



Quality Mark Early Permanence Moderation Panel

Name of Applicant Agency: One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY)
Type of Award: Full Quality Mark
Date of Moderation: 7 June 2019
Decision: 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.