have prevented this from being delivered in Bradford and Calderdale. These issues have been escalated within the local authorities in order for this work to be completed satisfactorily. Kirklees have implemented a new case recording system and we have trained the staff who need access to this system as well as exploring with them the quarterly returns and the portal technology is to be explored in due course. This effectively means that some staff are still using more than one device in these local areas, this is not an efficient use of time, however the matter is being addressed.

### 3.1.6 Budget

In June 2018 there was an increase in the inter agency fees nationally and this has had a significant impact on the 2018/19 budget for OAWY with a request for an increase in the funding from each local authority. The operational accountability of the regional agency is to the Management Board, comprising of senior officers delegated by each Director Children Services and the increase in budget was been agreed by the 5 LA's. The agency is overseen by a Joint Committee of councillors representing the 5 local authorities, who have knowledge of and responsibility for Children's Services. The Joint Committee exercises the corporate parenting role of the Participating Authorities in relation to the functions of One Adoption Agency for West Yorkshire and these issues were discussed and a way forward agreed with them. The final outturn of the budget is reported in section 4.4.

## **3.2 Partnership working**

### **3.2.1 Operational leads meetings**

The responsible officer for adoption in each local authority meets with OAWY senior team every three months and this is a helpful forum to discuss practice and performance issues. The joint commissioning of training across the region has been an issue as the take up has been mixed. There is a mismatch between what operational leads may consider as priorities and what each workforce development leads in each local area see as a priority. It is important that the context of each LA is considered in relation to their practice and it has been agreed that meetings will be held with workforce development leads to discuss the issues and identify a way forward.

Discussions were held regarding the changes in letterbox arrangements and these have moved forward as we streamline the systems supporting this work. A protocol regarding foster care adoptions has been agreed between One Adoption West Yorkshire and across the operational leads group that will improve the timeliness of progressing these.

### **3.2.2 Centre of Excellence Project**

This department for education project aims to improve the positive outcomes for children and families through an evidence based multi- agency assessment of need and support, in partnership with children, adopters and others. The project is due to be completed in October 2019 and the multi disciplinary team are on track with completing the key objectives. They have implemented a Standardised Adoption Support Assessment Framework and the training for this is currently being rolled out across the region. The team are in the final stages of completing a multi-disciplinary model for adoption support in the region and this is due to be shared with key partners in June/July. The funding from the department for education is due to come to an end in October and discussions are underway regarding the sustainability of this approach given resource implications, given the positive benefits this model and approach provides for families across the region.

### **3.2.3 Early permanence Project**

The department for education also fund this project run by the voluntary adoption agencies, Barnardos, Adoption Matters and Caritas Care in partnership with One Adoption. Placing children in an early permanence arrangement is growing and the professionals training which is run jointly with Barnardo's is going well with attendance from all Local Authority partners. The concurrency project is well underway with the first family being approved and another in assessment by Adoption Matters and Caritas Care.

### **3.2.4 Meetings with medical advisors**

The medical advisors across the region meet with One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) staff twice a year. A medical advisor protocol has been implemented and this has been very helpful for all concerned and has been recognised as an exemplar for other RAA's. There are some issues in two local areas regarding medical advisor capacity and the resources available to

undertake medicals regarding children's health needs in a timely manner. This has led to some delays for children in progressing care plans and the matters have been discussed within each local authority, with commissioners in health and providers to seek improvements in this regard.

### 3.2.5 Virtual school heads (VSH)

In August 2018 Local Authorities received funding from the government to implement the new statutory duty and the OAWY management board agreed that the local authorities would top slice the grant by 10% to enable OAWY to work in partnership with the VSH in implementing new duty across the region. The education worker within OAWY, working as part of the centre of excellence work is ideally placed to work with staff in adoption support to build their knowledge and skill about issues around education that affect children and young people and to provide advice and support to adoptive families. The funding enables the education worker to undertake an agreed programme of work with the VSH's, beyond the timescales for the centre of excellence project. This is pioneering work and is seen as an example of good practice by the Department of Education.

### 3.2.9 Special Guardianship

In July 2018 the management board agreed to another initiative, overseen by One Adoption West Yorkshire, working in partnership with grandparents plus and the five local authorities to provide support to special guardians in the region. This is a project developing a model that has been successful in the North East working with kinship carers providing a strong focus on peer support as a sustainable and effective way to support kinship carers. Two project workers have been recruited and came into post on 1st October 2018 and work has been progressing with the team managers in the fostering services to ensure that all are aware of the service, referral process and to look at identifying appropriate groups/ families to work with. There are positive indications regarding the impact of this work and more information regarding impact and outcomes will be provided in due course.

## 3.3 **Performance Management**

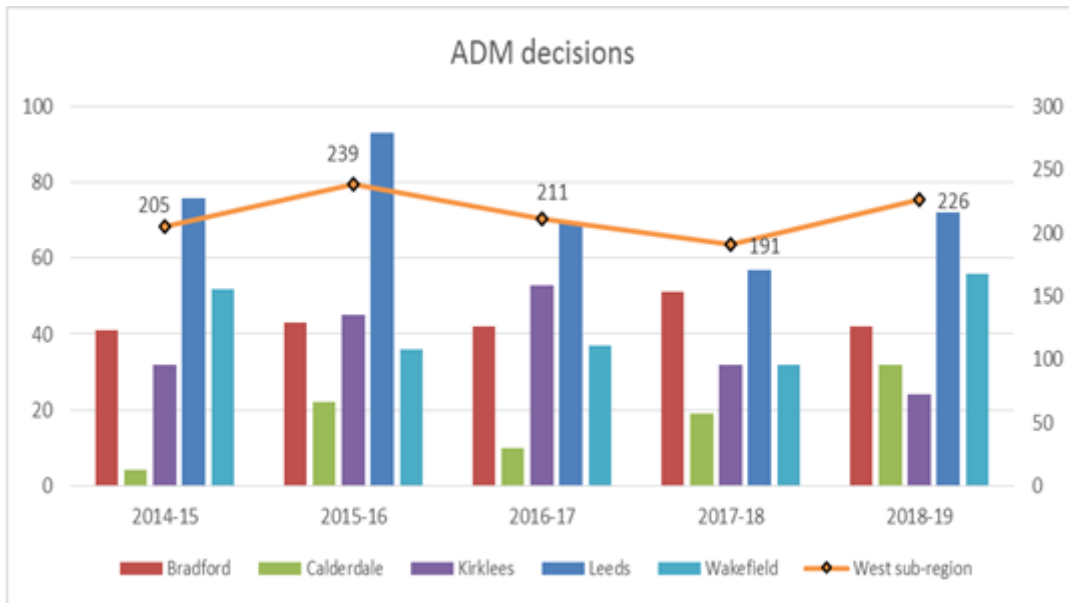
3.3.1 The agency provides quarterly reports to the management board. This data provided has developed over the last 2 years and is gathered to ensure that we are aware of how much work is undertaken, how well was it undertaken and if anyone is any better off.

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

### 3.3.2 The children with a plan for adoption during 2018/19

Between April 2018 and March 2019, 226 children had a plan for adoption ratified by the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities Agency Decision Makers. Of the 226 children with a plan for adoption, there were 118 female and 108 male children.

In total, this is a 18% increase on the last year's full year figure of 191 children from across the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities.



### 3.3.3 Ethnicity

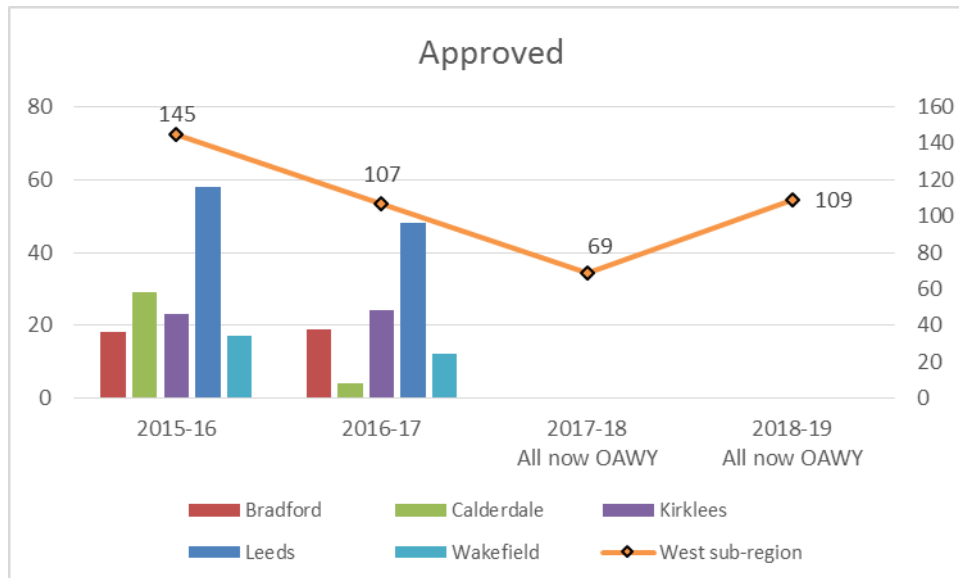
Of the 226 children with a plan for adoption ratified this year, 176 (78%) children were from white British backgrounds (including information not obtained) and 50 children (22%) were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, including children from eastern European, Gypsy Roma, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds.

### 3.3.4 Placement with Siblings

As a general principle, siblings will be placed together; however, due to the individual needs of children, this is not always appropriate and cannot always be achieved. It is essential that sibling assessments are carried out to ensure good quality decision making and support plans are evidence based if children are placed together or apart. The numbers of children requiring adoption in sibling groups during the year is 47 children (this includes those with a match and/ or placement). Of the 40 children placed from this cohort during the year 12 were placed apart. A breakdown of the size of the sibling groups is not available as some LAs do not provide a unique reference number for this. This will be captured on Mosaic for 2019/20.

### 3.3.5 Adopter recruitment

109 adoptive households were approved during the year and you will note from the table below that this is an increase of 40 from year-end 2017-18. This takes us slightly above the numbers prior to regionalisation and is encouraging.



Within the 109 households, 206 individuals were approved throughout 2018/19. Of these 22 (11%) are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds. We need to improve our percentage of BME carers and keep a focus on ensuring that we approve a full range of adoptive families to meet the range of children requiring placement, while at the same time not relying on matching children with regard to ethnic identity as an overriding factor. We are undertaking some key focussed work to increase the diverse range of adopters over the next year. Households approved for sibling groups improved this year with 21 households approved for 2 children; 1 approved for a sibling group of 3 and 31 households open to an Early Permanence Placements. There is still more to do around recruiting adopters for sibling groups.

### 3.3.6 Children with an adoption plan

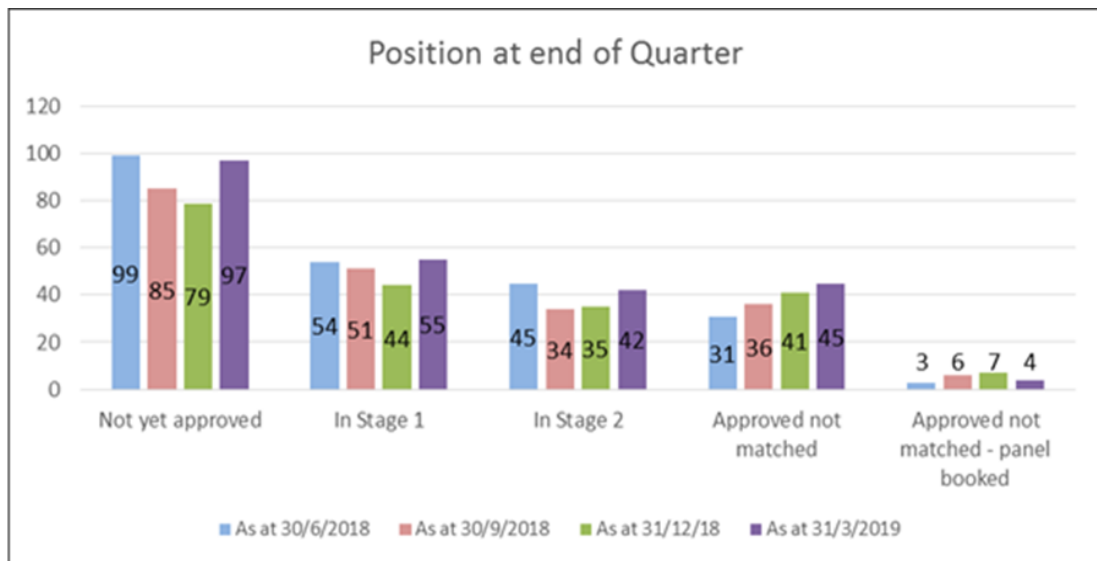
As of the end of March 2019 there are 202 children with a plan for adoption from the 5 west Yorkshire local authorities not currently placed and requiring adopters. 95 children out of the 202 are 0 - 2 years, 84 are between 2 and 4 years and 23 children are 5 years of age or older. 4 children have potential matches identified and 4 of these have a date booked at adoption panel for the match to be formally considered.

From the children waiting for a placement there are 99 girls and 103 boys, and 26% are children from BME backgrounds. There are 4 sibling groups of 2 and 4 sibling groups of 3. The plans for these children are actively reviewed with clear monitoring and tracking systems to understand the range of family finding activity going on for these children and whether adoption remains the right plan for each child. The delays for these children are related primarily to the needs of the children; the need to place siblings together, the age of the children or their particular special needs or complexity.



### 3.3.7 Adopters available

As of the end of March 2019, there are 45 approved adoptive households that have not officially been matched. 32 are available to consider placements (have no links) as 13 have a panel date booked for a match.

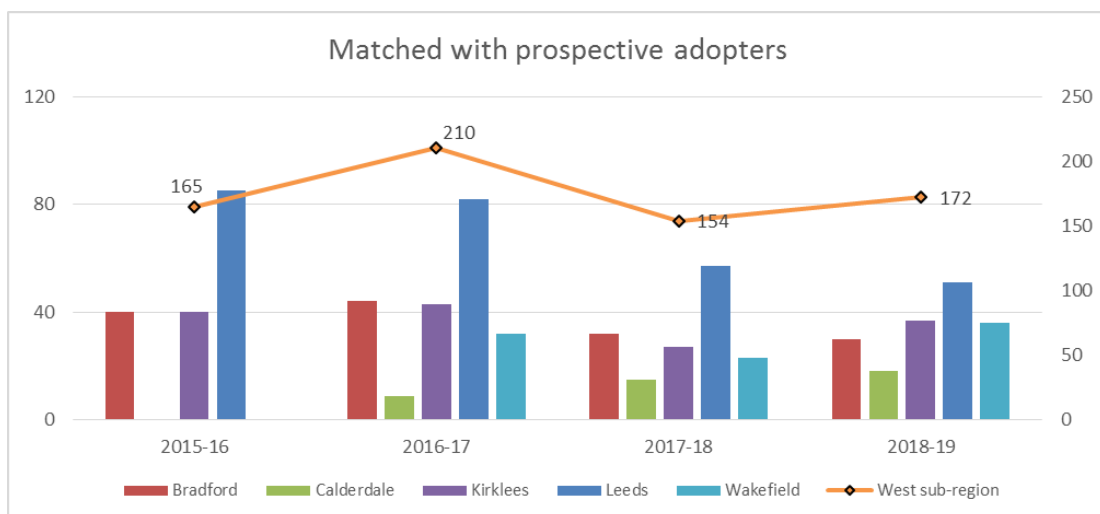


On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 97 adopters are in the process of assessment (in stage 1 or 2) although these will take a number of months to become approved. There is a steady increase in those within the assessment process overall.

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

### 3.3.8 Children matched in the year for adoption

Between April 2018 and March 2019, 172 children from the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities were matched with families at adoption panels; this is a 11% increase on the 154 children matched between April 2017 and March 2018 from across the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities.



From April 2018 to March 2019, 23% (40) of the children matched were from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

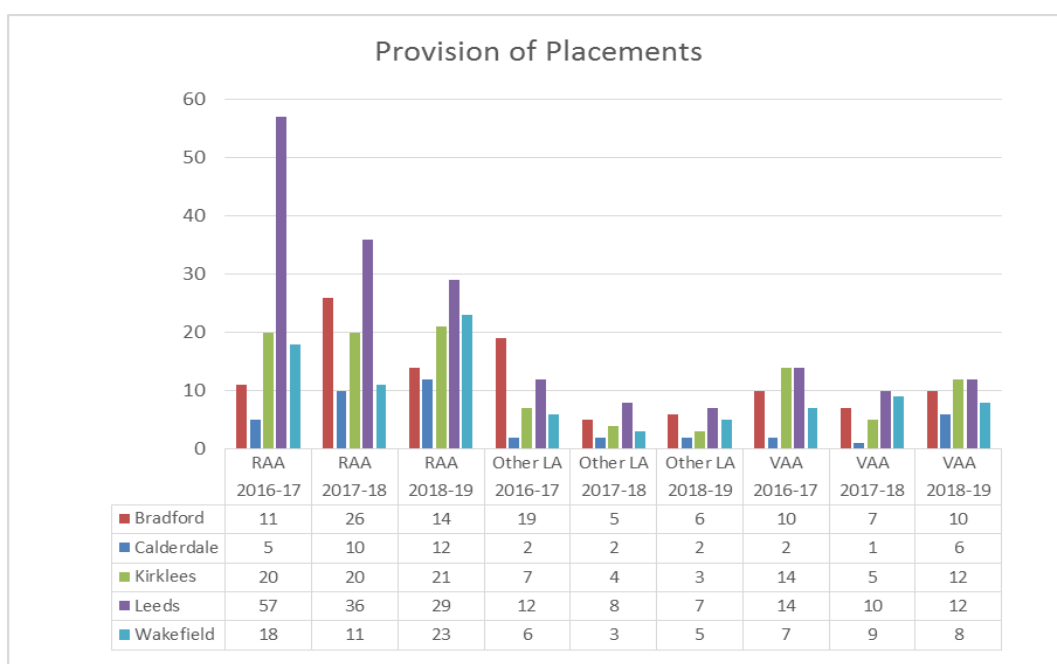
- 139 of the children matched were 0 to 2 years old;
- 23 children matched were 2 to 4 years old;
- 10 children were aged 5 years or older;
- 62 children were part of a sibling group (of the 172 matched);
- 55 children were placed who are part of a sibling group of which 19 were placed apart; as part of a plan due to their individual needs;
- 15 children were placed in early permanence placements during the year of which 4 have since been adopted. This is a very positive step in reducing the number of moves for children before they reach their permanent family.

### 3.3.9 Provision of Placements

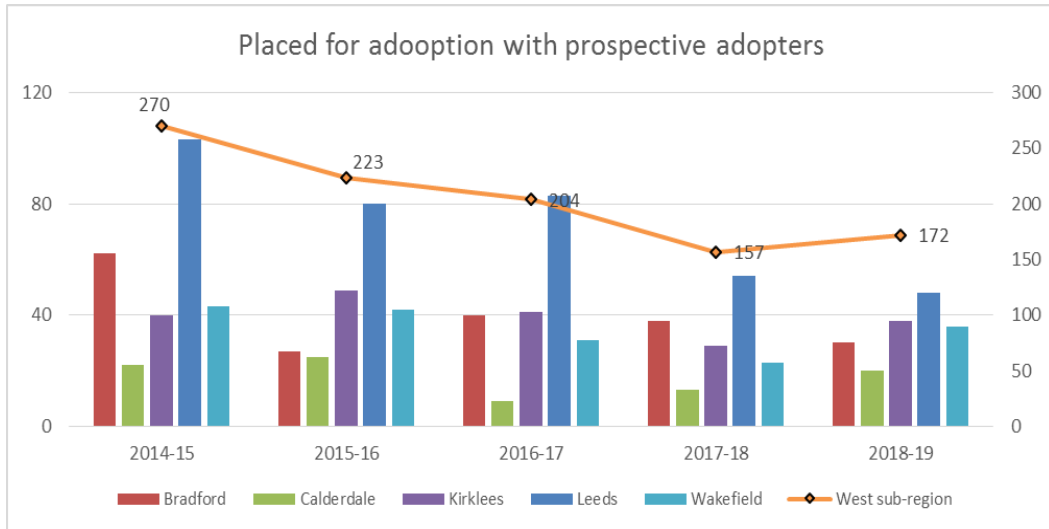
We placed 170 children this year. The percentage of placements provided in-house within the region has decreased this year, due to the lack of families in the process when the RAA went live so not as many available in the system as we approached the second half of the year.

- 99 children within RAA;
- 23 children with other local authorities LA's);
- 48 children with VAA.

The percentage this year was 59% in house and 41% interagency. Last year it was 66% in house and 34% interagency. It is clear from this table that the trends for LA's in the use of interagency placements has changed with some LA's decreasing the number of interagency placements made, although some LA's have also seen a decreasing number of children coming through for adoption so the picture is more complex than the figures suggest.



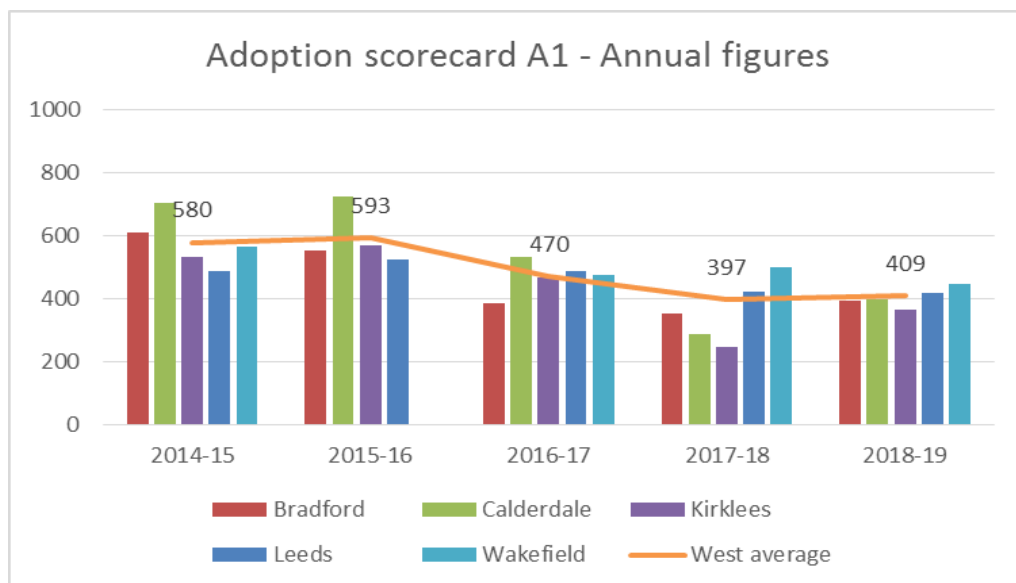
The following children were placed with adopters in the year. This is a slightly different figure from those matched as there is always a gap to allow time for preparation and introductions to the new family.



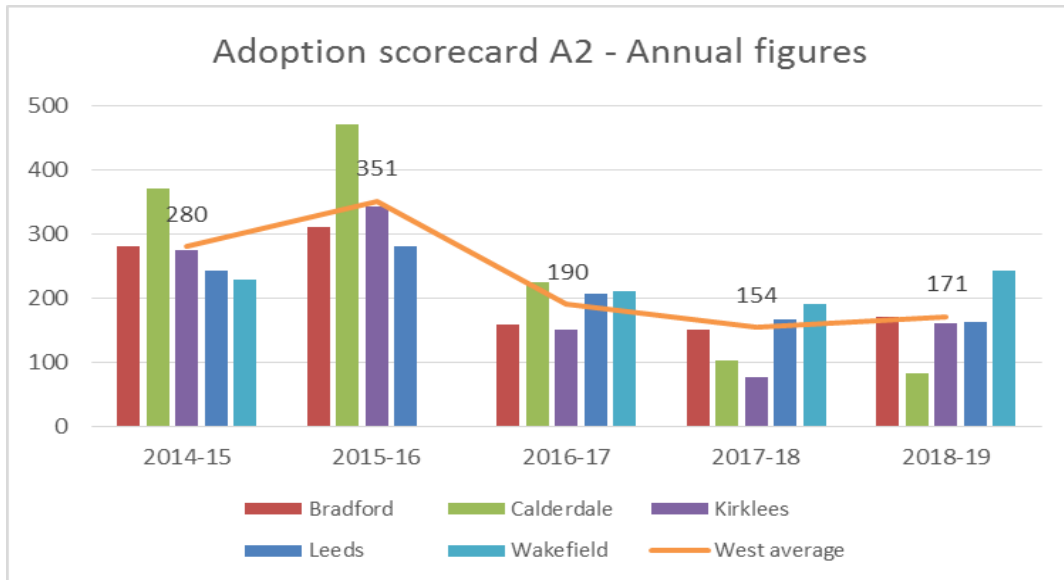
We can see from the data above that children in the region, including those children who often wait longer due to their individual needs, age or ethnicity or being part of a sibling group are being found families to meet their needs. The data below looks at how timely these placements are being made. N.B. The chart shows 172 placed, however 2 children had their placement disrupted in the same period.

### 3.3.10 Adoption Scorecards

The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (indicator A1) for children in West Yorkshire is 409 days, the National Indicator target is 426 days and the England Average is 486). This is positive and remains stable.

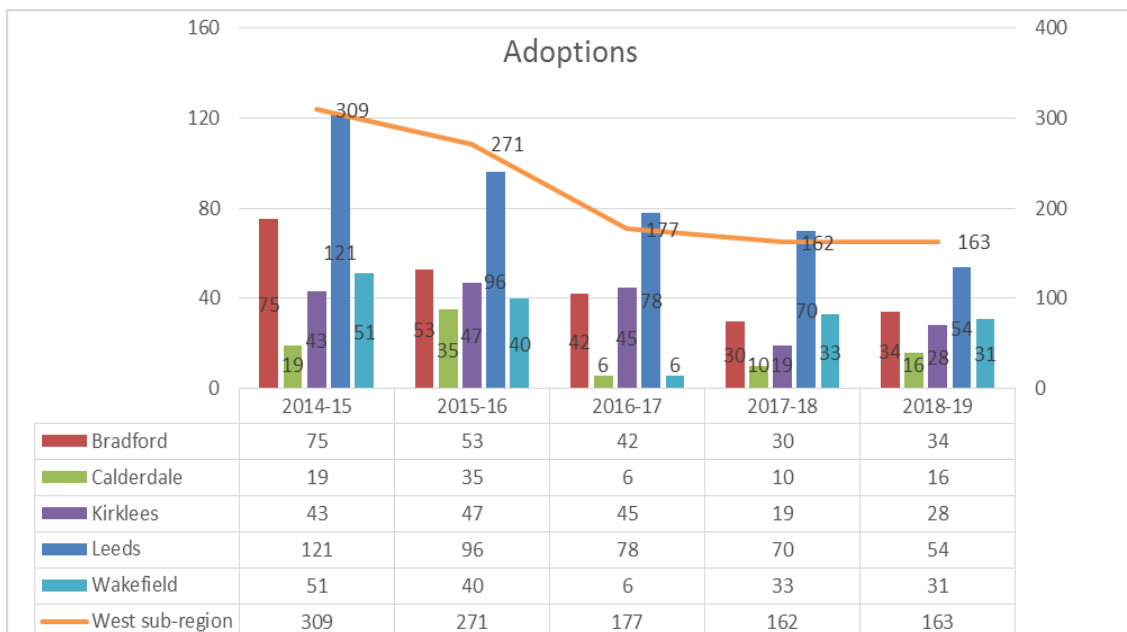


The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (Indicator A2) for children in West Yorkshire is 171 days, gradually declining which is better for children in reducing delay the National indicator target is 121 days and the England average is 201. This is still above the national indicator and reflects an issue of a national decline in the number of adopters available as well as some LA's having less early permanence placements that can impact upon this overall figure.



### 3.3.11 Children adopted from care

The number of children who have been adopted has increased by 1 (163) with 14% of children leaving care being adopted. This is in line with the national average.



### 3.4 Practice, quality of provision and management oversight

#### 3.4.1 Awards

In October 2018 One Adoption West Yorkshire was awarded a national award for Excellence in adoption practice. This was the first time a regional adoption agency has won a national award and this has aided with raising the profile of the agency and recognising good practice. In addition to this one of our adoptive families in the region also won the Adopter Champion of the year. They adopted four children and assist in the training of early permanence adopters in our region, highlighting the benefits of this approach for children.

In March 2019 One Adoption West Yorkshire also won the 2018 Local Government Chronicles Award. This award was for working across public to public partnerships. The judges said of the entry: "This partnership has taken an inclusive transformational approach to deliver a consistent high quality service. It has delivered a flagship service across a wide geographic area. It was the first of its kind and sets the standard for the rest of the country. It is shaped by the experience of its stakeholders."

#### 3.4.2 Recruitment and Assessment

Over 2018/19 the One Adoption brand awareness has continued to grow steadily. This can be seen by the increase in people finding the One Adoption website 'organically' (not through paid advertising). This activity resulted in 507 households attending the information events in West Yorkshire which is an increase of 129 compared to 2017/18. More targeted advertising has seen the marketing cost per household attending an information event reduced from £256 in 2017/18 to £115 this year.

The preparation of adopters has continued to improve with adopters now having access to additional training via full day or twilight sessions in relation to early permanence, birth parent workshop, infant brain development and training for relatives or friends.

The 4 days of Preparation Training now incorporate the use of Virtual Reality technology. This has had a very positive impact upon prospective adopters stating: "*a very good experience; really powerful andt really helped with putting yourself in the child's shoes.*" There continues to be a commitment to ensure birth parents are actively involved in the preparation of adopters and the introduction of these workshops has really helped adoptive focus on the importance of working with birth parents to help adopted children develop a coherent sense of their identity.. One adopter stated: "*I realised that you do not take a child and then forget about the birth family. They may not be there in person but they will always be part of the child's life*".

Over the last year there has been a real focus on promoting the Adoption Support Core Offer early in the recruitment process and ensuring this becomes the norm for adoptive families, enabling families to access support with a therapeutic parenting approach to meet their children's needs.

### 3.4.3 Adoption Panels

The adoption panels across the region continue to work well and the number of independent panel chairs has increased from two to three with Andy Stott joining the team in September 2018. Communication between the Chairs and OAWY has improved with the Service Manager responsible for panels now making regular phone calls to the Chairs. Formal meetings are also undertaken between the Chairs and the agency. The adoption panels play an important role in providing feedback to the local authorities and the agency regarding practice and provide a half yearly report. This is discussed more in 3.4.16

### 3.4.4 Family Finding

The Family Finding teams have continued with the regional linking meeting to look at children and families in the assessment process and to refine the systems to support this work. The ceasing of the National adoption register in March 2019 by the government has meant that other resources have been accessed to make links with families nationwide and we are exploring links to pilot the use of collective matching with Coram I and Linkmaker. We have continued to develop the partnership with the voluntary agency alliance in the region and we are exploring ways of commissioning their placements that ensure that children are placed more locally.

The use of profiling events has been positive with 5 profiling events held in 2018/19. These have resulted in 16 matches to date for children in the region. Approved and stage 2 adopters from OAWY and other agencies across the North of England were invited. The success of these events and the positive feedback from those who attended has resulted in plans for further profiling events to be held in 2019/20. Comments include: *“The event was excellent - the family finders and all the staff were amazing;”* *“all extremely informative – really good to have a social worker with me to think about the children that may be right for us.”*

Bump into meetings have developed and they happen following the decision to proceed with the adoptive placement and before adoption panel. Prior to the child being given information about their new family, the foster carer and adopters arrange to meet in a park or another location familiar to the child. When asking approved adopters what went well at the bump into meeting they said: *“It was great to see the twins for the first time but it was also great to meet their foster carer who was fab; “ We could see boys playing care free, and see their personalities rather than just their pictures.”*

### 3.4.5 Adoption Support

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

The range and quality of adoption services open to all adopters across the region continues to develop and increase as gaps in provision have become

clearer. The peer mentoring is going from strength to strength and there are now 31 trained mentors who are providing support to 51 families. The feedback from those who have a peer mentor has been really positive:

*“ Our mentor has been a life-line to us during this difficult process; “ helps me to feel I do a good job and that however challenging life is it's not insurmountable”; “It's so nice having someone who understands”;*

3 newsletters went out to all adoptive families across the region in June, October and January. These talk about all the activities going on across the region for families to access. Comments from adopters include *“ thank you for a fantastic and varied newsletter. I really enjoyed reading it, especially the articles and also the resources information. I appreciate all of the help and support we receive which is so much more valuable than anything we received as new adopters in 2015. Everything has moved at such a pace and I like to keep up to date.. thankyou”.*

One of the stay and play groups has been relaunched following consultation with parents. There have been a number of training programmes and workshops for parents including foundations for attachment programme with more than 20 families having accessed this since the start of the year. Feedback includes: *“Very thought provoking, made complete sense, made me better understand what was happening for my child”;* *“Greater understanding and new ways of parenting”.* Training for parent regarding non violence resistance to help manage child to parent violence and a safebase parenting programme for caring for teenagers has continued to be reviewed positively.

The new Adoption Support Fund portal on the Government website came into force at the beginning of July 2018 and this is much more user-friendly and along with our improved business support processes we have had a higher number of successful applications for therapeutic support for families. In total we have accessed £2.1 million to support 650 adopted children in West Yorkshire.

#### 3.4.6 Disruptions

In the last year, 2 adoption placements have disrupted prior to the adoption order being made. Disruption is always a cause for concern and OAWY is working closely with the local authorities to ensure that a full understanding of the issues leading to the breakdowns are fully understood to inform future planning for the child and the adoptive parents as well as themes for learning for future practice.

#### 3.4.7 Quality Assurance

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

- Views of Children and Families: The views and experiences of children & young adults;
- Performance Data: Any statistical data that helps us judge the quality and effectiveness of our professional practice;

- Practice Wisdom & Knowledge: The practice wisdom of those staff who work with children, young people and families, adoption panels and learning from disruptions;
- The findings of external and internal inspections, audits and evaluations of our practice.

A Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism for panel work is used as a matter of course and has found that the majority of prospective adopter reports (PARS) were of a good standard (81% 'good', 15% 'satisfactory' and 4% requiring improvement). This is an improvement on last years figure. The Child Permanence Reports provided by local authority social workers over half were considered good (53%, 19% 'satisfactory' and 28% requiring improvement). This is a slight decline since last year and OAWY are working with the 5 LA's to address this issues with training and development work, given the high turnover of staff in some some local authorities.

With regard to feedback from service users at adoption panel, 50 questionnaires were received from attendees at panel who rated the experience at panel out of a possible score of 10:

- 40 (80%) respondents rated the experience at 9 or higher;
- 6 (12%) respondents rated the experience at 8;
- 2 (4%) respondents rated the experience at 6;
- 1 (2%) respondent rated the experience at 3.

There has been some learning for panels and the agency about those circumstances at panel that have been difficult to ensure that we are fully aware of and can rectify issues as far as possible prior to panel.

There were 5 complaints made regarding the Adoption Service during the year. All complaints were resolved at stage one. 1 complaint was withdrawn, 1 was resolved, 1 was partially upheld, 1 was not upheld and 1 is ongoing, all relating to issues with adoption support. Each year we look at any themes arising from complaints to ensure that we can learn from these and feedback into practice improvement.

#### 3.4.8 Voice and Influence of Children, Young People and Adopters

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

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

#### 3.5.1 Staff development and support

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



The analysis of the staff survey last summer showed feedback that the top positive theme was relationships. Staff had cited strength in relationships not only with each other but also LAs, adopters, other agencies and families. The constructive themes that emerged for development were: communication – a sense of frustration that staff did not feel like they are informed of what was going on i.e. potential office moves and/ or that they have ‘no voice’; Travel/ location of offices – concerns over lost time, feeling of isolation and difficulty forming/ feeling like a team; Training – be it IT/ mosaic or social work practice training.

As a response to these issues a number of changes took place with regards to travel and accommodation, a review of communication across the agency with a new communication plan has been implemented and clinical supervision is provided for adoption support staff. We are underway with a skills gaps analysis in order to develop a workforce development strategy in the next year to ensure that we can continue to build a skilled workforce.

### 3.5.2 Training

During 2018/19 a range of training has been delivered across the teams. Here are some highlights:

- Restorative Practice- Action learning sets for managers
- Adoption Support Fund Assessment Tool – all social work staff;
- Adoption Support assessment framework – all social work staff
- Sibling assessments- family finders and LA social workers
- Contact and identity issues- social work staff
- Attachment Style Interview – all recruitment & assessment staff;
- Conflict Resolution – all team managers and advanced practitioners;
- Trauma Informed Training – delivered to all at a staff event in Oct;
- Virtual Reality – selected staff
- Management & leadership Level 3 & 5 apprenticeship – 3 x business support;

We are in the process of carrying out an skills gap analysis. This will inform the workforce development plan for the next two years to be in line with the service improvement plan. However, plans are already in place to provide training for adoption support workers with Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy & Non-Violent Resistance to work more effectively with families across the region.

### 3.5.3 Strategic issues and forward plans

OAWY’s plan on a page, Appendix 2, outlines the vision, mission, outcomes and priorities up to 2020/21. Activities linked to the delivery of the plan are tracked through the OAWY Service Improvement Plan.

## **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

There has been ongoing engagement with staff over the year. 2 staff events have been held and an annual on-line survey. Both the events and survey encourage involvement and the gathering staff views. Staff identified communications and the location of offices as areas for improvement. As a result a communication review was undertaken and a plan implemented as discussed in Section 3.1.5.

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

OAWY completed an equality Impact assessment last year and a clear action plan emerged from this to ensure that we are able to provide a comprehensive service to all communities. The actions are captured in the service improvement plan. This assessment can be found at Appendix 3.

### **4.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan**

The activities in this report contribute to the Best Council Plan outcome for everyone in Leeds to have Safe, Strong Communities with specific priorities to 'keep people safe from harm' and 'support children to have the best start in life' and to the Child Friendly Leeds . In addition, the supporting Children and Young People's Plan identifies Looked after Children as one of three priority 'obsessions'. The adoption service is integral to our plan to safely and appropriately reduce the numbers of Children Looked After through ensuring all our children are placed in a permanent family outside the care system as soon as possible.

*Climate Emergency Strategy:* the reduction in travel for staff across the region supports the Climate Emergency strategy in reducing the carbon footprint associated with car travel. We have an all staff event in June and will discuss with the staff the best ideas that we can have to contribute to this strategy across the region.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The final outturn position for OAWY was an overall pressure of £858k, due to the pressures around the new payment arrangements (set up by the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA)) for Inter Agency placements and staffing capacity issues in the service around adoption support. Each local authority increased its contribution to meet this shortfall.

4.4.2 Within staffing there was a net position just under £13k under, due to the £225k DfE income stream for the Centre of Excellence Project.

4.4.3 Inter-Agency placements - changes that came into effect from 1st June 2018 are as follows: the fee rates increased for voluntary adoption agencies and the fees are required to be paid in full in the year of placement. This is a change to previous years where the fee would be split over two years (2/3rd's/1/3rd split). This double effect of increased fee and paying the voluntary agencies

has significantly impacted on the financial position of OAWY which resulted of an overspend of £654k (£2,162k spend against budget of £1,508k).

- 4.4.4 Inter-Agency Income - a shortfall of £246k in 2018/19 due to less OAWY adopters available to be being matched with out of area children.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information Call In**

- 4.5.1 This report is subject to Call In.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

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

### **4 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year as a regional adoption agency has seen the service move forward positively. OAWY has increased the numbers of adopters approved and has maintained the timeliness of children placed for adoption, in spite of a national picture of a decline in both these areas. The development of a range of adoption support services has been welcomed by adopters and the service continues to work with families to address gaps in provision. The staff in the agency are extremely committed and passionate about improving outcomes for children in the region and to being part of a developing a flagship adoption service that promotes and develops best practice.

### **5 Recommendations**

- 6.1 That the Executive Board receives this report and continues to support the work of One Adoption West Yorkshire to ensure our adopted children receive the best possible support.

### **6 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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**One**  
Adoption  
Agency  
WEST YORKSHIRE

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

## JUNE 2019



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

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

### The Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with:

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

Adoption Agencies are inspected against these standards by Ofsted.

## 2. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

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

### Values: Children

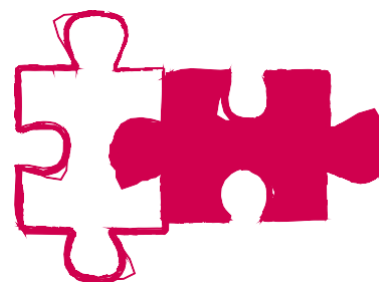
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond and where possible this should be within their own family
- The Child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process
- The Child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account at all stages
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible

- The child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality will be fully recognised, positively valued and promoted when decisions are made
- The particular needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family will be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many organisations, professionals and individuals who have to work together to deliver to meet the needs of the services.
- Birth parents and birth families are entitled to services that recognise the lifelong implications of adoption. They will be treated fairly, openly and offered a support service.

## Equal Opportunities

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

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



## 3. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AGENCY

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

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

## Objectives of the agency

1. To recruit, assess and provide adopters that meet the needs of the children to be placed for adoption within the timescales laid down by National Adoption Standards.
2. To provide information on the process to applicants interested in becoming adopters and on the children requiring adoption.
3. To ensure that adopters receive appropriate preparation, training, support and advice to enable them to offer the best possible standards of parenting, safety and protection for children or young people in their care.
4. To minimise delay in family finding, paying attention to the needs of the child at all times.
5. To provide information on the services available to all those affected by adoption recognising



that as adoption has lifelong implications for all those involved, their needs will change over time.

6. To provide a range of adoption support services to birth relatives, adopted adults, adopters and their children in partnership with other agencies.
7. To provide information on the service that is available to those wishing to adopt from abroad
8. To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair.
9. That concerns about the service are addressed and that information about the complaints procedure is made available.
10. That the organisation regularly reviews the services it provides, consults with, and learns from, those in receipt of their services through comments, compliments and complaints

## 4. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & OFFICE BASES

<b>Head of Service, One Adoption West Yorkshire</b>			
<b>Sarah Johal</b>			
<b>Service Delivery Managers</b>			
<b>Julie Chew (Leeds)</b>	<b>Michelle Rawlings (Bradford)</b>	<b>Mandy Prout (Huddersfield)</b>	
<b>Team Managers – Recruitment and Assessment</b>			
<b>Sheila Wood (Leeds)</b>	<b>Jo Hedgecock (Leeds)</b>	<b>Samantha Thomas (Bradford)</b>	<b>Lianne Kingswood (P/T) (Huddersfield)</b>
<b>Team Managers – Family Finding</b>			
<b>Nicola Steele (Leeds)</b>	<b>Heather Pipe (P/T) (Leeds)</b>	<b>Katie Robinson (Bradford)</b>	<b>Valerie Edwards (Halifax &amp; plan to move to Huddersfield)</b>
<b>Team Managers – Adoption Support and Adoption Support Services Advisors (ASSA's)</b>			
<b>Sarah Ryan (Leeds)</b>	<b>Amy Wood (P/T) (Leeds)</b>	<b>Rhian Beynon (Bradford)</b>	<b>Tony Bryce (Huddersfield)</b>
<b>Business Support Manager</b>			
<b>Aretha Hanson</b>			

### One Adoption provides an adoption service to:

Children who are in need of an adoptive family

Birth parents

Prospective and approved adopters

Children and adoptive parents who need adoption support services

Adopted adults and members of their birth families



## 5. THE WORK OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE



### The service undertakes the following tasks:

Recruitment of prospective adoptive families

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

Family finding for children who need a permanent home through adoption

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

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

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

Non agency adoption work for Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Head office is based at:

Kernel House,  
Killingbeck Drive  
Leeds  
LS14 6UF

## Other office bases are:

Bradford	Wakefield	Halifax	Huddersfield
<b>Margaret McMillan Tower Prince's Way Bradford BD1 1NN</b>	<b>Queen's House Queen's Row Market Street Wakefield WF1 1DF</b>	<b>Ground Floor Princess Buildings Princess Street Halifax HX1 1T</b>	<b>Civic centre 1 High Street Huddersfield HD1 2NF</b>

## 6. NUMBERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF

Sarah Johal, Head of Service, has overall responsibility for One Adoption West Yorkshire. Qualifications: CQSW in Social Work 1990; MA Social Work and Social Care 2001; Advanced Award in Social Work 2002; Post Graduate Certificate in Applied Social Work Management 2007. She has over 29 years post qualification experience in child care, including 20 years in Adoption and Fostering. She has been a manager for over 17 years within both statutory child care and adoption and fostering services.

The agency has three Service Delivery Managers. Mandy Prout (Diploma in Social Work 1991) has extensive knowledge and experience in adoption practice and has been a manager in adoption services since 2007. Julie Chew (CQSW 1992 & NVQ Level 4 in management). Julie has worked in a variety of settings in relation to children and families social work and has been an adoption manager since 2007. Michelle Rawlings (Diploma in Social Work 2003 & CMI Level 5 Certificate in Leadership & Management) is an experienced adoption social worker and have been a manager in adoption services since 2012.

The agency employs 125 staff. There are 64 full time equivalent qualified social workers across the three service areas, 6 of whom are Advanced Practitioners. There are 6 adoption advisors who support the recruitment and family finding service. The agency has a Business Support Manager and 21 full time equivalent administrative staff.

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

## 7. THE SERVICE TO PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS

### Enquiries and First Contact

Enquirers can access information on adopting with One Adoption West Yorkshire via the Regional Adoption Agency website (<https://www.oneadoption.co.uk/about-one-adoption-west-yorkshire>) or make contact through the dedicated advice line. At first contact, enquirers are given information verbally about the adoption process and invited to an information session.



## Applications for adoptions from overseas

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

## Information Events

Enquirers are invited to attend an information event. Information events are held a minimum of every three weeks across the West Yorkshire region. Details of these events are available on the One Adoption website. The information event delivers a presentation about adoption and attendees will have the opportunity to meet adopters and experienced adoption social workers to discuss the different routes to adoption. If enquirers are unable to attend an information event this needs to be discussed and alternative arrangements can be made. If enquirers wish to progress their interest, they request a home visit, the details of which are provided at the event.

## Initial Home Visit

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

A detailed summary of the home visit will be completed and passed to an adoption manager before the registration of interest form is provided. The adoption manager will make a decision within 5 days of receipt of the completed registration of interest form about whether it should be accepted.

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



## Stage 1 Pre-assessment process

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

The stage one process will include the following:

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

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

## Preparation sessions

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

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

## Stage 2 – the assessment process

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Adoption by existing foster carers

Foster carers should notify the service in writing of their wish to be considered as adopters for a child or children in their care. If the child/ children's plan is for adoption, this will be acknowledged and a meeting held between workers from the adoption and fostering teams and the child's social worker to consider how this should be progressed and will be discussed with the foster carers, who will also be informed of their legal rights.

A fast track process will be provided for approved foster carers who want to be assessed as adoptive parents. Stage one and two of the adoption process will take place concurrently in order to avoid delay. They will be offered training.

## Second or subsequent adopters

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

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

## Adoption Panel

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

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

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

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

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

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

Decisions are notified to a child's parent(s), guardian(s) and prospective adopter(s). Social workers will be informed of the agency decision within 2 working days and



the decision will be confirmed in writing  
within 5 working days.

## 8. BEYOND APPROVAL

### Matching and support

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Process for the matching of a child

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

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





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

## Annual Reviews of Prospective adopters

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

## Meeting birthparents

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

## After placement

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

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

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

## Contact and the letterbox service

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

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



## 9. ADOPTION SUPPORT

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

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

The agency has 3 specialist adoption support teams across the region who offer a range of adoption support services. They also signpost other services for those affected by adoption:

### **Adoptive parents**

#### **Adopted children and young people**

#### **Birth parents**

#### **Adopted adults**

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

### **For adoptive families:**

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

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



### **Adopted children & young people:**

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

- Information about registering a veto

## Birth relatives:

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

## For Adopted Adults:

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

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

## 10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE ADOPTION SERVICE

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

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

Adoption Agencies are monitored by external inspections carried out by Ofsted.

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

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

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

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



## 11. CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

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

Freepost

PO Box 657

Leeds LS1 9BS

Tel: 01132224405

Email: [feedback.children@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:feedback.children@leeds.gov.uk)

Details of the Registration Authority

### **OFSTED CONTACT DETAILS**

Ofsted National Business Unit

Piccadilly Gate Store Street,

Manchester,

M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)





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## Voice and Influence of Adopters, Children & Young People report Card April 2018 to March 2019

**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?

## Virtual Reality

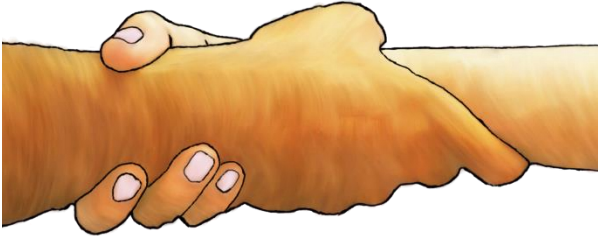
Working with Cornerstone, an agency run by adopters for adopters, we introduced Virtual reality (VR) to adopter preparation training in January 2019. The purpose of VR is to accelerate prospective adopters learning and understanding of the needs of children. The initial feedback to VR from prospective adopters has been positive with 15/17 rating it as good or excellent. Here are some comments:



- *...a very good experience;*
- *Really powerful;*
- *...it really helped with putting yourself in the child's shoes;*
- *Very impactful;*
- *...the content was very insightful;*
- *Emotional but again makes everything seem real*

This will be provided for all preparation training next year and we will also start to think about extending the use of the VR with adopters and professionals working with our families.

## Peer Mentoring Scheme



OAWY have delivered the Peer Mentoring Scheme, adopters having developed and delivering the service. The Peer Mentoring scheme provides trained volunteer mentors to help others through the process of adopting and being an adoptive parent – given how challenging and stressful it can be.

We now have 31 trained mentors who are providing support to 51 families. The feedback from those who have a peer mentor has been really positive:

- *Very informative mentor with great listening skills;*
- *Our mentor has been a life-line to us during this difficult process;*
- *At a time when we faced so many different challenges and concerns our mentor listened, shared their experiences and made us feel not so alone;*
- *Good to know someone who has adopted and I can ask for advice. Someone who will talk about "real life" rather than theory;*
- *Having somebody outside the process to talk to, who understands;*
- *Helps me to feel I do a good job and that however challenging life is it's not insurmountable;*
- *It so nice having someone who understands;*
- *It's nice to have someone to talk to or drop a quick message if a question pops into your head. I feel well supported;*
- *My mentor is always there for me we meet every month and I know she is only a phone call away if I need her.*

## Profiling Events

Adoptive parents wanted more opportunities to see children who were waiting adoption to make early links. The 5 profiling events held in 2018/19 have resulted in 16 matches so far. Approved and stage 2 adopters from OAWY and other agencies across the North of England were invited. The success of these events and the positive feedback from those who attended has resulted in plans for further profiling events to be held in 2019/20.

Feedback from those who attended has been positive, see comments below:

- *The event was excellent. The family finders and all the staff were amazing;*
- *All extremely informative – really good to have a social worker with me;*
- *It was a really good event and I enjoyed it;*
- *We don't feel you could do more.*



## Bump Into Meetings

Bump into meetings happen following the decision to proceed with the adoptive placement and before adoption panel. Prior to the child being given information about their new family, the foster carer and adopters arrange to meet in a park or another location familiar to the child. The adults say hello and spend some time engaging. Any organic interaction between the adopter and child is encouraged.

The meetings are short and planned with the support of the adoption Social Worker. It is hoped that when the child meets the prospective adopters and has a positive experience of being with these real people it will be easier for the child to associate these new people with positive feelings and experiences; in turn supporting the introduction period and placement.

When asking approved adopters what went well at the bump into meeting they said...

- *Relaxed atmosphere and calming influence of foster carer;*
- *It was great to see the twins for the first time but it was also great to meet their foster carer who was fab!*
- *We could see boys playing care free, and see their personalities rather than just their pictures;*
- *We were able to interact with the child and vice versa;*
- *We got to see him in the flesh, and start to hear from the foster carer about him.*



2 OAWY newsletters were sent to our adopters in 2018/19 (October and January). Please see the feedback we received from one of our adopters:

*...thank you for a fantastic and varied newsletter. I really enjoyed reading it, especially the articles and also the resources information. I appreciate all of the help and support we receive which is so much more valuable than anything we received as new adopters in 2005. Everything has moved at such a pace and I like to keep up to date...*

Adopter newsletters will be sent quarterly in 2019/20.

# adoptervoice

We provide a range of different opportunities and levels of involvement to enable adoptive parents to have a voice and influence in OAWY. Opportunities range from a paid role in the organisation to volunteering at events. We also pay an hourly rate for adoptive parents to deliver training. A new contract was put in place in January 2019 with Family Action to and Adoption UK are sub- contracted to deliver this service for the next three years, employing an adopter co-ordinator to continue to develop this work.

The Adopter coordinator is an adopter themselves and their role is to capture the voice of adopters and use them to influence the development of adoption services. They continue to help shape:

- information events – we now co deliver;
- assessment – peer mentoring has be introduced;
- prep training – co delivery and content influenced;
- support – development of a website, support menu.

An Adoption Charter has been produced by Adopter Voice. This outlines partnership working with One Adoption to ensure ‘the best possible future for families across the region’. The aims of this charter are integrated into the OAWY Service Improvement Plan to ensure a partnership approach to delivering service improvements.

Members of Adopter Voice have been involved in the recruitment of all managers, staff and panel chairs within OAWY.

## OAWY Teen Groups

OAWY have developed 3 new groups for children and young people across the region, in response to the need in the last year, including a new teen group in the Bradford area. The purpose of the group is for children with similar experiences to come together, share their experience and create a positive identity of themselves as adopted children. This has created a good support network for those who attend and gives them confidence outside of the group. There are currently 10 members who meet fortnightly and every third session they go out for an activity such as bowling, cinema or to eat. Here’s some feedback from one of the parents whose son attends:

- *XX is starting to look forward to teen group. He has said several times unprompted he trusts you and feels he can talk to you. You have worked wonders to help him settle into the group and it's helped that he is coming with XX. Now he feels more comfortable he can also see the benefits of having a different group peers to hang out with who aren't in school or at home. I am so glad he is going along to it. Thank you for everything you're doing there.*



## **Brain Based Parenting**

OAWY offer Brain Based Parenting training. This provides adopters with an opportunity to examine the impact of abuse and neglect on children's brain development and explore parenting strategies that best support repair and healthy brain development.

The content of the session covers:

- How brains develop pre-birth and in infancy;
- The stress response system (fight, flight, freeze);
- Facing the realities of children's experiences;
- Shame;
- Distressed behaviour;
- The principles of therapeutic parenting.

Here are some comments from the adopters who have attended:

- *The brain based parenting session last night was really great...;*
- *...it was really helpful to be reminded of how the brain is formed and from what age the various developments take place*
- *'...helpful to chat to other parents about our situations and realise we are all in this together...albeit alone!*

As a result of this positive feedback this training is now provided for prospective adopters during their preparation process to help them think about the need for a therapeutic parenting approach.

## **Adopters Early Permanence Placement (EPP) Training**

Adopters EPP training is an interactive 1 day event designed to enhance adopter's knowledge of EPP. The training is delivered by an experienced OAWY social worker and EPP adopter/ foster carer. 64 households have benefitted from the 7 sessions held during 2018/19.

Here is some of the positive feedback:

- *We had brief understanding of what EPP was going in however we have a clear understating now that we have done the session;*
- *Detailed and honest information;*
- *The training was straightforward and informative, giving a clear understanding of what the benefits and risks associated with EPP;*
- *Great training. Very honest and realistic;*
- *Trainers and adopter delivering training were organised, informative and sensitive to the feelings/questions/information being discussed;*
- *We were pretty sure we wanted to do EPP but the training confirmed we definitely do;*
- *Enhanced general understanding and introduced some specific ideas;*
- *Very balanced and well organised training.*



### **Birth parents workshop**

Adopted teenagers have talked about the importance of identity and lifelong relationships & birth families and adoptive families are key in helping children develop a coherent sense of identity, usually through contact arrangements and being open with children about their history.

Many adoptive families have misconceptions about birth parents and therefore we have introduced workshops in preparation training, delivered by birth parents talking about their experiences of contact. The introduction of this has been very powerful for adopters and has helped dispel myths about birth parents.

Here are some comments from adopters:

*“ I was not sure about this before I went to the session but I loved it. The birth parents there spoke to everyone so frankly about their experiences, thoughts and how they have coped with it. They spoke about letterbox contact and how much they depend on it.”*

*“ I realised that you do not take a child and then forget about the birth family. They may not be there in person but they will always be part of the child’s life”.*

*“ it made me think about the importance of keeping connections and I realised how vulnerable birth parents are”*

# Best ideas - what next?



In developing a more adopter led approach to finding families for children OAWY is holding its first Fun Day in June 2019. The Fun Day is a chance for OAWY and adopters from other agencies to meet some of the children who are waiting to be adopted and allows them to interact with the children in an enjoyable environment. The children attending will be those who typically wait longer to be adopted. There is careful preparation for these events with children, their foster carers and adopters.

## Peer Mentoring Scheme

This year, 2019/20, the Peer Mentoring Scheme will be:

- Running workshops on particular subjects related to adoption e.g. life story work, education, introductions;
- Recruiting more volunteers to help with new community/social events in the west;
- Training up specialist mentors (qualification in mentoring) to help with specific issues.

## Adopter Survey

An on-line survey to all OAWY adopters will be sent out in May/ June 2019. The aim is to capture views on the services we provide so we can identify areas that may require improvement.



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



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

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

## What we'll do:

### 4 Outcomes:

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

### 8 Priorities:

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

### 3 Obsessions:

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

## How we'll do it:



## 3 behaviours that underpin everything:

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

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

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

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

This form:

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

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

<b>1. Title:</b> One Adoption West Yorkshire
Is this a:
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy /Policy</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>
<b>If other, please specify</b>

**2. Members of the assessment team:**

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

<b>3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:</b>
In 'Regionalising adoption' in June 2015 the Government set out its commitment to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**4a. Strategy, policy or plan**

(please tick the appropriate box below)

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

**Please provide detail:**

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

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

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

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

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

N/A.

**Action required:**

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

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

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

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

Action 5 – Provide refresher LGBT Training.

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

**Yes**                       **No**

**Please provide detail:**

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

- Adopters via Adopter Voice.

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

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

**Equality characteristics**

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

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

**Stakeholders**

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

**Potential barriers.**

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



**specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function**

**Please specify**

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

**8. Positive and negative impact**

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

**8a. Positive impact:**

Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters

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

Family Finding for Children

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

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

#### Adoption Support

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

#### Adopter Voice

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

#### Birth Parent Groups

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

#### AT-ID

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

#### Staffing

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

#### Training

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

#### Specialist Advice

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

#### **Action required:**



None.

**8b. Negative impact:**

Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters

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

Family Finding for Children

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

Adoption Support

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

Training

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

**Action Required**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Yes**

**No**

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

<p><b>10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other?</b> (e.g. in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)</p>
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b></span> </p> <p><b>Please provide detail:</b></p>
<p><b>Action required:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

<p><b>11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another?</b> (e.g. where your activity/decision is aimed at adults could it have an impact on children and young people)</p>
<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b></span> </p> <p><b>Please provide detail:</b></p> <p>There could be the perception that certain groups are less likely to adopt than others. The primary focus of OAWY will always be the child. The decision to place a child will be based upon the individual(s) ability to meet the child’s ongoing needs and not their individual(s) diverse group. Therefore, prospective adopters who are not matched with a child may feel they are at a disadvantage.</p>
<p><b>Action required:</b></p> <p>See Action 3, section 12.</p>

## 12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

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

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

Action 9: Conduct Analytical work to establish if OAWY can better target adopters that meet the cultural needs of our children.	31/06/2018	Produce map that shows the demographic geography of our region and highlights where there are recruiting gaps. Recruitment & Assessment to plan based upon results.	Richard Stevenson
Action 10: Work needs to be conducted to identify groups that may benefit from more specific adoption support i.e. Dad's group, same sex parents as there may be gaps in the support we offer.	31/12/2019	Needs analysis that details gaps in adoption support provision and a plan to reach people who may have found barriers previously.	Julie Chew
Action 11: Training delivered to enhance organisational understanding of Trans People and to harness their ability to become adoptive parents.	31/03/2019	Relevant training sought and delivered to required staff.	Mandy Prout


**13. Governance, ownership and approval**

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

Name	Job Title	Date
Sarah Johal	Head of OAWY	
<b>Date impact assessment completed</b>		

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

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

**15. Publishing**

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

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

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

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

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to <b>Governance Services</b>	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate <b>Directorate</b>	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to <a href="mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk">equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk</a>	Date sent:

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



**One**  
Adoption

YOUR REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

**Hear more about their adoption story at  
[www.oneadoption.co.uk/liam](http://www.oneadoption.co.uk/liam)**



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



**One**  
Adoption

YOUR REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

**Hear more about their adoption story at  
[www.oneadoption.co.uk/alice](http://www.oneadoption.co.uk/alice)**





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



**One**  
Adoption

YOUR REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

**Hear more about her adoption story at  
[www.oneadoption.co.uk/nicola](http://www.oneadoption.co.uk/nicola)**





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

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

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



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

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

**[Read Matt and James' story](#)**

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

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

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



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

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

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

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Report author: Sarah Johal

Tel: 0113 2783623

## Report of Director of Children's Services

## Report to West Yorkshire Adoption Joint Committee

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019**

**Subject: Performance Report**

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

### Summary of main issues

1. This report sets out the quarter 4 and reconciled data of the year for 2018-19 in Appendix 1.

### Recommendations

2. The Joint Committee is requested to:
  - a) note the proposed performance information; and
  - b) support the development of this work.

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

- 1.1 This report sets out the final quarterly performance report of the regional agency in Appendix 1.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield adoption functions as specified in the partnership agreement were delegated on the 1st April 2017 to Leeds City Council. One Adoption West Yorkshire formally opened.
- 2.2 The partnership agreement is clear that One Adoption West Yorkshire will develop a performance management framework and will comply with the key performance indicators set and report upon performance in relation to these to the Management Board of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), the Adoption Leadership board and any other statutory body as required.
- 2.3 This is the format of the quarterly report and the final quarter performance of 2018-19 information.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 Work has been undertaken to establish the key performance criteria which will form the basis for practice improvement for the agency and this continues to be built upon.
- 3.2 Adoption Support is one area that requires more detailed consideration and we aim to start providing data in the first quarter of 2019-20.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with other local authorities and with adoptive parents about the performance measures and information and this continues to be work in progress.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 There are no implications for this report.

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

- 4.3.1 There are no implications for this report.

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

4.4.1 There are no implications for this report.

#### **4.5 Risk management**

4.5.1 There are no implications for this report.

### **5. Recommendations**

5.1 The Joint Committee is requested to:

- a) note the proposed performance information; and
- b) support the development of this work.

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

6.1 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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**One**  
Adoption  
Agency  
WEST YORKSHIRE

# **One Adoption West Yorkshire quarterly performance report**

Page 107

**January to March 2019**

## **Introduction/summary**

This is the final quarterly report for 2018-19, providing an update on One Adoption West Yorkshire.

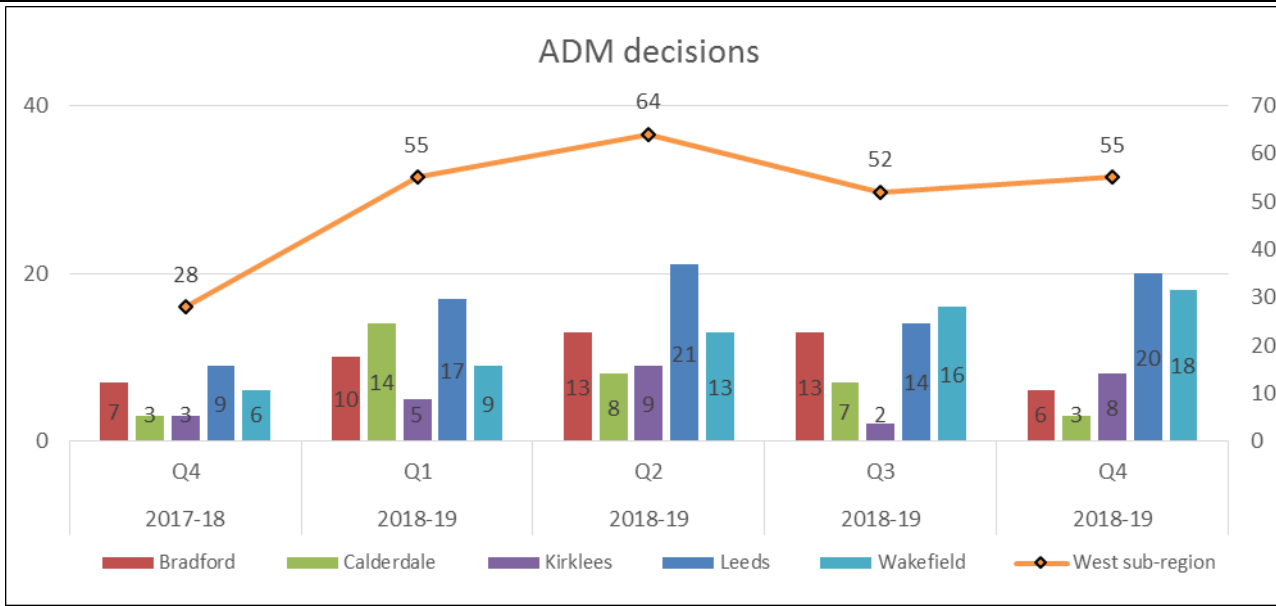
This report is based in the premise of how much work has been undertaken in the period, how well and what difference has it made. The report is a simple and concise report, with detailed tables in appendices. The report contains a number of tables and charts (when trends allow).

## 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. . The figures in bold are for the current quarter and those in brackets are for the same quarter of the previous year.

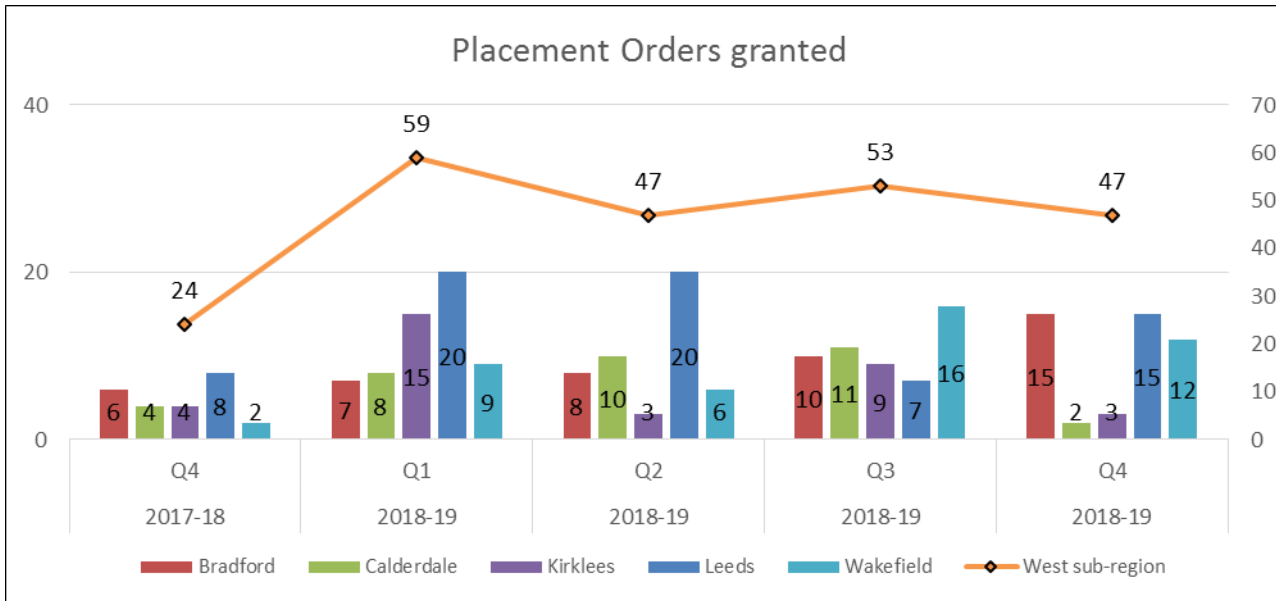
How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
<p><b>During the quarter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>269</b> (319) children left care, <b>47</b> (40) were adopted <i>During 2017/18 162 children were adopted, average 41 per quarter (13.9%)</i></li> <li>• <b>55</b> (28) children had an ADM decision made <i>During 2017/18 191 children had ADM decision made, average 48 per quarter</i></li> <li>• <b>47</b> (24) placement orders were granted <i>During 2017/18 169 placement orders were granted, average 42 per quarter</i></li> <li>• <b>39</b> (37) children were matched to an adoptive family – <b>15</b> (15) inter agency placements <b>38%</b> (41%) <i>During 2017/18 154 children were matched, average 39 per quarter</i></li> <li>• <b>42</b> (37) children were placed with an adoptive family <i>During 2017/18 157 children were placed, average 39 per quarter</i></li> <li>• <b>1</b> (5) children in new EPP <i>During 2017/18 16 children were in new EPP, average 4 per quarter</i></li> <li>• <b>18</b> Children added to tracking</li> <li>• <b>9</b> (13) Children had a change of plan away from adoption</li> <li>• <b>1</b> (2) Children had an adoption disruption</li> </ul>	<p><b>Statutory Scorecard Data</b></p> <p>For the <b>47</b> (40) children who were adopted during quarter 4 2018/19, it took an average of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>445</b> (426) days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (National Indicator is 426 days) (England Average is 486)</li> <li>• <b>201</b> (117) 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 201)</li> <li>• <b>32</b> (33) were placed within 426 days of entering care, this is <b>68%</b> (59%).</li> <li>• <b>21</b> (19) were matched within 121 days, this is <b>54%</b> (56%)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>For the <b>42</b> (37) children who were placed during quarter 4 2018/19, it took an average of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>484</b> (384) days between a child entering care and moving in with their adopter family – *(13 of the 42 children took more than 500 days)* if these 13 children were taken out of the equation the average number of days would be <b>350</b></li> <li>• <b>262</b> (170) days between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family</li> <li>• <b>23</b> (27) were placed within 426 days of entering care, this is <b>55%</b> (73%)</li> <li>• <b>9</b> (13) were matched within 121 days, this is <b>21%</b> (35%)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the <b>39</b> (37) children matched with an adoptive family during the quarter it took an average of <b>298</b> (180) days from placement order and <b>524</b> (409) days from entering care (16 of the 39 children took more than 500 days between entering care and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family), if these children were taken out of the equation the average number of days would be <b>337</b></li> <li>• <b>17%</b> (13%) of children leaving care were adopted, (England average is 13%)</li> </ul>

<p><b>How much did we do?</b> <i>At the end of the quarter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>191</b> (133) children have an ADM decision but not yet matched</li> <li>• <b>202</b> (162) children have an ADM decision but are not yet placed</li> <li>• <b>160</b> (110) children have a placement order but are not yet placed. Of these, <b>52</b> (67) have been waiting for at least 18 months since entering care. <b>105</b> (77) children have been waiting more than 121 days since the placement order was made</li> <li>• <b>1</b> 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>• The timeliness of children matched in the last quarter has dipped of the children placed during the period. However, one child was subject to a previous adoption disruption when placed with her sibling. The LA reviewed the plan and the child was placed on her own when subsequently placed in this quarter. The outcome for this child has been positive in securing permanence, despite the time taken to find the right family and contact is to be maintained between the siblings</li> <li>• Another child impacting upon the timeliness is a foster carer adoption whereby the child has remained with her foster carer throughout this period, although the match was not formally been agreed due to a number of issues raised as part of the approval and matching process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What would we like to do better?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A protocol has been agreed for foster carer adoptions and it is hoped that this will speed up the process of approving adopters and agreeing the matches for children in these circumstances.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What difference did we make?</b></p>



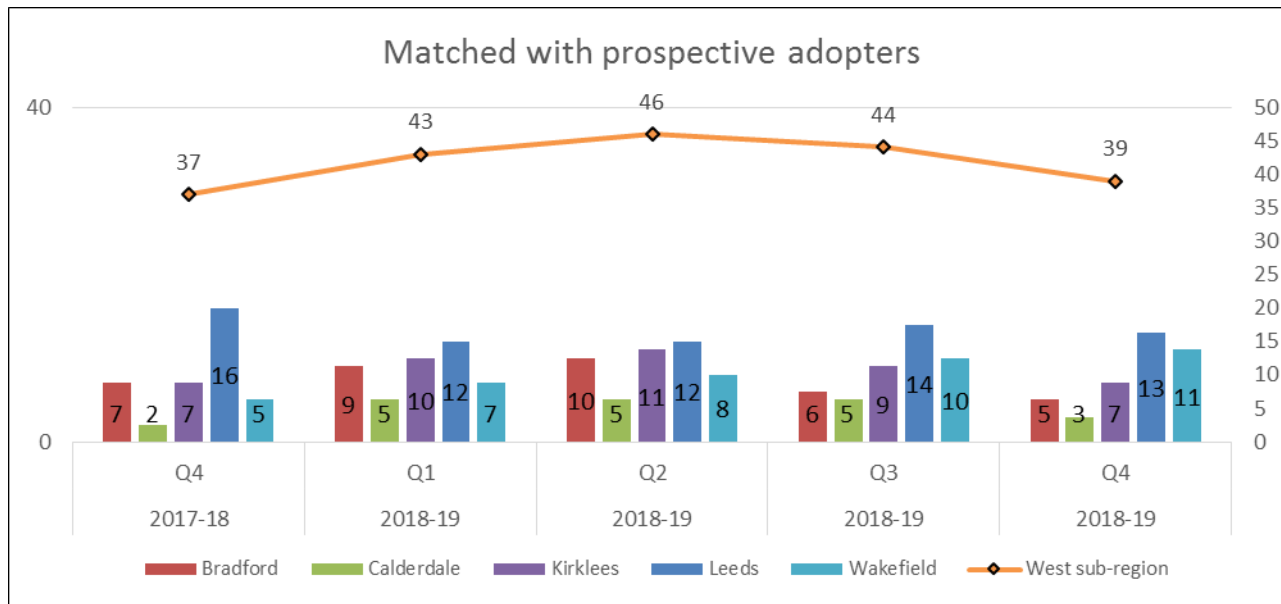
**Commentary**

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



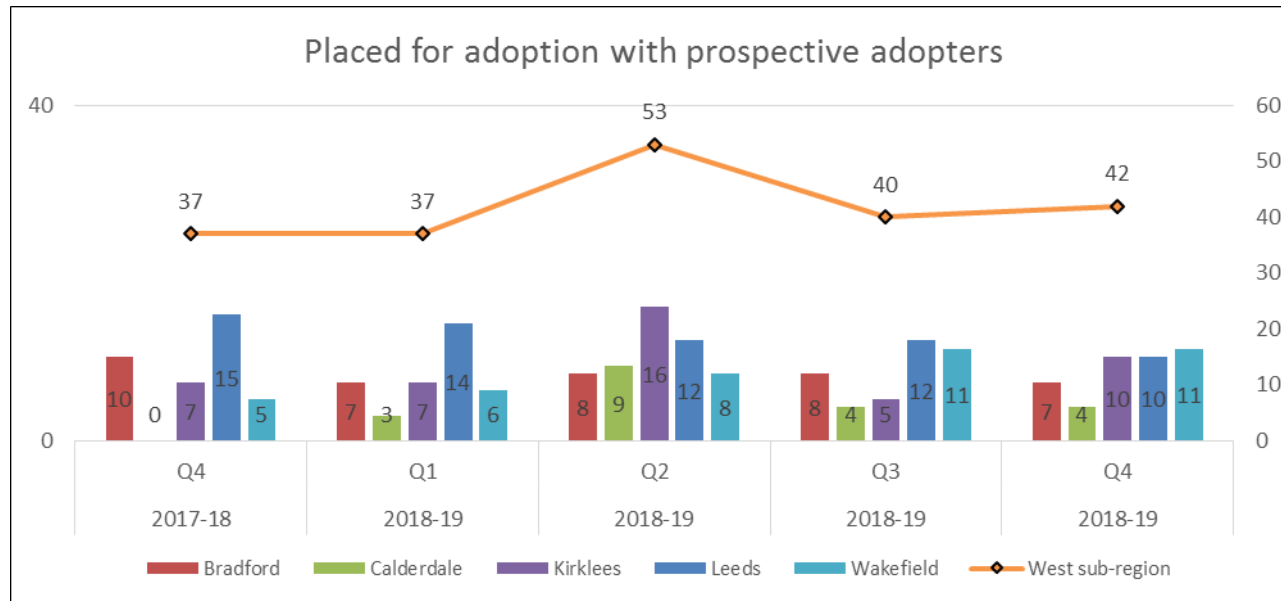
**Commentary**

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



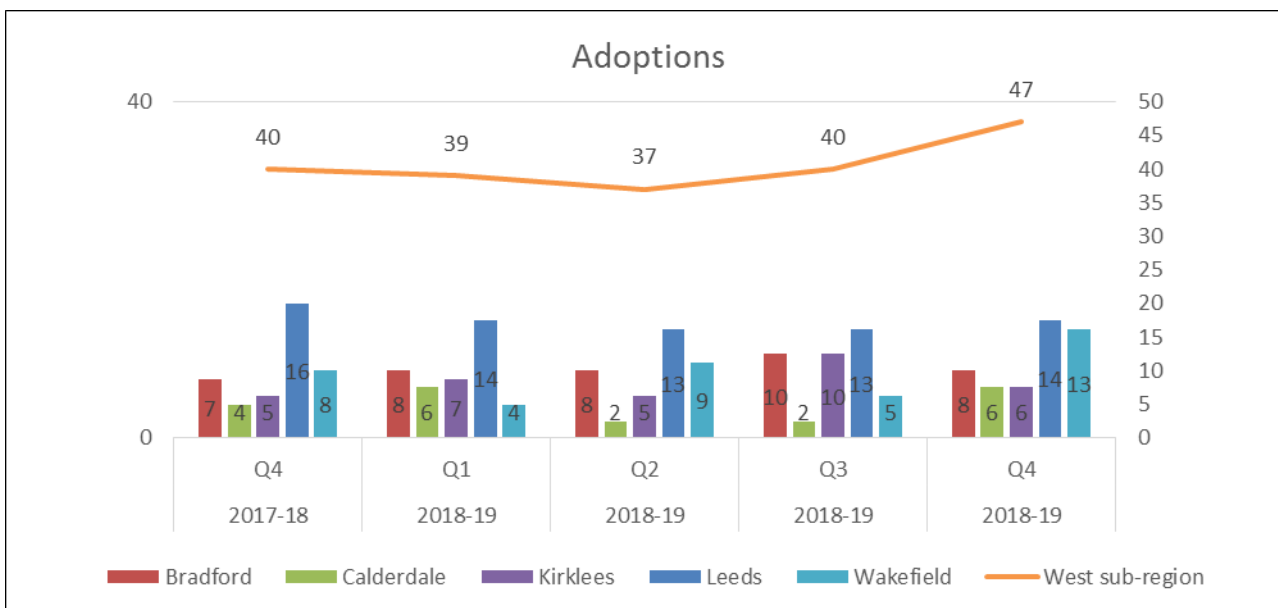
### Commentary

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



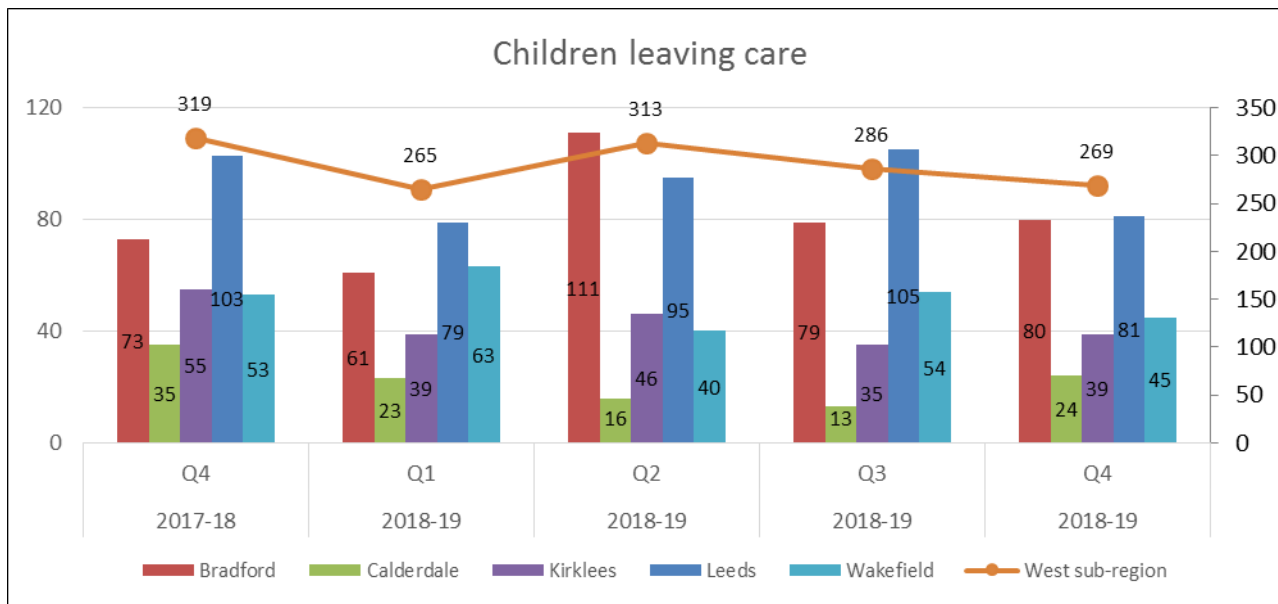
### Commentary

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



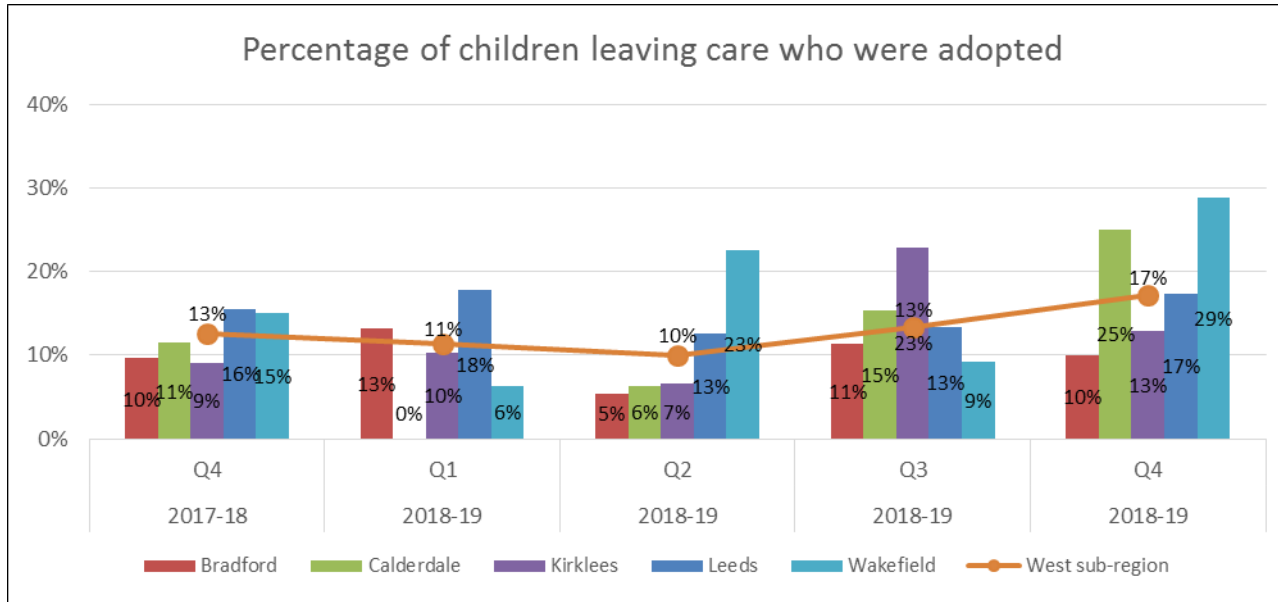
**Commentary**

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



**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

In quarter 4 this increased to 17%



## 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*

- **150** (123) prospective adoptive households attended information sessions
- **51** (27) Families started Stage 1
- **27** (X) prospective adoptive families attended preparation training
- **35** (32) Families started Stage 2
- **27** (18) prospective adoptive families were approved, of these, **4** (2) families were Foster Carer Adopters
- **23** (19) prospective adoptive families were matched, of these, **0** (1) families were matched with children outside the RAA and **23** (18) were matched with children from within the RAA
- **25** (21) prospective adoptive families had a child(ren) placed, of these, **0** (1) families had children placed from outside RAA and **25** (19) had children placed from within the RAA
- **26** (24) adoptive families adopted a child/young person
- **8** (5) Families withdrew from the process

### How well did we do it?

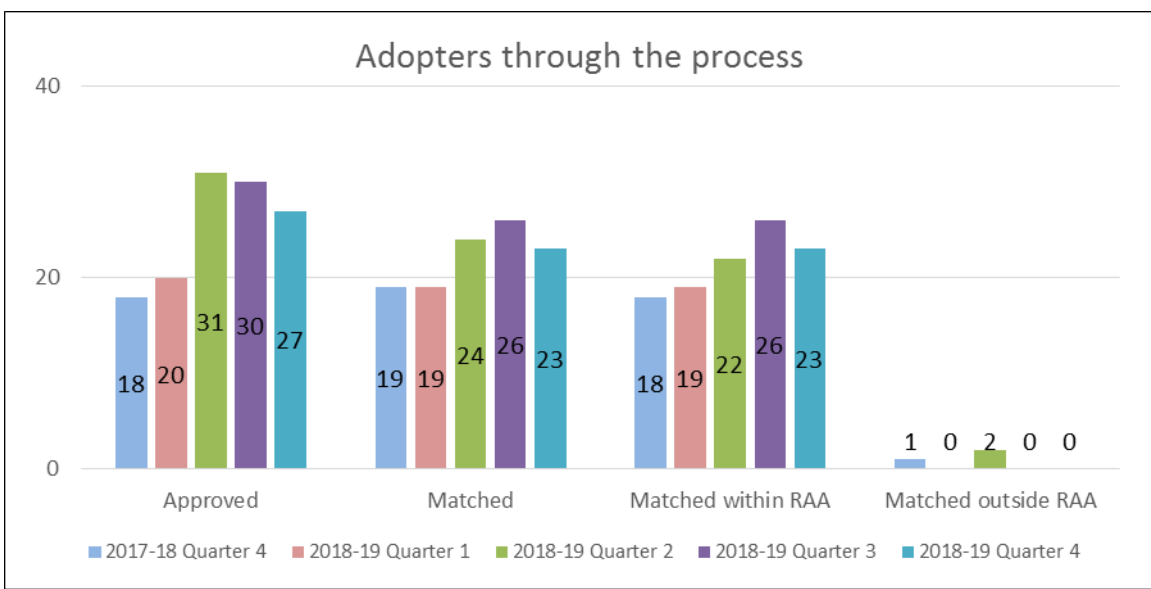
- Of those prospective adoptive families who ended Stage 1 in the quarter, they were in Stage 1 for an average of **2** months
  - **56%** were within timescales (Lowest was **0** month, highest was **6** months)
  - Those still in Stage 1 at the end of the quarter have been in Stage 1 for an average of **2** months
  - **75%** are within timescales
- Of those prospective adoptive families who ended Stage 2 in the quarter, they were in Stage 2 for an average of **5** months
  - **75%** were within timescales (Lowest was **1** months, highest was **15** months)
  - Those still in Stage 2 at the end of the quarter have been in Stage 2 for an average of **2** months
  - **89%** are within timescales

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

**17** (10) adoptive families were matched within three months of their approval; **6** (9) were matched after three months of their approval

The average time taken from approval to matching was **2** (7) months

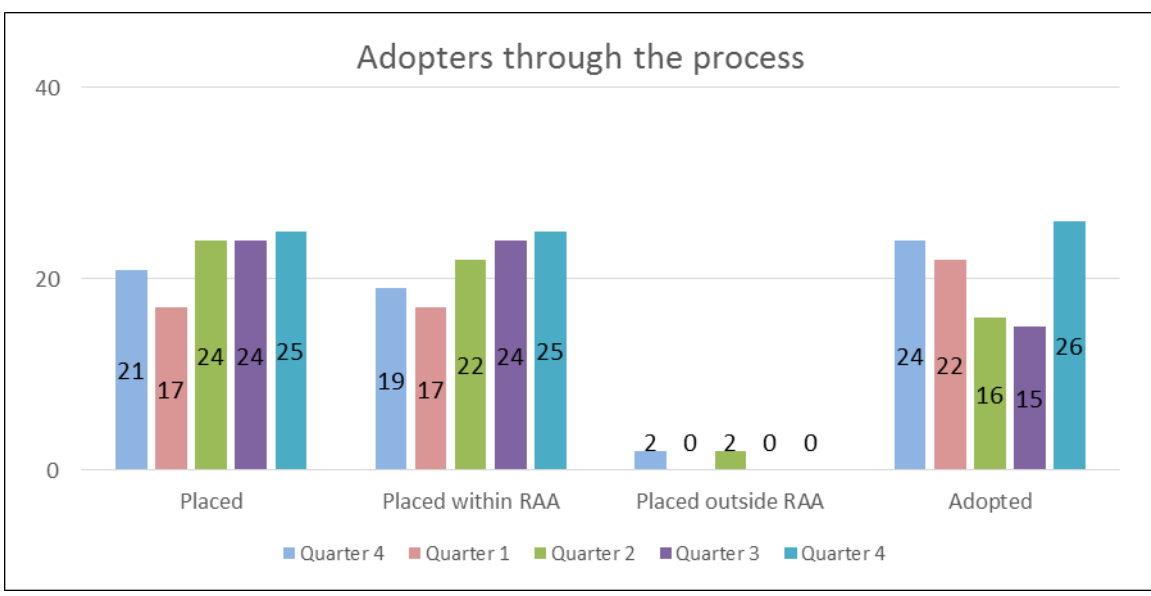
<p><b>How much did we do?</b></p> <p><i>At the end of the quarter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the <b>84</b> (59) individual approved adopters, <b>42</b> (33) are female and <b>42</b> (26) are male. <b>28</b>, <b>33%</b> (10,17%) are from a BME background</li> <li>• <b>97</b> (78) prospective adoptive families are not yet approved</li> <li>• <b>55</b> (33) prospective adoptive families are in stage one; <b>42</b> (45) are in stage two</li> <li>• <b>45</b> (32) approved adoptive families are yet to be matched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>6</b> (4) of these families have been waiting more than six months</li> <li>○ <b>4</b> (4) of these families have a matching panel booked</li> <li>○ <b>7</b> (6) of these families have a match identified but no panel date booked</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>16</b> (8) prospective adoptive families are on hold</p>	<p><b>How well did we do it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75 % of assessments were completed within stage 2 timescales.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What would we like to do better?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the number of BAME adopters</li> <li>• Stage 1 timescales remain an issue with medicals and DBS checks taking time to be returned.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What difference did we make</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of adopters in assessment</li> </ul>



#### Commentary

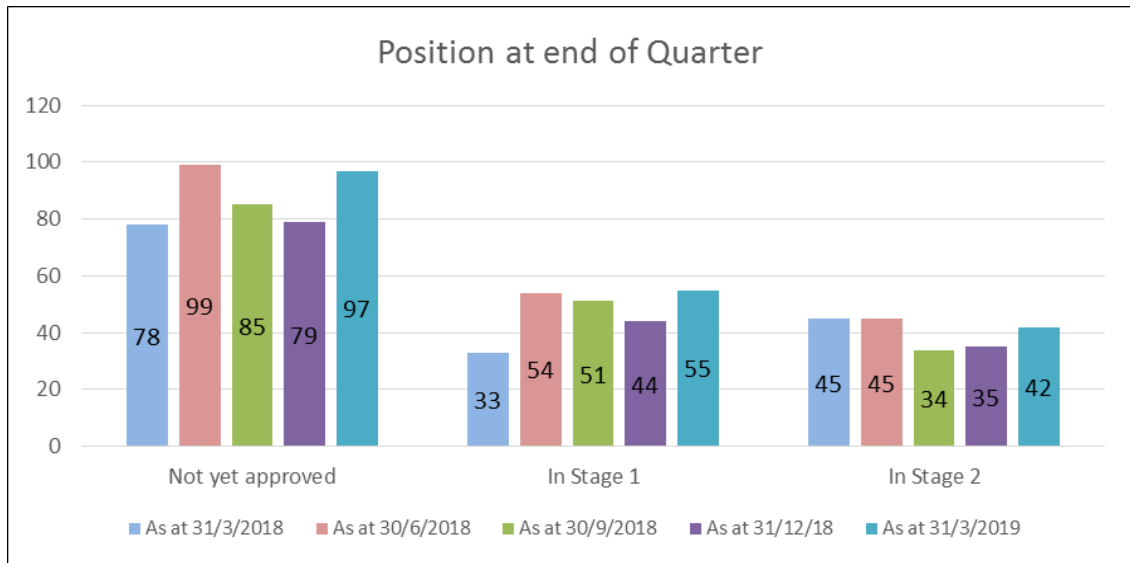
This graph shows numbers of adopters going through the process from 2017-18 Quarter 4 through to 2018-19 Quarter 4

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



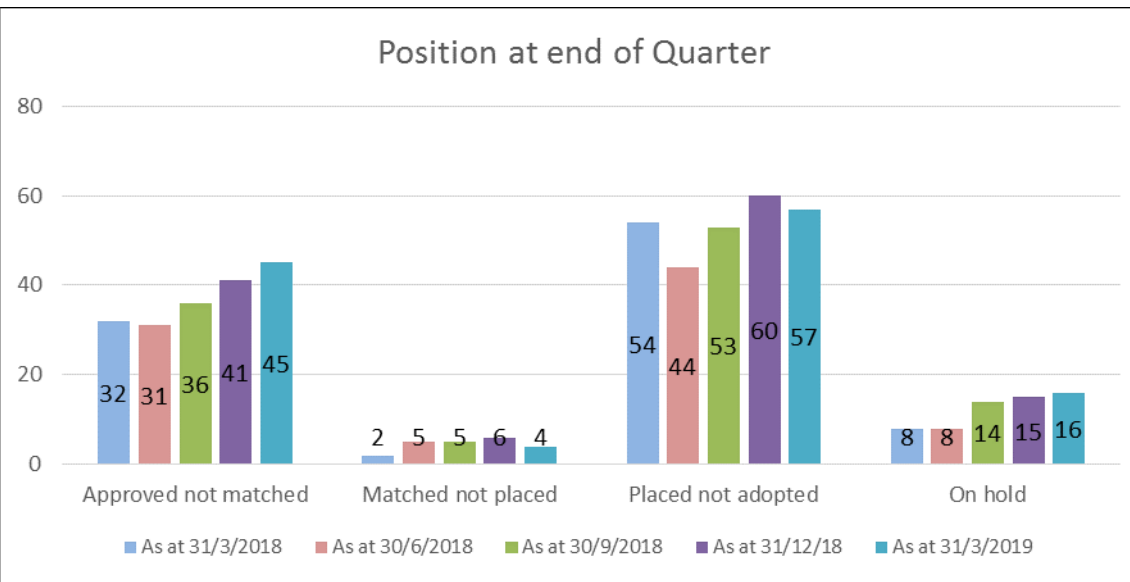
#### Commentary

This graph shows numbers of adopters going through the process from 2017-18 Quarter 4 through to 2018-19 Quarter 4



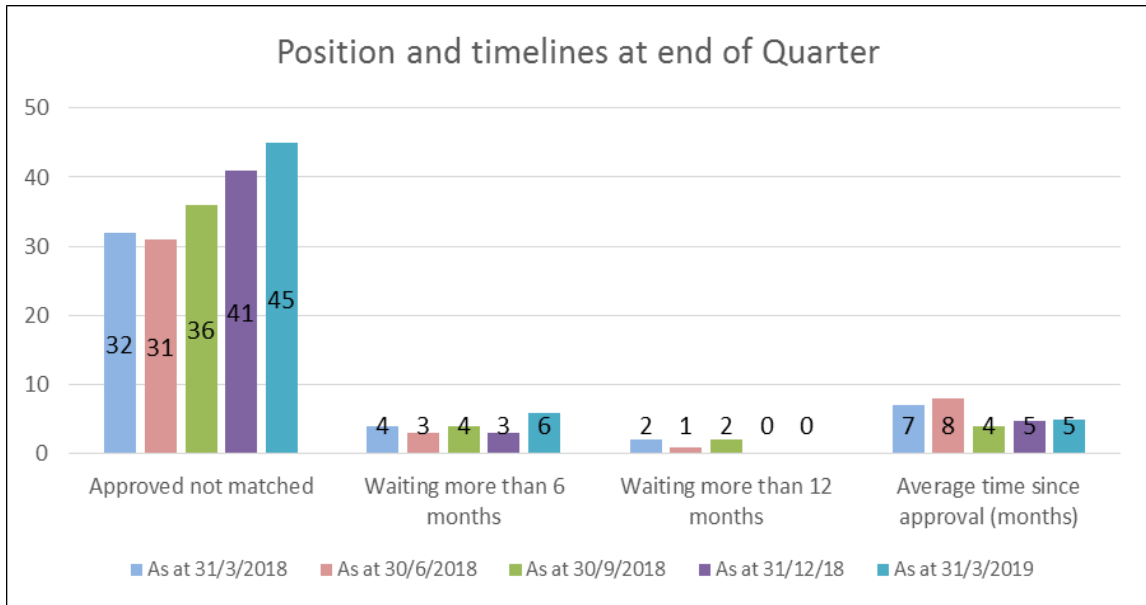
**Commentary**

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.



**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.



### 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.

## 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. **This section is work in progress and requires further development.**

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

Ethnicity	Number of individuals
African	1
Any other Asian background	3
Any other White background	3
Caribbean	3
Indian	7
Pakistani	12
White and Asian	1
White British	53
White Irish	1
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>45</b>

Religion	Number of individuals
Christian	42
Muslim	14
Hindu	2
No information available	18
None	
Other	8
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>45</b>

### Characteristics of children who have a decision but not yet matched (191), of these, 150 have a Placement Order

Ethnicity	Number of children
African	2
Any other Asian background	1
Any other Black background	1
Any other ethnic group	11
Any other Mixed background	13
Any other White background	11
Gypsy/Roma	5
Information not yet obtained	6
Pakistani	3
White and Asian	5
White and Black Caribbean	10
White British	123
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>191</b>

Children who wait longer (more than one characteristic)	Number of children
Part of a Sibling Group	97
With a Disability	4
BME	51
Aged 5 years +	27
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>120</b>

**45** Children have 2 of above characteristics

**7** Children have 3 of above characteristics

Of those above

**ADOPTERS**

Certain characteristics specified	Number of Households
Potential Match	12
Not specified any age group	43
Specified 0-4 years (incl 0-2 years)	32
Specified 0-2 years	25
Sibling groups	7
Specific Gender	5
Open to EPP	17

## Appendix One

This appendix contains a range of measures related to prospective adopters progressing through the approval and adoption process.

Table A9: individuals and families progressing through the approval and adoption processes

		Enquiries		Progress through the adoption process (Families)					
		Individuals	Families	Start Stage 1	Start Stage 2	Approved	Matched	Placed	Adopted
2017-18	Quarter 4	110	61	27	32	18	19	21	24
2018-19	Quarter 1		62	46	27	20	19	17	22
2018-19	Quarter 2		55	31	24	31	24	24	16
2018-19	Quarter 3		67	34	26	30	26	24	15
2018-19	Quarter 4		84	51	35	27	23	25	26

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Table A10: snapshot numbers of prospective adopters at different stages of the approval process

	Prospective adoptive families				Approved adoptive families waiting		
	Prospective adoptive families not yet approved	In Stage 1	In Stage 2	On hold	Approved adoptive families waiting to be matched	Approved adoptive families waiting to be matched for more than 6 months	Average time since approval (months)
As at 31/3/2018	78	33	45	8	32	4	0
As at 30/6/2018	99	54	45	8	31	3	0
As at 30/9/2018	85	51	34	14	36	4	0
As at 31/12/2018	79	44	35	15	41	3	0
As at 31/3/2019	97	55	42	16	45	6	0