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**Service Director – Legal, Governance and
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Monday 16 January 2023

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Corporate Parenting Board

The **Corporate Parenting Board** will meet in the **Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.00 am** on **Tuesday 24 January 2023**.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Muscroft", on a light background.

Julie Muscroft

Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

The Corporate Parenting Board members are:-

Member

Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)

Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds

Councillor Richard Smith

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Karen Allison

Councillor Carole Pattison

Gill Addy

Tom Brailsford

Keith Fielding

Stewart Horn

Colleen Kenworthy

Barry Lockwood

Louise Hallas

Elaine McShane

Mel Meggs

Sara Miles

Jo-Anne Sanders

Ophelia Rix

Christine Carmichael

Keely Lucas

Farrah Munir

Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities

Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers

Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

Kirklees Fostering Network

Head of Joint Commissioning, Children & Families

Kirklees Fostering Network

Kirklees Fostering Network

Virtual School Headteacher

Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection

Director for Children's Services

Interim Head of Service (Child Protection & Review Unit)

Service Director for Learning and Early Support

Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers & Looked after Children

Kirklees Fostering Network

Care Leavers

Care Leavers

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Membership of the Board/Apologies

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

2: Minutes of Previous Meeting

1 - 12

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 15 November 2022.

3: Interests

13 - 14

The Board Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have disclosable pecuniary interests, which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items, or any other interest.

4: Admission of the Public

Most debates take place in public. This only changes when there is a need to consider certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual. You will be told at this point whether there are any items on the Agenda which are to be discussed in private.

5: Deputations/Petitions

The Board will receive any petitions and hear any deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also hand in a petition at the meeting but that petition should relate to something on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10 (2), Members of the Public should provide at least 24 hours' notice of presenting a deputation.

6: Public Question Time

The Board will hear any questions from the general public.

7: One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report

15 - 60

The Board will consider the One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report.

Contact:

Michelle Rawlings, Interim Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire

8: Children's Performance Highlight Report

61 - 74

The Board will consider a report giving key highlights from the latest Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service

Contacts:

Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Headteacher

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children

Ian Mottershaw, Head of Service –Contextual Safeguarding and Y.E.S, Family Support and Child Protection

9: Children's Services Annual Complaints Report

75 - 92

The Board will consider the Children's Services Annual Complaints Report

Contacts:

Helen Sanderson, Complaints and Compliments Manager,

Yasmin Mughal, Complaints and Compliments Manager,

Kate Richardson, Complaints and Compliments Manager,

10: Virtual School Governing Body Update

The Board will receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Virtual School Governing Body.

Contacts:

Councillor Carole Pattison, Chair of the Virtual School Governing Body
Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher

11: Children's Ambition Board Update

The Board will receive an update in relation to the Children's Ambition Board.

Contacts:

Elaine McShane, Service Director (Family Support and Child Protection)
Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships)

12: Updates from Board Members on interaction with services

The Board will consider verbal updates from Board Members in relation to progress and key issues following interaction with Services and partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

Contact:

Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

13: Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/23

93 - 100

The Board will consider the agenda plan for 2022/23.

Contact:

Jodie Harris, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

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Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Tuesday 15 November 2022

Present	Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair) Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds Councillor Karen Allison Councillor John Lawson Councillor Richard Smith Councillor Andrew Marchington (ex-officio) Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support Colleen Kenworthy - Kirklees Fostering Network Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children Sara Miles, Head of Service – Resources, Improvement and Partnership Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection
In Attendance	Rahila Habib, Service Manager – Family Support and Child Protection Krissy Podgorski, Team Manager – Children Looked After Independent Service Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Sufficiency for Children and Young People
Apologies:	Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships) Stewart Horn, Head of Childrens Integrated Commissioning

1. Membership of the Board/Apologies

Apologies had been received from Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships) and Stewart Horn, Head of Childrens Integrated Commissioning.

2. Minutes

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 12th July 2022. It was noted that Cllr Richard Smiths apologies be added to the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

3. Interests

No interests were declared.

4. Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all agenda items would be held in public session.

5. Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6. Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

7. Children's Performance Highlights Report

The Board considered the latest reports giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for Children's Services. Rahila Habib, Service Manager – Children in Care Service presented the key highlights in relation to Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability and explained that:

- There was a continued fluctuation in the number of children coming into care from 607 to 621.
- It was important to note the work undertaken in respect of Connected Carers and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) in respect of this data.
- 3 further SGO's had been made in September and work continued to increase these numbers in the best interest of children and young people.
- There had been an increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people through the national transfer scheme.
- Following the recent opening of adult accommodation there had been an increased volume of referrals to Children's Services from adults claiming to be children.

Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children added that the data showed that children did continue to become looked after, but there had also been an increase in placements with parents and connected cares which should be considered alongside the data.

Ophelia Rix referenced the Children's Act and its emphasis on keeping children with their families and connected communities where it was safe to do so. It was explained that this was the key principle underpinning the SGO's and it was important to make sure that where children wanted to and could return home that there was the correct structure to facilitate this. The approach prevented children from remaining looked after, and Kirklees offered a support plan to enable this, but it was important to note that this was only the case where it was safe and appropriate to do so.

The Ex-officio noted the update and the explanation of the data in relation to children entering care and expressed that this was positive and reassuring. In relation to the data around unaccompanied asylum-seeking children showed a slight downward trend and it was important to monitor this going forwards.

The Board noted it was satisfied by the continued good work in relation to kinship carers and SGO highlighting that this together with the Councils investment in early support helped contribute to preventing children from becoming looked after. The Board further noted that it would be helpful to receive comparative data including learning points and long-term outcomes to evidence this.

Ophelia Rix presented the data in relation to Care leavers and highlighted that:

- There had been an increase in the performance indicator for Children in Care (aged 17 years) with an allocated Personal Advisor.
- The increase was from 96.0% in August 2022 to 97.9% in September 2022, but the target was 100%.
- There had been an increase in the percentage of Care leavers in Employment, Education and Training (EET) but this was a key area for improvement.
- A programme of work was to be produced along with education, housing, and businesses in relation to improving EET opportunities for care leavers.
- There had been an increase in staying put arrangements (post 18), and the new financial policy was successful in enabling this.
- The number of young people with a pathway plan had increased but a key priority was to improve the timeliness of updating the plans.

The Board noted the data in respect of Care Leavers, and it was agreed that an update in relation to improving EET opportunities be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher presented the data in relation to Children Looked After Educational Outcomes, and it was highlighted that:

- Work continued with education and social care providers to make sure all young people had at least one Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting each term.
- 100% of PEPs had been completed within the Summer Term in-line with the termly processes.
- 100% of initial PEPs had been completed within 10 school days of the child coming into care since 01/09/2022.
- Persistence Absences continued to be key area for improvement, and in September there was a decreasing trend.
- There continued to be a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education and reducing the number of school moves.

Responding to a question from the Board around the decreasing trend in Persistence Absence for September, Louise Hallas explained that previous absence data could be a result of Covid-19 absences. The Board were informed that some measures around persistent absence had been actioned, but it was too early to identify if these had impacted on the decreasing trend.

The Ex-Officio, highlighted the educational outcomes as positive, especially the work around PEP's highlighting this was an example of strong partnership working achieving good outcomes for young people.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children presented the data in relation to Children Looked After Health and it was highlighted that:

- Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data showed that 80.5% of Initial Health Assessments were completed in the statutory 20 working day timescale.
- Locala monthly data for September showed that 16 Initial Health Assessments were completed 'in house' and 100% were completed within timescales.
- For Review Health Assessments (RHA), Kirklees's 12-month data showed that 89% of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5 years old) and 93.7% of 'Annual' assessments (over 5 years old) were completed in statutory timescales.
- Locala monthly data for September showed that 85% of under 5-year-olds and 63% of over 5-year-olds RHA's were completed in timescales.
- There were 12 in-house breaches, 9 were in relation to capacity, 2 due to holiday, and 1 was re-arranged.
- In relation to breaches it was reported that other Local Authorities reported similar issues.
- A Business Case had been delivered to senior managers and Locala to request additional nursing resources to mitigate capacity and KPI issues.
- For Dental Checks, Kirklees rolling 12-month data showed that 61.6% of children aged 1+, at the point of their RHA had attended the dentist.
- Locala monthly data showed that 91% and 97% of children aged 18 months - under 5 years, and 5-18 years, had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA.
- Locala data showed that 93% and 100% of children aged 18 months to 4 years and 5 years+ at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' had supported Children Looked After and Care Leavers to register with a dentist.
- The Designated Nurse attended the 'Kirklees Oral Health Advisory Group', to advocate for vulnerable children and care leavers.
- In relation to substance misuse, 6 young people (1.26%) admitted to, or were known to use substances when asked at their last RHA.
- All cases had been discussed with the local Substance Misuse Outreach worker, to ensure support had been offered.
- If a young person declined their RHA, a check was made with the social worker to ascertain if substance use was an issue.
- Any young person misusing substances at any level was offered support.

In relation to increased pressure on health services and the requirement to hold extra clinics, the Board agreed that additional support should be prioritised and progressed.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Children's Performance Highlights Report, and it was agreed that:

1. The data for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children continued to be monitored and reviewed going forwards.
2. The Board receive comparative data, in respect of the Councils investment in early support, learning points and long-term outcomes.
3. A programme of work was to be produced along with education, housing, and businesses in relation to improving EET opportunities for care leavers.
4. Additional support to alleviate the pressure on health services should be prioritised and progressed.

8. Kirklees Looked After Annual Health Report

The Board considered the Kirklees Looked After Annual Health Report (March 2021-April 2022) presented by Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children. It was highlighted that:

- During 2021-22 alternative hybrid methods of working were necessary to comply with Covid-19 restrictions in Initial Health Assessment clinics.
- There was a rise in demand for support related to increased child health complexities, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), and involvement with children accommodated in Kirklees by other local authorities.
- There had also been an increased amount of telephone and IT communication.
- The increased number of agencies using the electronic child health record System-One amplified the number of communications via tasks, and the volume of information available to inform assessments.
- The wealth of material was an asset but added significantly to the time taken in the preparation of assessments.
- A Business Case related to the team capacity and resource has been submitted to the joint commissioner for consideration and discussions had been held with senior managers. This was still ongoing.
- Completion of the Review Health Assessments (RHA's) within statutory timescales continued to present a challenge.
- To alleviate pressure, a temporary 6-month measure was introduced to complete the RHA's in the month they were due, but Statutory guidelines were reintroduced in March 2022.
- An audit looking at reasons for breach in Quarter 1 of 2022, illustrated that children and their families were at the heart of the planning, prioritising family, work, school, and outside activity commitments before timescales.
- Dental access had improved from the time of the pandemic and was supported by the 'Flexible Commissioning' programme.
- Immunisation rates averaged 91.5% across all ages. Teenage boosters remained the most common outstanding immunisations.
- The manual return rates of 'Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires' (SDQ's) had remained low.
- It was noted that this was a time consuming but statutory task and the electronic portal was unable to facilitate any system improvement.
- The redevelopment of the Local Authority Placement Support Service (PSS) provided a multi-agency approach alongside the SDQ's.
- The inclusion of a trauma screening assessment for UASC by a Local GP, added a valuable dimension to the support options.

- The Ages and Stages Social and Emotional (ASQ–SE) questionnaire, continued to provide a resource to measure the emotional health of children and babies under 4 years old.
- Liaison with the sexual health, and substance misuse outreach workers continued, reinforcing the collaborative working model. Drop-in's had also resumed recently.
- Medical reports continue to be completed by the Medical Advisors, and all adoption panels in Kirklees and Calderdale had a Medical Advisor present for advice and support.
- The 'Health Outcome Audit' project enabled data collection to continue.
- This measured the health needs of children as they entered care and a comparison of improvements to their health for those who remained in care, at the point of their first Review Health Assessment (RHA). A re-audit was planned during 2022-23.
- A recent review identified that it was not possible to resume pre-pandemic levels of performance.
- The service had required modification to meet the needs of a changed society and vulnerable group of children.
- Further adjustments may be needed, as challenges in relation to changes to practice and demands on the service continued.
- During the reporting period 741 RHA's were completed including requests from other authorities.
- 236 adult medical reports for foster and special guardianship orders, 77 adult and 69 child medical reports for adoption plans and 26 meetings with prospective adopters, were carried out by the Medical Advisor

The Board welcomed the report as very comprehensive. Responding to a question from the Board in relation to the assessments of UASC and follow up work, Gill Addy advised that there was a shortage of this specialist work. Referrals were currently submitted through the placement support service and picked up by wellbeing team to identify where support may be available. The Board noted value in identifying where there may be capacity to support young people's needs. Gill Addy further added care leavers were now included in the screening assessment made by the GP, and the Board welcomed that this work was being undertaken at an early stage.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Kirklees Looked After Annual Health Report

9. Virtual School Headteacher Report

The Board considered the Virtual School Headteacher Report for the 2021-22 academic year presented by Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher and it was highlighted that:

- Kirklees Virtual School now worked with all young people in the care of Kirklees Council from the age of 2 through to age 18 (end of Year 13 with consent).
- Following self-assessment, the Virtual School rated the service as good overall with some outstanding features, and some areas for development.
- Most recent national indicators showed that Kirklees Virtual School was in Quartile A in 5 of the indicators and Quartile B in 1 of the indicators.

- The team was experienced and effective and worked with all young people to monitor their educational progress and to provide the best for young people.
- The Virtual School collaborated well with other professionals including Social Workers, Designated Teacher's, Carer's, and Education Psychologists.
- There were robust systems and processes which provided accurate data linked to the Virtual School's priorities and statutory duties.
- Most of all children in care accessed free early education and continued to be placed with an education provider judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- Year 1 phonics screening was above the national average for children and young people in care in 2022.
- The percentage of KS1 pupils reaching expected or a higher standard for Reading, Writing and Maths and Reading/Writing combined was above the national average for 2022.
- Improvements in KS2 results in 2022 highlighted that Kirklees were above national averages for Reading, Writing and Maths individually and just below national averages for combined.
- This was a significant improvement for KS2 outcomes for Kirklees Council.
- Most young people who achieved national expectations at the end of KS1/2 progressed on the trajectory to expected outcomes at the end of KS2 and KS4.
- Participation and progression remained strong in Post 16 education despite the remaining challenges following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There had been no permanent exclusion of a child and young person in care since the establishment of the Virtual School.
- The electronic Personal Education Plan (PEP) system enabled the Virtual School to monitor the completion and quality of PEPs and allowed for systematic application, authorisation, and monitoring of Pupil Premium Plus funding for individual pupils.
- 100% of PEP's were completed within the termly timescales.
- Initial PEP completion in 10 school days of notification was 98% in 2021/22 an increase from 97% in 2020/21 within 10 working days.
- The Virtual School Team Managers had oversight of school changes and ensured that new schools were at least 'good' and met the curriculum needs of the young person.
- In July 2022, 81% of children and young people in care were attending good or outstanding schools.
- There was a clear understanding of the 19% in attendance at education provisions judged as requires improvement / inadequate at their last Ofsted visit, or those providers with no inspection report (13%).
- When a schools Ofsted judgement was inadequate, extra monitoring and support was in place to ensure that educational needs were being met.
- 89% of school moves took place with no break in learning and 92% of these took place within 20 days.
- The Virtual School commissioned multi-agency support working across the Education Psychology Service.
- This included dedicated Educational Psychologist support, inclusion workers supporting complex young people, and nationally recognised work with schools through the Timpson Project.
- Additional resources were commissioned for the Childrens Emotional Wellbeing Service which enhanced the offer to young people in care.

- There were commissioned programmes of work from the Kirklees Early Years Outcomes Team.
- These provided opportunity for parents/carers and Early Years Practitioners to work together around school readiness (START programme) and language development (50 things to do before you're 5 programme).
- The structure of the Virtual School had been developed to ensure that young people with SEND had specialist and timely support.
- The Virtual School had an established Governing Body that met regularly with a cross section of representatives to hold the Virtual School to account through supportive and challenging meetings.
- The Virtual Schools key areas for improvement to reach outstanding included:
 - Reducing the number of suspensions for all young people with a particular focus on secondary education.
 - Consistent improvement in early years development and consistent progress across all key stages
 - Improvements to persistent and unauthorised absence.
 - Ensuring that Covid-19 recovery and school led tutoring around the impact on pupil progress was embedded in all PEP meetings.
 - Focussing on school stability, minimising changes, especially during Key Stage 4 and supporting any necessary school moves.
 - Enhanced provision to support UASC young people for the full year.
 - Embedding the work for children and young people with a social worker so that it becomes system led and system wide throughout the authority and education system.

The Board welcomed and noted the report. In the discussion to follow the Ex-Officio advised that in attending a meeting in respect of understanding the work of the Virtual School was helpful. It was also noted that the Governing body was giving an appropriate level of challenge and support and the structure was working well. Providing additional support for parents in meetings was also raised as a key idea.

Responding to a question about the increase in demand the additional duty placed on the Virtual School and the impact of this, Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support provided reassurance to the Board that the extended duties had been in place to give the virtual school oversight of any child with a social worker. The Executive Virtual School Headteacher was working alongside the Virtual School Headteacher, social work teams and designated teachers to raise the profile of any child with a social worker. This was a systematic change but there was no expectation that PEP's to be put in place, but some of the expertise and learning from these may be utilised. There was a small amount of additional funding received with the new duty and an innovative and joined up approach had been taken. The Board noted the response and it was agreed that the Executive Virtual School Headteacher provide a report to a future meeting of the Board around work undertaken in response to the Virtual School's new duty and the key outcomes.

The Ex-officio added that it would be difficult to replicate the structure of the Virtual School for the new numbers of children under the additional duty and in order to achieve the desired outcomes appropriate resources to replicate detailed areas of work and processes were required. The Board agreed that the new challenge was

been approached in the best way possible, but it was important that this was properly resourced.

The Board reiterated that the briefing around understanding the work of the Virtual School was helpful in understanding sharing ideas and recommended that this be repeated to allow other Board members to attend. Louise Hallas responded to agree that the workshops could be replicated on a 1:1 basis for any interested Board Members.

The Board noted that in 2022 Kirklees was above the 2019 national Children Looked After data for GCSE outcomes but were yet to obtain the fully validated results or national comparators for 2022. Louise Hallas responded to advise that the validated data should be available in January 2023, and it was agreed for the Board to be provided with this information when appropriate.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Virtual School Headteacher Report for the 2021-22 academic year and it was agreed that:

1. The Executive Virtual School Headteacher provide a report around work undertaken in response to the Virtual School's new duty and the key outcomes to a future meeting of the Board.
2. The new duty had been approached in the best way possible, but it was important that this was properly resourced to replicate effective processes going forwards.
3. Briefings around understanding the structure and work of the Virtual School be offered to any interested Board Member.
4. The validated data for GCSE outcomes be provided to the Board when available.

10. Children's Voice, Participation and Corporate Parents Presentation

The Board received a presentation in respect of Children's Voice, Participation and Corporate Parents presented by Krissy Podgorski, Team Manager – Children Looked After Independent Service.

It was highlighted that the Children's Rights Team wanted to work with the Board to ensure that the views of children in care and care leavers were a consistent and influential feature of the Board. Ideas for participation included:

- Themes and patterns from advocacy be reported to the Board on a regular basis
- Children and young people are enabled to regularly share the key issues and themes that affect them with the Board.
- A young person friendly meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board be held once or twice per year to enable and encourage attendance.
- The use of video's or presentations be used as an additional method of communicating with the Board.
- Progress being measured by the Board through hearing directly from young people and through visiting the groups periodically throughout the year.

In relation to the child's voice shaping policy, it was highlighted that Children's Services should be involving young people in discussions around policy changes and work around key priorities through the Children in Care Council and the Care leavers Forum as well as the wider group of Children Looked After and Care leavers to gather a broad representation of views. This engagement could be facilitated through the Children's Rights Team, with support from other services. Krissy Podgorski, requested to hear the Boards thoughts on the ideas presented and asked for any other suggestions.

In response, the Board welcomed the idea of video submissions, and other methods of communication with Children Looked After and Care leavers (e.g.- voice recordings or written statements). The Board also requested that the details of upcoming meeting dates of the Children In Care Council and the Care Leaver Forum, and for an invitation to attend these meetings be shared with Board members.

The Board welcomed the idea of video submissions and requested that the details of upcoming meeting dates of the CIC and CLF, and an invitation to attend these meetings be shared with Board members. The Board also recommended that some meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board be set at a time appropriate to enable the attendance of young people with a young person friendly agenda.

The Ex-officio noted the importance of meeting children and young people in their environment as well as ensuring the agenda was appropriate and relevant to allow young people to engage and participate. It was also important to make sure there was a feedback loop to acknowledge ongoing positive work across Children's services. The Board agreed and further noted there was a skill development opportunity for the young people in being able to present to Board members.

The Board highlighted the Total Respect Training as positive, as well as asking Foster Carers questions via voice recording for presentation to the Board. The Board also supported the idea of hearing directly from young people of their experiences and for them to have the opportunity to ask board members questions but highlighted that the formality of the meeting may be intimidating so agreed with the idea of making the conversation more informal or sharing the questions to CIC and CLF to answer during the meeting beforehand.

The Board expressed enthusiasm for the ideas presented, there need to be direct contact where possible, but video and written submissions would also be welcomed. It was also important for the young people to understand why their voice was important.

The Board suggested taking a 'you said, we did' approach to create the feedback loop perhaps by sharing a video from Board members to communicate back actions to children to demonstrate the impact that they are having, and how their feedback is linked through the Board into discussions around policy. The Ex-officio added it was important to manage expectations and set parameters whilst acknowledging the importance of knowing what young people need.

The Board also suggested that 1:1 drop-in slot with councillors be held with young people for direct contact and feedback.

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding agreed to share the dates for the CIC and CLF and put together a proposal around the suggestions made by the Board and create the feedback loop to communicate back the responses from the Board. Rahila Habib, Service Manager – Family Support and Child Protection highlighted an upcoming meeting with the children in care council and care leavers forum and in respect of the corporate parenting Strategy and suggested asking them for their ideas for participation.

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support highlighted the SEND transformation plan and Kirklees futures, and capturing the live experience, this was about taking a planned and co-ordinated approach to the suggestions made.

The Board highlighted the upcoming Foster carers celebration and requested that future invitations be extended to all Board members. The Board also noted the invitation to meet Foster Carers, and hear their views directly, at weekly Thursday morning meetings, and it was agreed that the Kirklees Fostering Network representative would provide the relevant details.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Children's Voice Presentation, and it was agreed that:

1. Anna Gledhill would share the dates of upcoming meetings of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum with an invitation to Board members to attend.
2. Rahila Habib would communicate the ideas around participation to the Children in Care Council and Care Leaver's Forum as well as asking the young people to provide their own ideas for participation for inclusion.
3. A proposal around the discussed ideas for participation be created and that a plan for implementation be made.
4. The proposal should be centred around a feedback loop to communicate responses from the Board to young people to demonstrate impact.
5. Members of the Board be invited to a future meeting of the Kirklees Fostering Network and the Kirklees Fostering Network representative provide the relevant meeting details.
6. Future invitations to the foster carers celebration be extended to all Board members.

11. Virtual School Governing Body Update

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher presented a verbal update in respect of the Virtual School Governing Body, and it was noted that:

- At the last meeting the Virtual School Governing Body were presented with the Annual Virtual School Headteacher report.
- This was followed by an analysis of persistent and unauthorised absences and action points were shared with the Governing Body.
- It was agreed that at the next meeting the Governing Body would receive a presentation from the new SEND Lead.
- This would include an analysis report in respect of young people with SEND and the action plan.

- The Governing Body also planned to consider an update on the Virtual School's new duty to include all young people with a social worker.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Virtual School Governing Body Update.

12. Update from Board Members on Interaction with Services

The Board noted verbal updates from Members in respect of interactions with Services and it was highlighted that:

- The Ex-officio noted the link between children looked after and adoption (particularly around children with SEND) and requested that the Board considers this pathway going forwards.
- The Ex-officio noted that the Children's scrutiny panel visited a Dewsbury cluster team meeting and highlighted that participation was found to be useful.
- The Chair noted attendance at a number of events including; the Kinship Carers event (Greenwood Centre), the Kinship carers Halloween party, Homestats AGM, the Kirklees Together Partnership Board, the Children's Partnership Event and the Kirklees Children's Safeguarding Board.
- The Chair had been interviewed by a representative from the LGA in respect of the West Yorkshire view of Children's social care.
- The Chair also visited Fairfield's School and presented the 'Democracy Friendly School Awards'
- It was highlighted that the students were to be invited to the Council Chamber in the New Year to learn about voting.
- The Chair had also attended the Mockingbird Project Celebration Event and the launch of 'Constellation', and the positive feedback received from Foster Carers was highlighted.
- The Board noted attendance at 'Woven' where the Board met the co-ordinator of the care leavers quilts exhibition in the piazza.
- This was highlighted as important work and Board members were encouraged to view these on exhibition.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the update on Interactions with Services.

13. Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/2023

The Board considered its agenda plan for 2022/23. It was noted there were a few items arising from the meeting to be added to the Plan.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the agenda plan for 2022/23 and it was agreed that:

1. The items highlighted during the meeting be added to the document for the Boards consideration.
2. The link between Children Looked After and Adoption (particularly around children with SEND) and this pathway be added to the work programme as highlighted under item 12.

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC

DECLARATION

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Name of Councillor

Item in which you have an interest	Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an “Other Interest”)	Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]	Brief description of your interest

Signed:

Dated:

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

(a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and

(b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.



One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report 2021/22

June 2022

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the developments within One Adoption West Yorkshire from April 2021 to March 2022.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield adoption functions as specified in the partnership agreement were delegated on the 1st of April 2017 to Leeds City Council and One Adoption West Yorkshire formally opened on this date.
- 2.2 The regionalisation of adoption services by the government as a structural reform programme is almost complete with 31 Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA's) and 145 local authorities (LA's) now live, with the remaining 6 local authorities likely join existing RAA's. The government is supporting the RAA's and is funding a small national team to develop and improve services and support for vulnerable children and families within the adoption system, working closely with Association of Directors of Children's services (ADCS) and others across the sector.
- 2.3 The latest figures released nationally show that there continue to be more adopters available than children with an adoption plan. However, there is a mismatch between the needs of the children requiring adoption and the adopters willing to consider these priority children. Nationally there has been a fall in the numbers of children with an adoption plan over the last three years. However, this is not being replicated in the West Yorkshire region, with numbers remaining broadly consistent.
- 2.4 The future of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) has now been confirmed until 2025, along with funding for the National Adoption Strategic Group. Sarah Johal, National Adoption Strategic Lead, continues to bring together RAA Leaders from across the country to focus on developing and improving adoption practice in relation to adopter recruitment, matching children with adopters and the provision of adoption support services.

3 Main issues

3.1 Use of Resources

3.1.1 Staffing

There are currently several interim appointments within the management and senior management team of One Adoption West Yorkshire with Michelle Rawlings (Head of Agency), Rhian Beynon (Service Delivery Manager with a Recruitment and Assessment Lead) and Nicola Steele (Service Manager with a Family Finding Lead) all being in temporary posts until the Autumn. Permanent recruitment to posts is being explored as the impact of uncertainty is acknowledged.

- 3.1.2 There have been several changes over the year as some experienced staff have retired and others have moved on to new roles or reduced hours for a better work life balance. This has caused pressures at different times in parts of the service, but as we move into 2022/23, we have successfully recruited to most vacant posts.
- 3.1.3 Morale for staff has continued to fluctuate, with this being impacted by both work pressures and external factors. Wellbeing was a focus of the staff Winter Conference and of mid-year appraisal discussions. Leadership check ins have been introduced for staff to communicate directly with the Head of Agency regarding queries or concerns. Discussions are underway with staff regarding retuning to offices to ensure an appropriate balance between home and office working.
- 3.1.4 Sickness levels have remained low in comparison to children's social care.

3.1.5 Duty System

The duty and advice service has continued to run as before on a remote basis, with duty managers overseeing a daily check in each morning where tasks are able to be allocated and workers keeping in touch with one another throughout the day via MS Teams messaging. The number of calls to duty has remained consistent, there were a higher number of calls relating to letterbox in the first part of the year, but these have subsequently levelled off as the backlog of letterbox exchanges was cleared.

- 3.1.6 The 'choice' system for callers has continued to be in place, however the line 2 option (letterbox) has continued to be suspended to allow business support colleagues to concentrate on the actual exchanges and put a 'post-pandemic' system

in place for managing these going forward. As before, this has meant that line option 3 (the main duty line) has responded to all calls other than those enquiring about becoming an adopter. We are planning to start to utilise line option 2 again in May 2022.

- 3.1.7 The total number of calls to the duty and advice line for the second half of the year is 1764, with an annual total of 3,626. This averages at 69.7 calls per week or 13.9 calls per day. 309 calls (8.5%) related to people enquiring about adoption; 3317 calls (91.5%) were relating to support and letterbox.

3.1.8 Accommodation & service delivery

Staff are continuing to work predominantly from home, though some teams are beginning to work from the office more regularly. Workspace is now available in all 5 of our partner local authorities for teams to come together. This space is more limited than prior to the Covid 19 pandemic and systems are in place to ensure workers can have a workspace when travelling into an office. In most areas current workspaces are temporary with exploration ongoing in relation to future office use. Discussions are taking place with staff teams regarding future working patterns and service delivery by One Adoption West Yorkshire.

- 3.1.9 Results from the LCC Future Working Arrangements Survey showed 61% of OAWY respondents would like to work from home 'most or all of the time' and that 0% would like to work from the office all the time. This suggests staff have found working from home beneficial. There is no indication that home working has impacted upon service delivery, though there is a recognition of the importance of peer support and practice development from time spent together.

3.2 Partnership working

3.2.1 Operational Leads Meetings

Over the last year this group has continued to meet to discuss children's care planning in relation to adoption and the interface between the West Yorkshire Children's Services teams and One Adoption West Yorkshire. Discussions have taken place regarding joint auditing of children's adoption permanence plans and adoption related training for children's social workers and foster carers. Discussions have taken place regarding arrangements in relation to Foster Carer adoptions, where there is often evidence of delay in achieving permanence.

3.2.2 Multidisciplinary Team

Over the last year there has been considerable change in the team staffing, with two Clinical Psychologists and a Speech and Language Therapist being appointed in the summer of 2021. A Social Work team manager and senior therapeutic social worker were recruited to replace team members who left due to retirement and finding work opportunities outside OAWY. The Clinical Psychology Lead also left the team in early 2022 and a new Psychology Lead has been successfully appointed at a consultant grade. This change has allowed the opportunity for restructuring the Multidisciplinary team, with the Social Work team manager, managing the MDT service as MDT Team Manager, alongside the Consultant Psychologist to ensure a coherent service.

- 3.2.3 With all staffing in place, this has allowed the team the opportunity to continue to develop their service and develop a clear clinical model which embeds the MDT within OAWY. The model builds upon and supports the core adoption support offer, making MDT more accessible to families and OAWY staff. Key areas of development include supporting OAWY Social Workers in using and developing their skills in Theraplay, DDP and Life story work through supervision and developing and expanding the Therapeutic groups for families to access through ASF, ensuring that this support is provided equally across all the regions.

3.2.4 Agency Medical Advisors and GP's

Medical advisors have continued to work hard during the Covid 19 pandemic to ensure that they provide medical information for children in a timely way for their adoption plans to progress and to offer support to our adoption panels. We have continued to run 8 panels per month and have secured a medical advisor from Wakefield for the 8th panel. One of our Leeds Medical Advisors is due to retire soon, and we anticipate a smooth handover to her replacement. We have reviewed and updated the medical protocol in July this year with input from the medical advisors and local authority operational leads. GP capacity for undertaking medical assessments of adopters has increased over the year and we no longer face significant delays. We do however continue to face some challenges from a small number of GP's who have refused to carry out medicals regarding prospective adopters, have set their own fees or who request OAWY pay the CCG Fees. In these cases, issues have been escalated within the Clinical Commissioning Groups locally.

3.2.5 Virtual school heads (VSH)

Our Education Lead continues to meet with the Virtual School Heads on a termly basis. At the last meeting there was a particular focus on the increase in the number of pupils being excluded – both officially and un-officially; a plan is being drafted as to how we can support parents to manage the situation when this is the case.

3.2.6 The Education Advice line continues to be well used by parents and professionals alike. It is evident that the Virtual Schools across the region are gathering momentum in supporting their schools to become more attachment and trauma informed, understanding this is key in being able to further support schools across the region. Kinship also attends the meetings and will be included in any planning.

3.2.7 Special Guardianship Regional Work

Financial support - the financial offer is being implemented in 4/5 of the local authorities. Wakefield have decided not to proceed with implementing the regional approach and will continue with their current offer to special guardians. The implementation of the financial support policy has stalled due to issues around the waiving of the means test for non-agency SGOs where the carer is in receipt of means tested benefits. Policy and legal advice indicate that the means test cannot be waived where children were not previously looked after, and Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit must be deducted unless the child was previously looked after. Local Authorities will need to complete calculations to gauge the amount of child element in Universal Credit in these cases. We are awaiting further advice from Counsel before meeting with leaders in Leeds and Kirklees to reach a point of agreement on this issue. At that stage the Leeds policy is ready to be implemented. This will be used as a template within the other 3 local authorities.

3.2.8 The Kinship (formerly Grandparents Plus) project is progressing well with the contract having been renewed for a further two years until March 2024. There remain three project workers offering 1:1 Support to kinship carers in the region, alongside support groups and access to telephone advice. Between January and March 2022 166 carers accessed the advice line, 5 accessed peer mentoring, 54 accessed support groups and project workers secured 21 grants totalling £8142 for West Yorkshire carers. Over the year Kinship have given 1:1 support to 122 carers.

3.2.9 The Kinship regional Facebook group now has over 284 very active members. This allows us to connect with many Special Guardians in the region and hear their views. There has been a marked increase in the number of younger carers engaging with Kinship. The emerging themes from Special Guardians this quarter have been Education, Finances, Diagnosis Pathways and Mental Health. The cost-of-living increases have been an additional pressure on many low-income families, pushing them further into poverty. There remains a significant Covid backlog for medical assessments resulting in significant delays in children receiving diagnosis or support and there has been an increase in Special Guardians presenting with mental health difficulties due to the prolonged Covid situation. The support groups run by Kinship have been a lifeline for Special Guardians during the last 6 months and have provided training and support:

- *“Lovely to meet you all today, what a lovely group of people, so glad I came to the meeting.”*
- *“After our meeting, my daughter said that you were lovely and the type of person who we should be working with”.*
- *“Thank you so much, this is the sort of thing I was looking for”.*

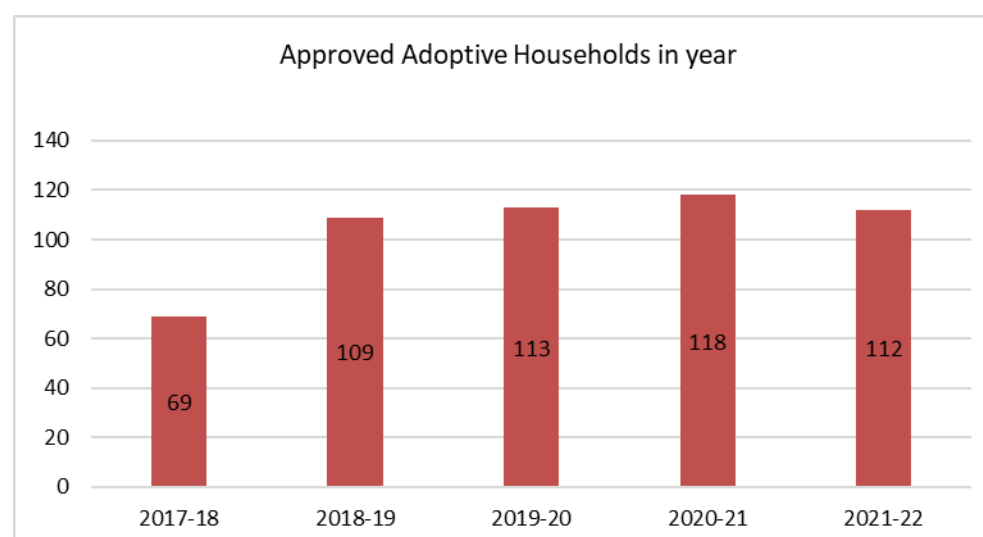
3.2.10 Guiding Guardians has continued to run over the October to April period with 19 families attending programs in October, January and April. OAWY made the group applications to the fund on behalf of the region.

- *“I thought the program was amazing and feel I’ve come away from it with answers and a great understanding which can only help me so much. So happy I could be part of it thank you”.*
- *“Really good, thoughtful examples as to approaches and how to respond went a long way beyond previous courses and reading; it really helped to reshape my understanding of ‘therapeutic parenting’.”*
- *“This programme is invaluable to anybody who is a Special Guardian and struggling to support children who are trying to deal with things they have had to deal with earlier in their lives.”*

3.2.11 Rhian Beynon’s co-ordination role has now finished. OAWY will continue to manage and oversee the Kinship contract and Rhian will support the implementation of the Leeds policy following advice from counsel. Kirklees will facilitate the Guiding Guardians programme going forward and support regular regional practice meetings.

3.3 Performance Management

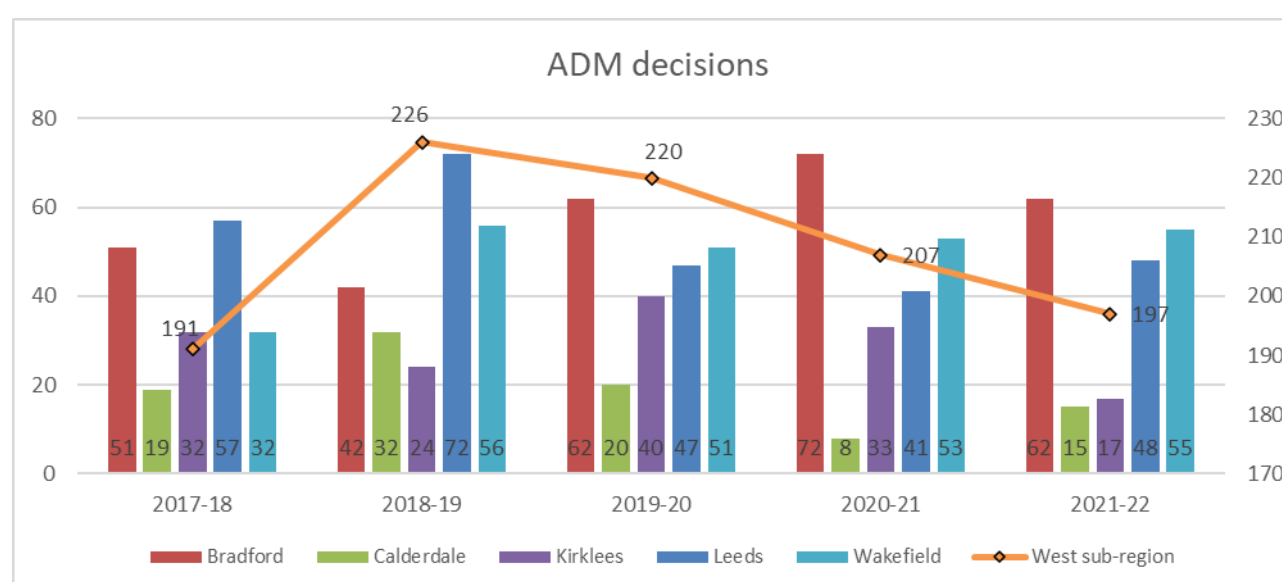
3.3.1 The agency provides quarterly reports to the management board. This data provided has developed over the last 5 years and is gathered to ensure that we are aware of how much work is undertaken, how well it was undertaken and if anyone is any better off.



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 ratified for adoption during 2021/22

Between April 2021 and March 2022, 197 children had a plan for adoption ratified by the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities Agency Decision Makers. Of the 197 children with a plan for adoption, there were 98 female and 99 male children. In total, this is a reduction of 10 from last year's full year figure of 207 children from across the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities.



3.3.3 Ethnicity

Of the 197 children with a plan for adoption ratified this year, 134 (83%) children were from white British backgrounds (including information not obtained) and 33 children (17%) were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, including children from eastern European, 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. Of the 74 individual siblings placed during the year, 31 individual children were placed apart, for which 29 the plan was to be placed apart.

3.3.5 Adopter recruitment

112 adoptive households were approved during the year, this is a slight decrease compared to the previous two years.

3.3.6 Within the 112 households, 206 individuals were approved throughout 2021-22. Of these, 20 (10%) are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds (last year was also 10%). We need to improve our percentage of BAME 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 families of the same ethnicity, but rather a family who can meet their holistic needs. We continue to work with the national recruitment campaign, and it's work on recruiting adopters who can reflect the heritage of all our children.

3.3.7 Households approved for sibling groups has increased by 3 this year with 27 households approved for sibling groups, all 27 for 2 children. The Sibling Adopter training course has helped to shift thinking of those prospective adopters in being able to have the confidence to consider adopting brothers and sisters together. 19 households approved were open to an Early Permanence Placement. This has reduced but has, nevertheless, exceeded the demands for these placements over the year.

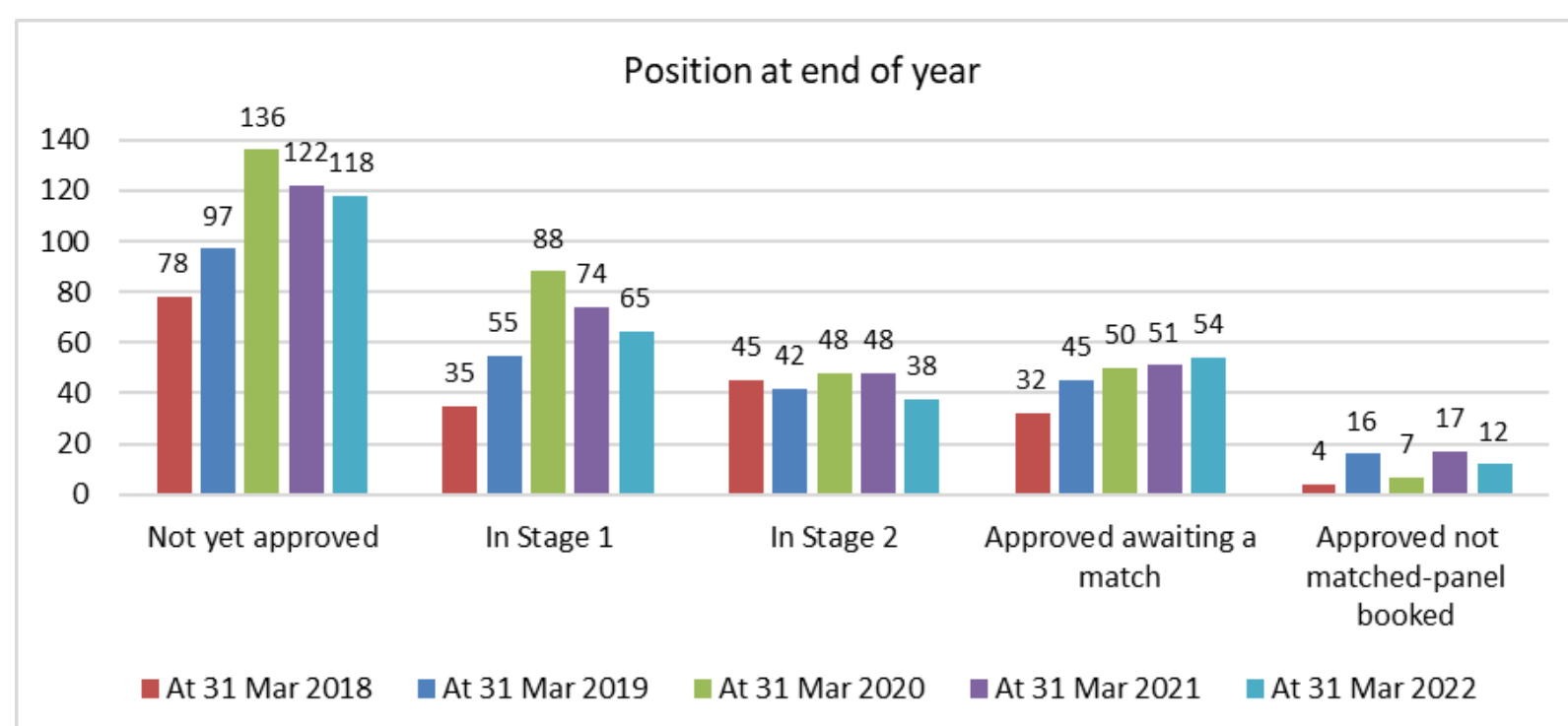
3.3.8 Children currently with an adoption plan

As of the end of March 2022 there are 143 children with a plan for adoption, and have a Placement Order, from the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities not currently placed and requiring adopters. 85 children out of the 143 are 0 - 2 years, 37 are between 2 and 4 years and 21 children are 5 years of age or older.

3.3.9 From the children waiting for a placement there are 65 girls and 78 boys, and 20% are children from BME backgrounds (including children from eastern European, Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds). 71 children are from sibling groups. The plans for these children are actively reviewed with the local authorities 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 special needs or complexity.

3.3.10 Adopters available

As of the end of March 2021, there are 54 approved adoptive households that have not been matched and 5 are in the process of looking and are in discussions about considering placements and 12 have a panel date booked.



3.3.11 On the 31st of March 2022 118 adopters are in the process of assessment (in stage 1 or 2, or on hold pre-approval) although these will take several months to become approved. This is a positive picture, however, a more nuanced approach to recruitment and approval is required to ensure that we have adopters who can meet the needs of children with a plan for adoption and particularly the children we know who wait longer. This will be discussed later in the report.

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

3.3.12 Children matched in the year for adoption

Between April 2021 and March 2022, 182 children from the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities were matched with families at adoption panels; this has remained stable compared to last year from across the 5 West Yorkshire local authorities and is positive given the pandemic. From April 2021 to March 2022, 18% (33) of the children matched were from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and this is extremely positive news as these children often wait longer to be placed.

- 133 of the children matched were 0 to 2 years old.
- 34 children matched were 2 to 4 years old.
- 15 children were aged 5 years or older.
- 80 children were part of a sibling group (of the 182 matched).
- 49 children (of the 182 matched) were placed and are part of a sibling group of which 21 were placed apart, the plan for 20 of the 21 children was to be placed apart due to their individual needs.

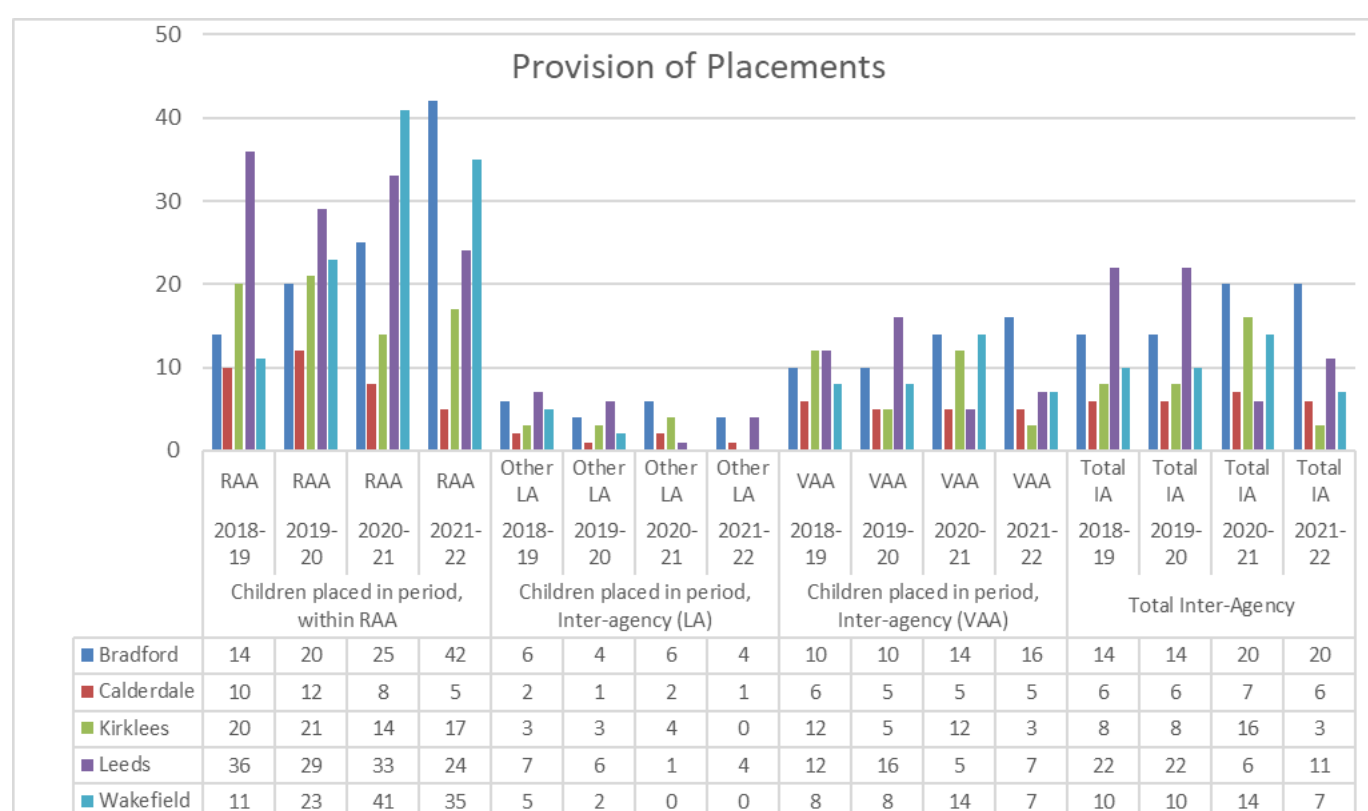
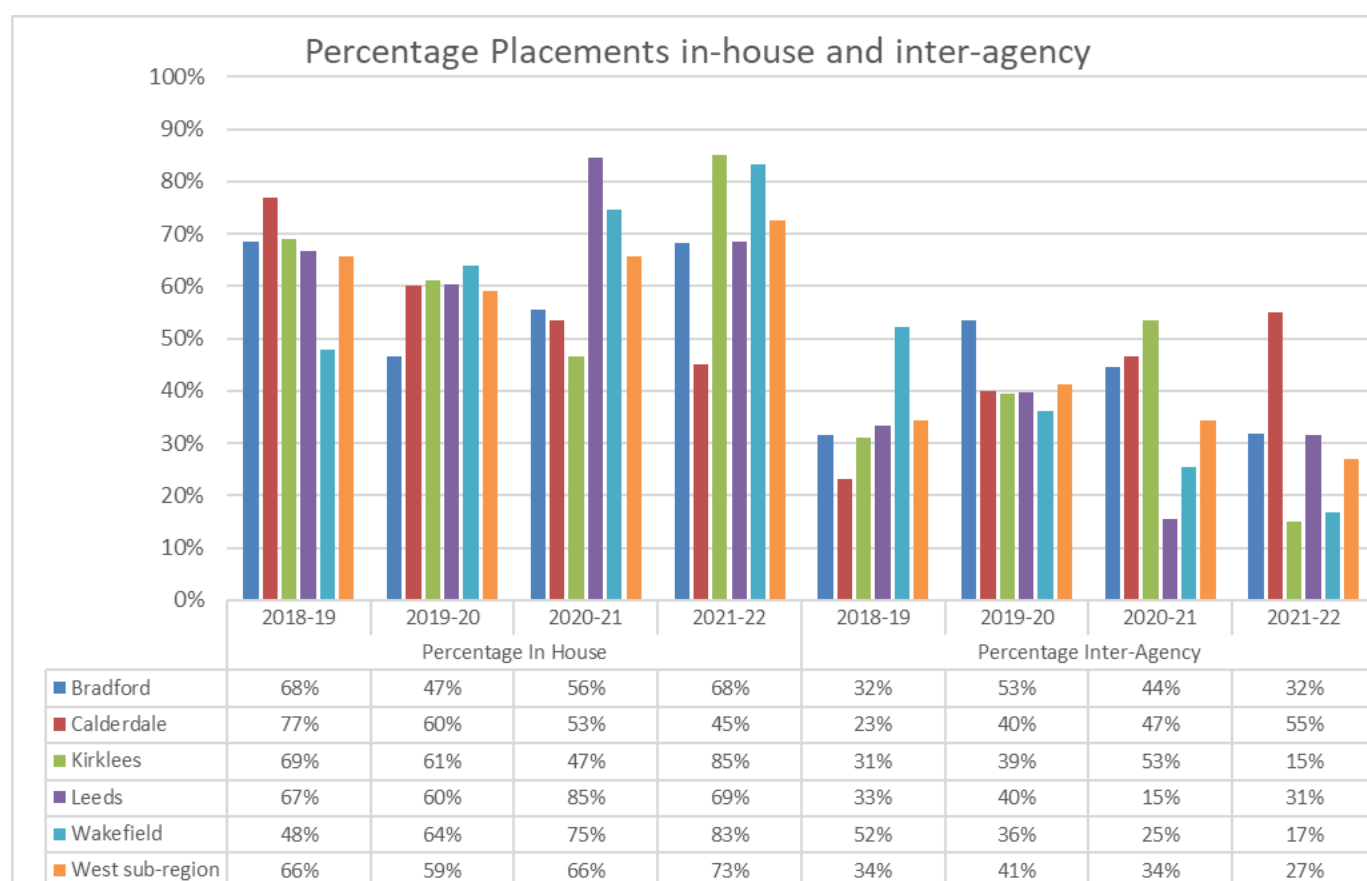
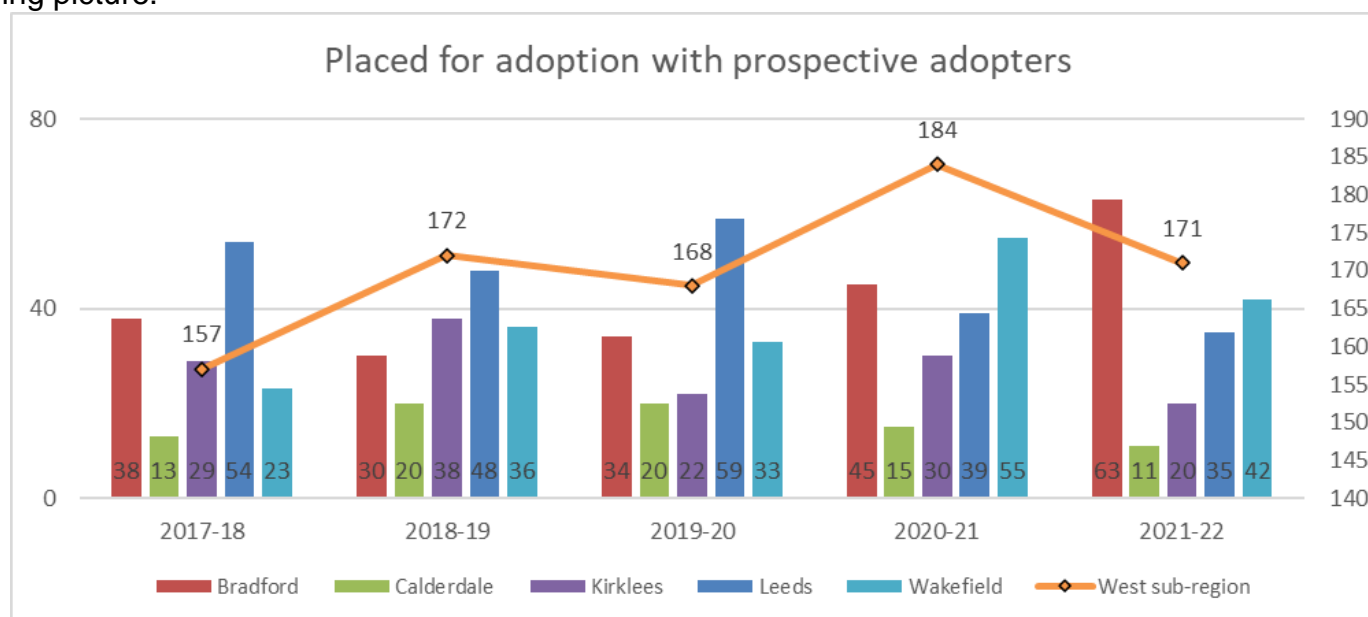
- 15 children (of the 182 matched) had been previously placed in early permanence placements (7 placed EPP during the year); 7 of these 15 children have been adopted in the year.

3.3.13 Provision of Placements

171 children were placed this year. The percentage of placements provided in-house within the region has again increased significantly this year.

- 124 children within OAWY.
- 9 children with other local authorities or other Regional Adoption Agencies.
- 38 children with Voluntary Adoption Agencies

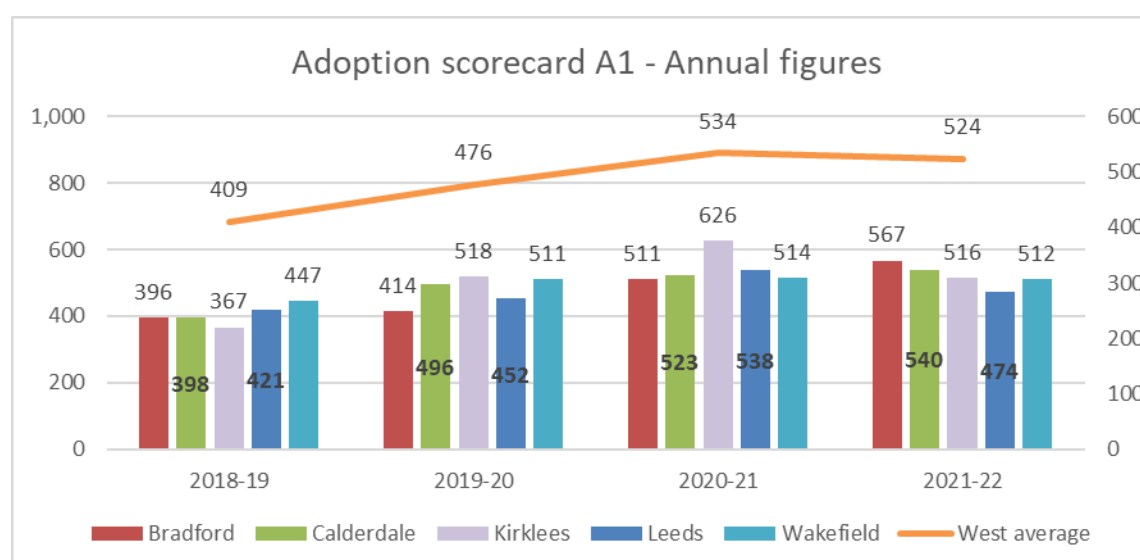
The percentage this year was 73% in house and 27% interagency. Last year it was 66% in house and 34% interagency and is an improving picture.



3.3.14 Adoption Scorecards

A1 indicator

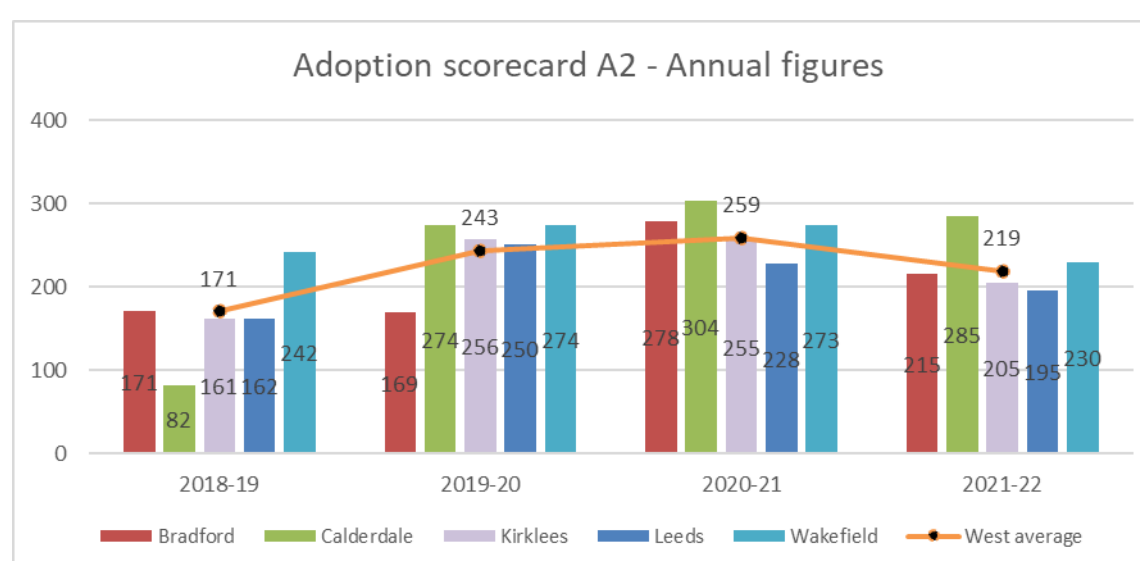
The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (indicator A1) for children in West Yorkshire is 524 days, the National Indicator target is 426 days.



- 21 of the 167 children adopted entered care more than 3 years ago.
- 112 of the 167 children adopted were hard to place children.
- 71 of the 167 children adopted took more than 500 days between entering care and being placed,
- Of the 71 children that took more than 500 days 54 of the 71 were hard to place children with 27 having 2 or more characteristics

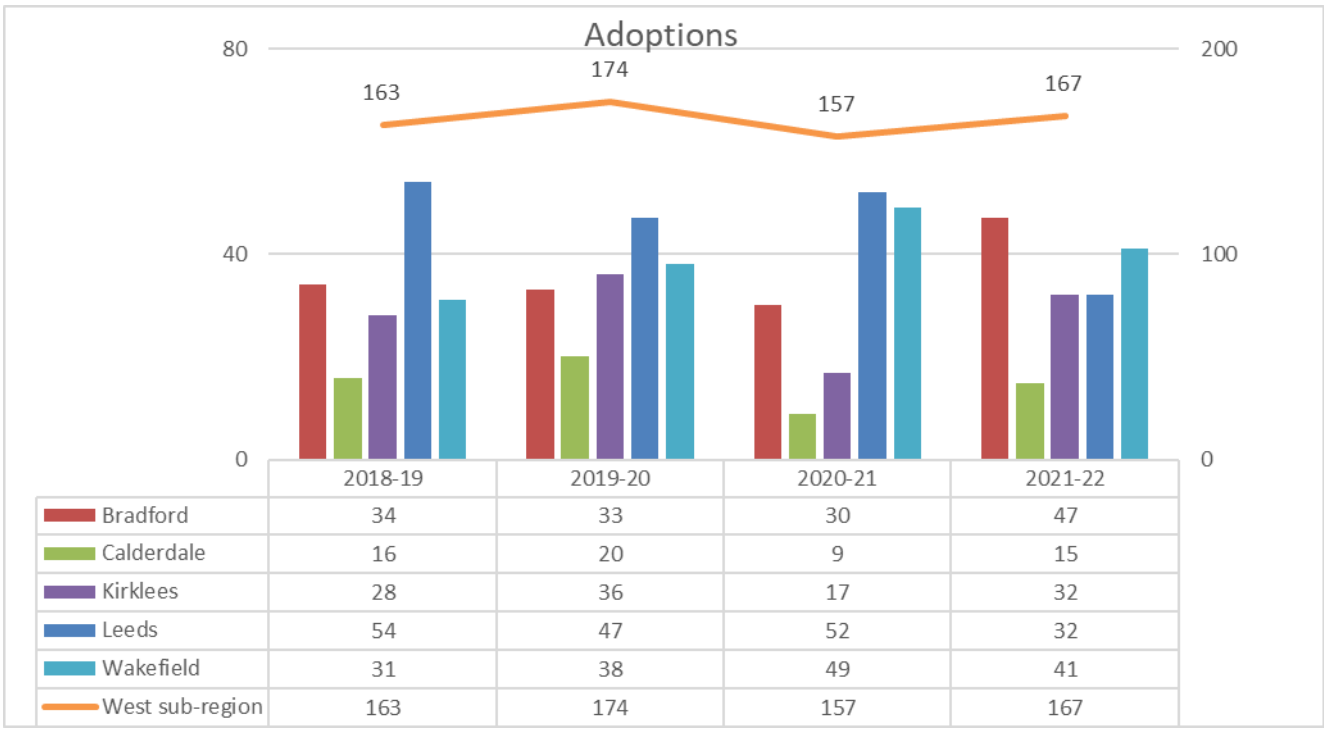
3.3.15 **A2 indicator**

The average time for those children adopted in the period, 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 has decreased to 219 days, the National indicator target is 121 days. This is above the national indicator and reflects an issue of a disconnect between the matching criteria of adopters available and the complexity of children waiting for adoption. However, as discussed in the above paragraph the cohort of these children adopted is important to note and the fact that children have secured permanence and an adoptive family is positive for each of these individual children.



3.3.16 Children adopted from care

The number of children who have been formally adopted has increased by 10 (167) with 13.6% of children leaving care being adopted across the region. The National average is 12%.



3.4 Practice, quality of provision and management oversight

3.4.1 Recruitment and Assessment

We have approved 112 adoptive families over the course of this year and matched 106 families with children, all of these being children from the West Yorkshire region. We have had fewer enquiries in 2021/22 than we did last year but the number of these proceeding to an initial visit has remained similar. We no longer have a backlog of families waiting for assessment and families are allocated at the point they are ready for assessment. We are increasing our online marketing activity to encourage enquiries and our social media presence has improved significantly this year. The numbers of families entering stage 2 have stayed consistent. We have continued to use sessional workers to support capacity in the service and ensure timeliness, though more recently we are managing to allocate far more of our assessments to OAWY workers. Following retirement, we no longer have the additional three recruitment and assessment social work posts.

3.4.2 The feedback from adopters regarding their experience has overall been very positive. Feedback from the 2021 annual adopter survey:

- *Really quickly managed to get help and support in place. Very much appreciate having N (OAWY social worker) in our lives.*
- *R our support worker has been amazing.*
- *T our social worker has been more than brilliant at supporting us. Without her I really think our daughter may not have remained with us.*
- *Very helpful social worker who has helped us with some tricky issues as a family.*
- *Our adoption support team is brilliant.*

3.4.3 Feedback from a Bradford IRO:

- *"N and J wanted it to be noted that the support they have received from T (OAWY) and S (SW) is exceptional and that they wanted to thank them for all the support they have provided to them as adopters and to the children. It's clear that the consistency in workers for these children, along with the day-to-day support given, has enabled N and J to feel well supported, which in turn has ensured the children are very well cared for and settled."*

3.4.4 Further feedback from S and K, prospective adopters (EPP):

- *"There is so much support, it has been absolutely fantastic. The professional support has helped us be more realistic". The couple also said that they would love to "pay back" the support they have received by providing it to other prospective adopters.*

3.4.5 Feedback from a colleague in children's services:

- *"You have made my first adoption experience less difficult than I thought it would be! Thank you for supporting me with this, it's been a pleasure."*

3.4.6 Our training offer has continued to develop. 112 households attended the preparing to adopt training in 2021/22, 61 households have attended our Adopting Siblings training, 127 have attended our connected by adoption training, 54 have attended EPP training, 33 have attended our Experienced Adopter training, and 21 have attended our Foster Carer Adopting training. Some feedback from the Preparing to Adopt training:

- *"It was thought provoking and challenged some of my pre-existing assumptions. I came away with a much greater understanding of adoption. Also, great to meet other potential adopters and have first-hand knowledge from an adoptee and an adoptive parent."*
- *"I feel like I gained a lot of insight, knowledge and confidence from the training. It was great to hear from others on the same journey and begin to build a network of friends who can relate to possible experiences I might go through."*
- *"I learned so much and have so much more to think about but know that me and much partner are on the right path and excited to carry on our journey. I also didn't realise we would make the connection we did with other prospective adopters."*

3.4.7 We have been working on reintroducing the Birth Parent workshop and plan going to run classroom training 6 times in 2022/23 in addition to some online training. We have commissioned Adoption UK to provide all our new adopters with access to the Adopter Passport, where they can access many resources, webinars and videos and complete modules on different areas of adoption. We have also delivered Brain Based Parenting online to many of our stage 2 adopters:

- *“It was very useful and explained in a very clear and practical way - even though I have read a lot about this, it is fantastic to have a clear reminder and practical tips. It will really help me explain my younger son's reactions to my older son - who struggles with the way we try to therapeutically parent our younger son - and my husband, who tends to revert to traditional parenting”*
- *“We attended the training last night and thought it was a really interesting and well-presented session which was really informative that we enjoyed. We are approved adopters but looking for a match now, so always happy to have resources available that would help us when we start our actual parenting journey.”*

3.4.8 The Stage 1 restructure has been in place for 12 months now. A recent audit of stage one work has shown greater consistency in decision making and good evidence of management oversight, along with a bespoke approach to meeting the needs of the enquirers; arranging interpreters, rearranging video visits to face to face, and meeting to provide information even when it was known an enquiry could not progress. This evidences a responsiveness to individual need and good customer service. A recent Mystery Shopper exercise gave very positive feedback about our helpful and open approach to enquirers:

- *“The advisor was quite dynamic, quite friendly. They showed a willingness to help further. Most of the time they sounded quite positive, suggesting solutions and expressing support.”*
- *“The advisor was dynamic and positive. They were helpful, I appreciated their offer to email further information and the invite to attend a meeting.”*
- *“The staff member was engaged, positive and really was keen to help me overcome what I saw as issues. They explained that the stability and length of the relationship was all that mattered and they didn't seem at all put off by the fact we were a same sex couple. They just emphasised that a strong relationship was all they were looking for.”*
- *“I thought the Agency came across as really understanding and seeking to remove as many barriers as possible while ensuring the child was getting the best possible options.”*

3.4.9 Having a strong management focus on the front end of the recruitment service did lead us to decrease the amount of time taken between enquiries, initial visits and receiving and accepting a registration of interest in the first half of the year. In the second half of the year our stage one timescales have been impacted by a shortage of adoption advisors due to staff moving on to study or take up new roles. We have now recruited and will be fully staffed in June. We have also increased the forms embedded in the OAWY website to reduce reliance on post and email, which should reduce delays further. We continue to experience delays at all stages of the process due to GPs being unable to prioritise medical appointments and reports.

3.4.10 We continue to take steps to increase the number of adopter enquiries through our marketing strategy for priority children, and through increasing the possible number of attendees at online information events, which take place twice per month. A key priority for us is recruiting families who can provide a home for siblings. Throughout 2021/22 27 households were approved for sibling groups, an increase of 3 households from the previous year. 61 households attended our sibling training which runs every two months, and we have held a sibling specific profile day for families across the country. Discussions are ongoing regarding our strategy to increase further the number of sibling adopters and a focus group with adoptive families is due to take place in early July to consider recruitment strategy and the support provided post placement. We continue to support the national recruitment campaign and it's work on recruiting adopters for siblings.

3.4.11 A priority for the next year is to increase Early Permanence placements in the region. 19 households approved in 2021/22 were open to Early Permanence Placements, which is 5 fewer households than in the previous year. The number exceeds the number of children identified in the year to be placed via Early Permanence. However, we have still had to place two children externally due to not having families that could meet their needs in the timescales. Numbers of children identified for EPP remain low across the region. One Adoption were successful in a pan regional bid for funding to develop Early Permanence in West Yorkshire and have appointed a project lead to take this forward.

3.4.12 Advertising and marketing

Over the next six months we will be significantly increasing our marketing output, with a combination of paid and free campaigns across our social and digital channels. General brand awareness campaigns to attract top-of-the-funnel audiences will be interspersed with more focused campaigns to help recruit more adopters for sibling groups, children of Black and mixed-Black heritage and older children. We will continue to promote our information events but will have greater focus on our adoption support offer and what makes our offer unique. Social and digital channels will continue to be the key platforms used however we will consider out-of-home and/or radio campaigns later in the year if recruitment numbers remain low. Internal resource to support our social media campaigns will be increased to help deliver more strategic and coordinated messaging.

3.4.13 We are developing a suite of mobile-only landing pages on the website, to improve the overall user experience for people who find our website through a search engine. These pages will be designed to respond to specific search terms used and

will offer a more focused response to individual queries. The improved speed and relevance to search terms will help our Google Ads perform better, which will in turn mean better value for money.

3.4.14 Adoption Panels

Panels are still being run virtually via zoom and this continues to operate well. We hold 8 panels per month and capacity has been less of a challenge in recent months. Bridget Puddepha and Michaela Bass have joined as Panel Chairs bringing the number of Panel Chairs to 4, which has been helpful in managing capacity and covering leave. The panel chairs provide a biannual report for the adoption agency and this feedback is discussed with the local authority adoption leads and decision makers regularly. Lois Highton continues in her role as panel advisor and the consistency and scrutiny she provides has contributed to the smooth running of our panels and an improvement in the quality of paperwork being presented to panel due to the feedback she provides to workers. The business support teams are central to the effective running of panels and the feedback regarding the quality of the organisation of these and minutes are very positive.

3.4.15 Panel Members access their paperwork and join panels either via iPads or their own equipment with SharePoint/secure email providing a secure platform for panel members to read their paperwork. This has helped us with improving diversity of our panels with panel members being able to join from other areas of the country. We are looking to move more panel members to accessing their paperwork via SharePoint as this is more user friendly and plan to use PAR accounts with multi factor authentication to make this happen in the coming months.

3.4.16 Family Finding

197 children have received a should be placed for adoption decision this year, this is down slightly on the previous year of 207 children. 183 children have been matched with their adopters in this year, 171 of which have been placed for adoption. The number of children regionally leaving care through adoption has increased in the last year and is above the national average.

3.4.17 The family finding teams have worked creatively to undertake family finding and achieve matches for children. There have been additional pressures on all the teams in family finding; the complexities of transitions during the pandemic have remained challenging, this has meant an increase in the work required to ensure effective planning to ensure transitions can be undertaken safely as well as a higher level of support needed for both adopters and foster carers. Over the last few months of the year, we have moved to more face-to-face meetings and visits, and some of the additional pressures that came with the covid pandemic have reduced.

3.4.18 There has been an increase in the percentage of children placed with One Adoption West Yorkshire families during 2021/22, from 66% (during 2020/21) to 73% of children placed. This has been possible due to the number of adopters that progressed through for approval in the last 2 years. As a service we are working hard to ensure that children are matched with adoptive families within or close to the West Yorkshire area. The OAWY commissioned contract with the Voluntary Alliance entered its second year and we exceeded the number of 30 adoptive placements for West Yorkshire children. As this contract enters its third and final year analysis will be completed regarding whether the contract has met the aims and objectives and if a further contract should be commissioned. Alongside the various family finding methodologies that we utilised this year we have invited 2 VAA adopters to be featured at each of our internal linking meetings twice a month. This gives family finders an opportunity to find out more information about VAA adopters living in or close to West Yorkshire before other RAAs and for links to be made for our children who are waiting longest.

3.4.19 Workers from the Local Authorities have continued to value the support of the family finders in OAWY with positive feedback from Local Authority Social Workers being received:

- I just wanted the opportunity to praise one of your workers. I have been in social work many years, but new to the adoption/ family finding process. She has gone above and beyond to advise me on the processes and what to expect now and moving on. She has ensured that all documentation has been processed in a timely manner to avoid drift and delay and is already ready to look at going to an internal matching panel on Thursday. I would just like it noted my praise, as in social work as we all know, good work can often go unrecognised.*
- I just wanted to raise with you how helpful she has been during this last week with my EPP case. It's my first EPP case and she's really taken the time to explain everything to me which I really appreciate. It was also clear that she had really taken the time to read the case files in great detail before the linking meeting and she has done an amazing job with the EPP paperwork, she has kindly taken the lead on this and done the majority of the paperwork which I really appreciate, and I just cannot thank her enough for this!*

3.4.20 Profiling events have continued to be delivered virtually with five events taking place over the year. We have changed the format of events, moving from 'live' Skype events to pre-recorded weekend events where adopters can log in and view children's profiles over a longer timeframe. This change was made following feedback from adopters regarding the online profiling events and has enabled the service to significantly increase the number of adopters viewing the profiles from One Adoption West Yorkshire. The events have engaged adopters nationally with a particular focus on engaging adopters approved or in Stage Two of the assessment process within OAWY or with local VAAs. These events take a great deal of

organisation, and the business support staff are key in ensuring the booking system works well and that the technology is working to manage such big events. One of these events specifically focused on profiling children part of a sibling group and two sibling groups were matched from this targeted event. The children featured at these events are children who wait longer for an adoptive family and 75 children have been profiled at the events (some children will have been featured at more than one event). 670 adoptive families have attended the events, with 103 expressions of interest being made in West Yorkshire Children. 6 linking visits with adopters have taken place and 4 matches have been made with the other 2 progressing to panel. Since moving to weekend pre-recorded events the number of adopters in attendance and the expression of interests have risen significantly. There is a plan to continue to run our online profiling events with the next one scheduled for April 2022.

3.4.21 We received the following feedback from adopters who attended the online profiling events:

- *“Fantastic presentation, very good detail, absolutely loved the event in its shape!”*
- *“I found it particularly helpful to see and hear the family finders talking about the children”*

3.4.22 Our first fun day since the start of the pandemic took place in October 2021 and 9 children attended (5 single children and 4 children part of a sibling group) and 31 adopters. This event was kept small due to needing to continue to navigate the continued risks associated with COVID 19. 16 expressions of interest were made at this event and 1 of these has progressed to a match. There is a plan to run a further three fun days next year with the first event scheduled for May 2022.

3.4.23 We received feedback from one social worker following the fun day that said, *“two of my adopters are now considering matches they wouldn’t have before the event, it was a very well-run event”*.

3.4.24 OAWY is utilising Link Maker to profile children to OAWY approved families as well as being able to use the system to profile children to a wider reach of adopters, including targeted profiling to adopters through the contract with the Voluntary Adoption Alliance and nationally where needed. Internal linking meetings continue to be practitioner led with both family finding and adoption social workers profiling the children and families they are family finding for. We have included the profiling of targeted adopters from voluntary adoption agencies who are part of the VAA contract since November 2021 at our internal linking meetings. We are planning to strengthen our connections with other local RAAs in the year ahead, namely those in other areas of Yorkshire as at times they have surplus adopters. We will be inviting them to feature their adopters at our internal linking meeting from May 2022 and exploring hosting fun days pan regionally. We continue to have several family finding methodologies to support children being matched with adoptive families.

3.4.25 Adoption Support

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

The teams have continued to work mostly from home as their base but with increasing numbers of contacts with families or other professionals being carried out face to face; we have recognised that there are occasions (for ease or to make best use of time) that a virtual response is appropriate. The teams are benefitting from spending time together in office bases working as a team and having face to face team meetings. Discussions are taking place about what the future work pattern will look like; how often teams will work in the office base (once a week, for example), and this will form our future hybrid model of working along with the face to face and virtual approaches detailed above.

3.4.26 Some feedback from adopters about the work undertaken by OAWY staff in the last 6 months include:

- *I just wanted to thank you personally for all the support you have given us as a family over the years. It made all the difference to us to know you were there to reach out to.*
- *F had empathy and understood as well from the point of view of adoption and Muslim culture as well.*
- *JW has given our family such tremendous support. For our girls she is so caring and nurturing and has brought out the best in both even in times of great difficulty....She has been able to be the voice of reason with other professionals at the table who perhaps would hear G and I as "just" the parents.....She's gone above and beyond every single time*
- *Just listened to this (podcast from an adopter experiencing difficulties) and it made me so grateful for all your support over the last couple of years. Thanks for all the training and help for C. It really has made a massive difference*
- *It is not possible to convey how much JE has supported and helped us over the past 18 months. She has been on the end of the phone and email, checking in when I've been at breaking point, and to generally checking in the whole time. She has helped me fight for services locally and highlight H's needs. She has helped find appropriate support and assessments and we would not have coped with out her support*
- *You probably won't see M working day to day with adopters so I thought that I should let you know that she is INCREDIBLY good at her job. P and I feel very supported by her....always manages to decipher what is going on and give us really useful advice. She has been brilliant with school and very diligent in contacting people for us and writing up meetings etc. As you know, she is a lovely person too and always makes us feel better!*
- *Thank you so much K for your help and the information you gave me on Thursday and the email you sent me (duty caller)*

3.4.27 We have continued to make full use of the Adoption Support Fund to commission therapeutic work for families, children and young people. Most, if not all, therapy appointments are taking place face to face now although some providers have maintained virtual working as an option if that meets the needs of the young person better. This year in total we have had 624 applications to the fund approved resulting in £2,544,704.43 being awarded. Of this £59,283.81 was generated income

where we had provided services in-house and were able to charge for these from the ASF. Local authorities in the region agreed to £51,091.38 match funding for therapy.

- 3.4.28 Our Stay and Play groups are now back up and running inside venues across the region. We have lately made the difficult decision to cease provision in the Hebden Bridge area of Calderdale due to dwindling take up; we will review this again in future if indicators are that there is a level of need in that area. The Bradford 'Tweens' group continues to run, and we continue to work on setting up 'tweens' and teens provision in the other areas with new groups planning to be launched in the Leeds/Wakefield boundary area at the end of summer. Kirklees/Calderdale planning is also in the pipeline.
- 3.4.29 We now have an established offer of 4 adopter support groups running online per month: Adopter Chat (general support group), Single Adopters, Dads Group and TRECS (trans-racial/ethnic/cultural adopter group). They are incrementally building in size, with the slight exception of the Single Adopters group which we plan to refresh and relaunch in the coming months. The opportunity to attend TRECS group was also offered to colleagues in One Adoption North and Humber as well as One Adoption South Yorkshire and we are pleased to have a couple of families from South Yorkshire who have attend the group.
- 3.4.30 As before, we have continued to offer a programme of evening workshops for families on topics ranging from: Brain Based Parenting, Education workshops in relation to transitions to a new school and SEND, and our new workshop around contact and identity. We have identified in the last few months that there seems to be less appetite from families to attend group parenting programmes; planned groups for Underdeveloped Systems (US), NVR and Persevering Parents have all had to be either abandoned or offered on a 1:1 basis to a couple of families (in the case of NVR) due to a lack of take-up. We are monitoring the need for this provision and are well placed to provide these programmes again when required.
- 3.4.31 We have continued to offer attendance at all our online events to families who live beyond the confines of West Yorkshire and recognise these now as part of our core offer of support to families outside the region who have adopted a child/ren from West Yorkshire.
- 3.4.32 Access to records work is recovering from the impacts of Covid, and we are increasingly moving towards a position of 'business as usual'. We continue to have a dedicated Business Support Officer to deal with these requests, who has received the following feedback from a partner agency:
- ... (name of manager in partner agency) *mentioned to me how amazing the work is that you do around accessing files – they commented that out of all the RAAs and LAs they have a contract to work with (which will be pretty much the whole north of England at least, I should imagine) – you are the best person to deal with.*
- 3.4.33 And specifically, a birth parent was very complimentary about the work undertaken to provide her with letters and pictures of her children that had sat on file for several years, not able to be passed on at the time. The Business Support Officer went over and above in collating some additional non-identifying information about her children and which siblings they had been placed with, which was a comfort to the birth mum to know even several years after the event.
- 3.4.34 In total, we received 330 requests for access to records in the year – averaging 27.5 requests per month. Requests are mostly received from adopted adults, birth family members, adoption support agencies, social workers and police.
- 3.4.35 Commissioned Contracts: Adoption UK and PAC/UK
- Adoption UK: Peer Mentoring
- There are currently 20 active peer mentors supporting 55 families across the region via the 1:1 support service, 27 via WhatsApp groups and 28 via 1:1 support. Furthermore, there are 9 families who are accessing enhanced support via the transitions service.
- 3.4.36 Here are some comments from those accessing the mentoring service:
- Mentee – *“No matter what you’re struggling with there is always someone on hand to help you with their life experiences through adoption. It’s about having someone who understands and who can provide guidance and support to you. It’s about them saying you’re doing a good job and we don’t always get everything right but things will get better and to keep on going. It’s about having that person that has the same thing in common with you and you don’t have to check in on them because they check in on you. It’s just overall brilliant and the value you get from it is priceless.”*
 - Mentor – *“Having previously used the mentoring service when going through the adoption process myself, I found the service invaluable. To have somebody who people can talk to who has “lived” the adoption process and offer real life experiences is really useful to the mentees. As mentors you are offering a completely different perspective to the professionals and one that is as vitally important.”*

- WhatsApp participant – *“the support group and our mentor have been an amazing help for us. No question is too big, too small or too stupid.... a great help through the process and made everything seem possible and easy to get through.”*
- WhatsApp participant – *“reassuring knowing there’s others in the group where we can seek support, people who understand what we are going through. It’s a safe space where we can ask anything and know we will get an honest answer. E.g. buying nursery furniture, to someone else outside adoption it would seem trivial but to us was a big step and the group get it!”*
- Transition Service User – *“Best adoption service we have ever used – learned so much, looking at things differently now, better than any training course!”*

3.4.37 Adoption UK: Adopter Engagement

The Adopter Engagement provision has been active in One Adoption West Yorkshire in the following work:

- Prep training
- Sibling training
- Pre-matching training
- Experienced parent training
- Experienced adopter training
- EPP training

3.4.38 In addition Facebook groups run by Adopter Engagement coordinators across the whole of the Yorkshire and Humber region have reported the following activity:

- Adopter Voice, Facebook group, 911 members.
- Early years and primary school, Facebook group, 284 members.
- Secondary and further education, Facebook group, 149 members.
- EPP, Facebook group, 40 members.

3.4.39 PAC-UK: adults work

PAC-UK have dealt with 461 calls to their advice line and worked with 167 service users (existing and new) across the year. These services are provided for all adults affected by adoption but most of the work is undertaken with birth parents and adopted adults. A total of 655 appointments were offered across the year to service users.

3.4.40 PAC-UK: Adopteens service

81 young people from West Yorkshire have been involved in Adopteens during the year. Additionally, 6 of the members of the Adopteens Youth Council are from West Yorkshire.

3.4.41 Non-Agency Adoption

One Adoption West Yorkshire undertakes non-agency adoption on behalf of Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield councils; Bradford and Leeds councils undertake their own. Due to the pandemic this work was suspended and reopened on the 1st of April 2021. Throughout the year we have received 27 Notifications of Intention to Adopt (NOIs).

3.4.42 Over the last 12 months there were a total of 81 enquiries/ briefing session registrations received for non-agency adoption. 28% (23) of enquiries were from families living in Calderdale, 27% (22) were from families living in Kirklees and 44% (36) were from families living in Wakefield.

3.4.43 Over the past 12 months there were 9 non-agency adoption orders granted, 22% (2) were for families from Calderdale, 33% (3) were for families from Kirklees and 44% (4) were for families from Wakefield.

3.3.44 2021 saw the introduction of virtual briefings which started in July. Those interested in non-agency adoption book onto an online briefing session. Sessions are delivered every 5 weeks in the evening. Attendees can learn about the process and can ask questions, leaving them equipped to make an informed decision about proceeding.

3.4.45 Disruptions

There were 8 children who had an adoption disruption (preadoption order) during 2021/22 which relates to 6 placements. This is an increase from last year. The children part of a sibling group was aged 3 and 4, and 2 and 6 at the time of the disruption.

The single children were aged 4,2,3 and 7 at the time of their disruption. 3 of the placements were internal adoptive placements and 3 of the adoptive placements were external.

3.4.46 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, including the views and experiences of children & young adults.
- Performance Data: statistical data that helps us judge the quality and effectiveness of our professional practice.
- Practice Wisdom & Knowledge: 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.

3.4.47 A Quality Assurance mechanism for panel work is used as a matter of course and has found that 98% of prospective adopter reports were of a good or outstanding standard (1% outstanding, 97% good, 2% requiring improvement) this is an improvement on last year's figure of 93%.

3.4.48 In relation to Child Permanence Reports (CPRs) provided by local authority social workers 95% were considered good or outstanding (1% outstanding, 94% good, 4% requiring improvement and 1% not recorded) this is an improvement on last year figure of 85%. OAWY continue to work with the 5 local authorities to raise the quality of CPRs and support them with training and development work. More detailed feedback is provided for each local authority.

3.4.49 There have been 49 responses to the panel survey in 2021/22. Attendees were asked to rate their overall experience of attending adoption panel, the responses were:

- Very good – 42 (85.71%).
- Good – 5 (10.20%).
- Neither good nor poor - 2 (4.08%).

3.4.50 Between 01 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the Customer Relations Service logged twenty complaints for One Adoption West Yorkshire. The types of complaint were as follows:

Breakdown in adoption process	5
Access to or breach of information	5
Post adoption support	4
Staff attitude	2
Correspondence not answered	2
Contact not adhered to	1
Challenge assessment	1

3.4.51 One complaint was escalated to stage two. This concerned a mother who was unhappy that she was not given access to information about her child's sibling at the time of adoption as it may have changed her decision to adopt them both. A full explanation was given as to the reasons for the decisions made at the time. The customer relations team continue to report a good working relationship with managers from One Adoption West Yorkshire and complaints are responded to in a timely manner.

3.4.52 Case File Audits

41 audits were completed across the service during 2021/22 by Service & Team managers. The result of each audit is recorded as either excellent, good, satisfactory or requires improvement. Any actions identified from the audits are fed-back to the worker to support improvement. Of the 41 audits:

- 5 (12.2%) were excellent.
- 20 (48.78%) were good.
- 11 (26.83%) were satisfactory.
- 5 (12.2%) required improvement.

3.4.53 Joint audits were completed across the region, 7 in total, between a OAWY Service Manager and an LA lead during 2021/22. OAWY recorded the result of each audit as either excellent, good, satisfactory or requires improvement. Of the 7 audits:

- Good – 4 (57.14).
- Satisfactory – 2 (28.57%).
- Requires improvement – 1 (14.29%).

3.4.54 Compliance Audits

Compliance audits are system generated reports that identify missing and/ or incorrectly entered data and were introduced in Q2. Anomalies identified are forwarded to the worker and/ or team manager for investigation with support provided by the performance team. The aim is to reduce the number of anomalies and the time taken to resolve them. Here are the results of the 2021/22 Compliance Audits:

	No. identified	No. (%) resolved
Children	1,166	686 (59%)
Adopters	591	211 (36%)
Adoption support	1,068	97 (9%)

3.4.55 Work is underway to improve the speed in which anomalies are resolved, improvements are expected in 2022/23.

3.4.56 Thematic audits

Two thematic audits have been carried out during 2021/22 to look at specific areas of practice:

3.4.57 Families who left the adoption process following the initial visit - 62 files were audited, 33 (53%) families withdrew, and 29 (47%) families were not recommended. Of the 29 households that were not recommended:

- 5 were enquiring relating to specific children and joint decisions were made with the local authority not to progress to application.
- 22 were given advice and support in relation to returning to the process later and addressing vulnerabilities.
- 2 were informed that the level of risk was such that adoption with OAWY could not be progressed.

3.4.58 Children allocated to family finders post Adoption Order - 43 files were audited looking specifically at date since adoption order, workflows (in particular the existence of a contact workflow) and case records. Of the 43 case files audited:

- 11 were of a good standard.
- 12 files require updates to case records. There was a particular theme in relation to a lack of recording post-match to evidence the transition period and support to the child and family post placement prior to the adoption order.
- 16 files require a contact workflow adding to evidence plans for future contact between the child and their birth family.
- 8 files needed workflows updated, for example supervision workflows closed and trackers closed.
- 15 files were identified as being ready for closure, either immediately or following update, being over 12 months post adoption order.
- 2 files had ongoing adoption support or ASF applications which should be on a new file in the child's adopted name.
- 7 cases were considered closed but have open workflows or allocations which require ending before the case is fully closed.
- 1 case has been closed since the report was run.

3.4.59 Interactive audits

We are planning to introduce interactive audits in 2022/23. The process is currently being developed and a pilot will take place before we go live in Autumn 2022.

3.4.60 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

An all-staff event was held in June which provided an update from each service area and featured an introduction to the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark (CCQM) with related activities. A second event was held in November where the focus was the OAWY 3 Year Plan, wellbeing, key achievements, values and changes. Racism in adoption and a CCQM update also featured.

3.5.2 Training

A skills review of all social work staff was completed in 2020/21. The skills review allowed OAWY to develop a plan which prioritised training based upon the needs of the service. Here is an update of the training delivered and scheduled:

- Theraplay Level 1 – 22 workers completed training in February '22.
- Theraplay Group Work – 11 workers completed training in February '22.
- Theraplay Level 2 – 12 workers are booked on for April '22.
- DDP Level 1 – 24 workers are booked on for May and 24 workers for July '22.
- DDP Level 2 – 24 workers are booked on for November '22.

3.5.3 1 member of staff has been trained in therapeutic life story work and 3 more will be training in 2022/23.

3.5.4 All staff in the agency continue to work towards achieving the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark.

3.5.5 Strategic issues and forward plans

OAWY's 3-year plan (Appendix 2) outlines the vision, mission, outcomes, and priorities up to 2024. Activities linked to the delivery of the 3-year plan are tracked through the OAWY Service Improvement Plan (Appendix 3).

Corporate Considerations

4.1 **Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 There has been ongoing engagement with staff over the year. Two all staff events have been held, one in June and one in November which covered; strategic and service area updates, wellbeing, Adoption UK delivered a presentation on the Adoption Passport and the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark (CCQM) team also delivered a presentation. There were facilitated team exercises were with a focus on the CCQM.

4.1.2 Quarterly newsletters are in place to keep staff updated as well as email bulletins if needed. Ongoing engagement with adopters, young people through Adopteens, adopted adults and birth parents is an integral part to co-develop and co deliver the services provided for children and families in the region.

4.1.3 The OAWY annual staff survey was emailed to all staff in Q2; 46% of staff completed it. 85% of staff enjoy working for OAWY (10% indifferent) and 89% of staff are proud to work for OAWY (6% indifferent).

4.1.4 When asked: What do you think we do well? The themes from the responses were:

- Support children and families.
- Work well together – friendly, helpful & supportive.
- Innovative, creative and forward thinking.

4.1.5 When asked: What do you think we could improve on? The themes from the responses were:

Theme	Action
Relevant/ specific training & career development.	<p>Theraplay level 1, Theraplay level 2, Theraplay group work, DDP1, DDP2, Therapeutic life story work and CCQM training are being delivered throughout 2022.</p> <p>OAWY have developed a bespoke CPD internal experience pathway that allows staff to shadow and experience key elements of other roles within the agency.</p>
Communication - SLT/ general updates, new starters.	<p>OAWY's 2022/23 SIP (Appendix 3) has a specific action to 'Identify and implement ways to collaborate across the agency'. This includes seeking and reviewing staff feedback to factor into the internal communication strategy.</p> <p>Email updates to team managers following SLT are now in place. TMs then cascade the information accordingly.</p> <p>Three weekly leadership check-ins started in April 2022. These are for optional online meetings where OAWY HOS provides updates and answers questions/ addresses issues raised by staff. They are intended to improve lines of communication by offering an alternative to email updates and provide an opportunity for staff to ask questions.</p>

4.2 Equality and Diversity/ Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The OAWY Equality Impact assessment was reviewed and updated March 2022 and can be found at Appendix 4. Actions from this are fed into the annual service improvement plan and tracked throughout the year.

4.3 Resources and value for money

4.3.1 The final 2021/22 outturn position for OAWY was an overspend of £9.2k which was funded from OAWY's earmarked reserve. The main pressure on the 2021/22 budget was a £162k shortfall of Inter Agency income, a £60k overspend on Inter-Agency placements, and a £32k overspend on commissioned contracts. This was offset by additional income generated through support of the National Grant work. The backdated pay award resulted in an overspend of staffing costs, however an additional partner contribution was made to offset this. A further point to note is that a total of £2.34m of expenditure was attributed to the ASF and this was offset by corresponding ASF income received in year.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to present challenges for the service and impacted on staff wellbeing. Consultation is ongoing regarding the future balance between home and office working to ensure that we continue to deliver a high-quality adoption service alongside staff having a good work life balance. I am continually impressed by the passion and enthusiasm of the staff team and how they adapt to changes despite the pressures they face. As a result, we have over the last year recruited and assessed a diverse range of adopters and matched them with West Yorkshire children with an adoption plan. We have been proactive and creative in finding families for children, utilising a wide range of resources. We have also provided an ever-increasing range of training and support to our adoptive families. Our service delivery and development continue to be influenced by those impacted directly by adoption, with independent support offered to birth families and adoptees.

One Adoption West Yorkshire



Voice and Influence of Adopters, Children & Young People report card April 2021 to March 2022

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?

Annual Adopter Survey

The One Adoption West Yorkshire 2021 adopter survey was emailed to adopters in October and completed by 108 adopters.

When asked 'What do you think we do well? The themes from the comments were:

- Support: education, groups, events, resources & training
- Social workers – genuine, understanding, helpful.

When asked 'What do you think we could improve on? The themes from the comments were:

- Support and timeliness of it.
- Communication – speed and what's available.
- Staff – consistency, retention and more of.
- Support for older children.

Here are some of the positive comments received:

"Best social workers ever"

"TM our social worker has been more than brilliant at supporting us.

Without her I really think our daughter may not have remained with us."

"Our adoption support team is brilliant, but under-resourced. They go above and beyond in terms of supporting us and our adoptive family."

"We've been impressed with the support at a very stressful time.

Really quickly managed to get help and support in place. Very much appreciate having N in our lives."



National profiling event

One Adoption West Yorkshire facilitated a national virtual profiling event in September. Regional adoption agencies from across England joined to profile children of Black African/Caribbean heritage and mixed Black African/Caribbean heritage who they were actively family finding for. The event was an opportunity for approved adopters to view information about a range of children across the country waiting for adoption. Profiles were created by Family Finding social workers via pre-recorded videos which were available to be viewed over one weekend, hosted on the One Adoption website.

Prospective adopters were able to submit questions about the children or expressions of interest after they had watched the presentations in their own time. 56 adopters registered to attend represented by 35 different adoption agencies.

19 children were profiled including 4 sibling groups of 2. We received 13 expressions of interest with 2 links being explored.

Here are some comments from those who attended:

"We thought it was an excellent event and find it a lot more personal than link maker."

"We really appreciated hearing from the children's social workers directly and getting a clearer picture of each child."

"We did like hearing from the foster carer and seeing a few extra photos and videos."



Local profiling events

One Adoption West Yorkshire held six profiling events in 2021/22 with one of the events being sibling specific. Across all the events:

- 99 profiles were presented (70 part of a sibling group and 29 individual).
- 109 expressions of interest received.
- There have been 3 linking meetings for sibling groups of 2.
- 2 sets of siblings (2x groups of 2) have been matched and now placed for adoption.
- 694 families registered for these events. 54 have been OAWY families and the rest external.

Here are some comments from those who attended the events:

"The accessibility of this event, being able to hear information and revisit at your own pace was a huge positive."

"It was very helpful to have more information about children compared to their Link Maker profile, without having to travel."

"It's great that I can attend at any time over the weekend so I can fit it into my schedule and look at the profiles at my leisure."

"Fantastic really. We appreciate the effort everyone put into this so much!"

"This was our first online event for family finding and found this to be a positive experience."

"The event was well run and organised."



TRECS Support Group

TRECS group – the trans-racial, trans-cultural, trans-ethnic adoption support group was formed in January and is for parents who have adopted children from a different race, ethnicity and/ or culture to their own.

The group meet monthly to discuss the importance of racial and cultural identity for adopted children, with sessions supported by OAWY social work staff.

The group meet online but plan to hold some sessions face to face when people feel safe to do so. OAWY offer the group to OASY and OANH and we have had adopters from Sheffield also attending. There is no formal feedback mechanism in place yet, but one parent emailed to say:

“Sincere thanks for all you're doing it's a really fantastic group.”



Partnership with Adoption UK

Adoption UK have supported many families in One Adoption West Yorkshire through the mentoring service they run, and have also helped support families around transitions in education. Adoption UK will be continuing to provide these services for any families in West Yorkshire in the future.



Partnership with PAC-UK

ADOPTTEENS
FORMERLY KNOWN AS AT-ID

Adopteens 'Voices of Adopted Teens' film was released publicly just before Christmas and has received positive feedback on social media. It is available to watch on the [PAC-UK YouTube channel here](#).

Filling the Gap 18 – 25 Therapeutic Group

This 1-year pilot group started in September and runs monthly at the PAC-UK Leeds office. The group consists of a diverse group of young, adopted adults from the region.

The themes have varied while the group has been running but has highlighted consistently the need for such groups to bring young adults together at a time in their lives where support is probably at its most crucial.

Themes that have emerged as part of the group include:

- Access to records.
- Contact arrangements (support pre 18 and what happens post 18).
- Age of adopters and impact this has on their growing children.
- Experience of therapy.
- Life story work.
- Varying experience of social workers/social work support.

Feedback from participants has been excellent:

"Really helpful to be able to discuss with adopted young people."

"Having the young adults there giving their real-life experiences added so much more to the workshop".

"The focus on the lived experience of adoption was great and thought provoking."

"The Adopted for Life workshop was excellent; it was so powerful to hear the adopted adults speak and hear their experiences of accessing adoption support. Lots of thinking to do about how we can better meet the needs of our young people – thank you."

"The workshops were amazing, particularly the adopted for life with the Adopteens – really powerful."



Best ideas - what's next?

Fun Days

Fun days will be relaunched during 2022/23. The first of which will be a regional Fun Day, led by OAWY held in May. Children and families from North, South and east Yorkshire will be in attendance.



Increase adopter engagement

In 2022/23 we will be looking to increase adopter engagement with our core offer of support services at the point of enquiry.

Improving help and support for teenagers and young adults who are moving towards independence.

We will be producing a clear core offer for the website for 18+ year olds and collaborating with LAs for pathways to services for those not able to live with their families.



Letter swap – contact pilot

Link maker have developed a new system, Letter swap, that supports a broader and more flexible range of contact between adoptive and birth families. One Adoption West Yorkshire will be piloting this new system for nine months with 10 families.

Improve participation and voice and influence in service development and delivery

We will:

- Review the surveys we send to prospective adopters.
- Review the voice of the child and birth family in life appreciation days.
- Review the feedback mechanism following work with children.
- Implement an interactive audit tool.
- Develop systems for communicating with birth family members and share their feedback.

Involving adoptive parents

As part of OAWYs review of EPP we will be involving adoptive parents by linking with Adoption UK.



Voice and influence of the child

To enhance the voice and influence of the child we will be exploring ways for them to 'inspect' and feedback on our service.

Rebuild group provision

We will be focusing on rebuilding the group provision for teens and tweens that was ceased during the pandemic. In addition to the existing Bradford group, we are looking to set up groups covering Calderdale/ Kirklees and Leeds/ Wakefield.

Adopteens

Activity days – Adopteens have the following activity days planned for the West in 2022:

- Zoom cheesecake making.
- Wreath making workshop.





One Adoption West Yorkshire's plan 2021 – 2024

What we'll do...

Our vision

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

Our mission

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

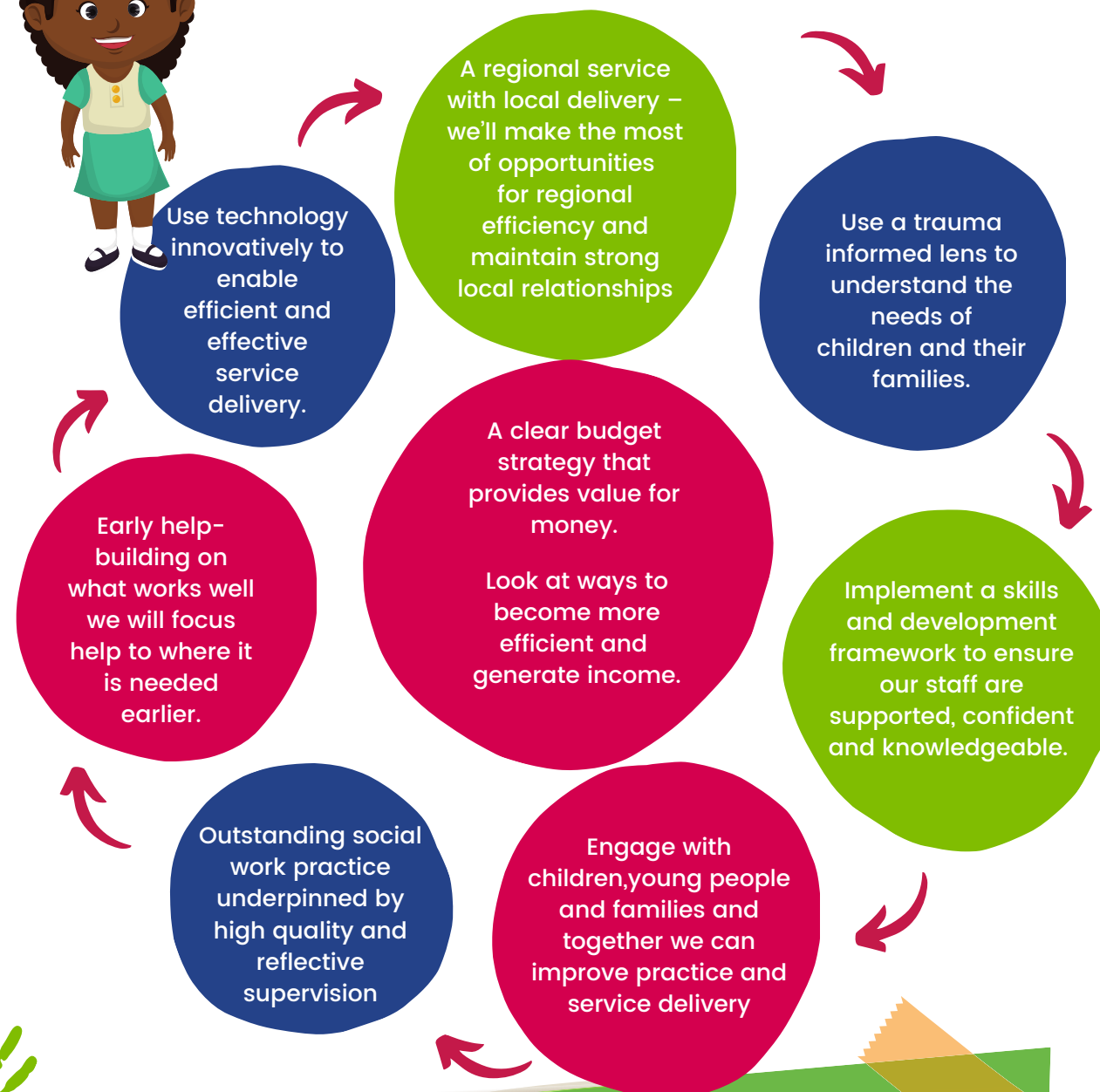
4 outcomes

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

7 priorities:

- 1 To meet the needs of the children we will recruit and assess a diverse range of adopters.
- 2 Work with local authorities and partners to: improve the early identification of children needing adoption; the use of early permanence and; to promote children remaining within or close to West Yorkshire.
- 3 To improve the timeliness, accessibility and flexibility of adoption support provision across in the region.
- 4 To implement a multi-disciplinary model of adoption support to help parents support their children and build strong relationships.
- 5 To collaborate with local authorities to improve the help and support for teenagers and young adults who are moving towards independence.
- 6 To achieve the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark.
- 7 To work collaboratively with partners to Improve the flexibility, variety and quality of contact arrangements.

How we'll do it...



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

Increased diversity of adopters approved and matched.

High level of family stability.

Improved outcomes from evidenced based evaluations.

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

Positive service user feedback.

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



Three behaviours which underpin everything:

1. Listening and responding to the voice of the child.
2. Using restorative practice: Doing with, not for, or to.
3. Using Outcomes Based Accountability: 'Is anyone better off?'

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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

Directorate: Children & Families	Service area: One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY)
Lead person: Michelle Rawlings	Contact number: 07712 216 979
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: March 2022	

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

2. Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team e.g., service user, manager of service, specialist
Michelle Rawlings	OAWY	Head of Service
Rhian Beynon	OAWY	Service Delivery Manager
Julie Chew	OAWY	Service Delivery Manager
Nicola Steele	OAWY	Service Delivery Manager
Richard Stevenson	OAWY	Practice Improvement & Development Manager

<p>3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:</p> <p>OAWY was the first Regional Adoption Agency to go-live on the 1st of April 2017. OAWY is made up of the 5 separate Local Authority adoption teams which provided adoption services for West Yorkshire; Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield and is the largest adoption agency in the North of England.</p> <p>OAWY 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>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)</p>

<p>4a. Strategy, policy or plan (Please tick the appropriate box below)</p>	
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"/>
<p>Please provide detail:</p>	

<p>4b. Service, function, event please tick the appropriate box below</p>	
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"/>
Please provide detail: 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, prospective adopters, adopters, birth parent and staff.	

5. Fact finding – what do we already know

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.

(Priority should be given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration related information)

There are no restrictions to adoptive applicants regardless of age, religion/ belief/ faith, disability, gender, sexual orientation or race provided they are deemed able to meet the needs of the child/ children who have a plan for adoption.

Adopters need resilience, skills and openness to parenting in a therapeutic way, regardless of age, gender, religion, sex etc.

Children who wait longer to be adopted generally have one of more of the following characteristics: they are older (5+ years old), BME, have a disability or are part of a sibling group.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Age	Legally you must be at least 21 years old to adopt. Age restrictions for people that age or above applying to adopt are flexible provided they meet all the relevant criteria and can meet the needs of the children with a plan for adoption.	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 (see section 12, action 1 & 2).
Religion/ Belief / Faith	OAWY accepts adoption applicants of all religions/ beliefs/ faiths provided they meet all the relevant criteria and can meet the needs of the children with a plan for adoption. This ensures there is potential for a wide range of	There are not always adequate numbers of potential adopters or children to meet the religious/ belief/ faith needs of either party (see section 12, action 1 & 2).

	adopters recruited to meet the range of children needing placement.	
Disability	<p>Adopters with a disability can 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> <p>OAWY offers a range of key services virtually (i.e., information events, training and support) throughout the adoption journey. This means people who may struggle or be unable to travel to events still have access.</p>	<p>Potentially some adoptive applicants with 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 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 (see section 12, action 1 & 2).</p>
Gender	<p>Gender identity does not impact a person's ability to adopt provided they meet all the relevant criteria and are able to meet the needs of the children with a plan for adoption.</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 often female. A negative impact of this may be that there is a potential for male adopters (Dads) to feel isolated. Therefore, we have a regional support group for dads.</p> <p>Gender variance training delivered by New Family Social (NFS) to 75 social work staff in 2021/22. Staff can also access free webinars offered by NFS through our membership which focus on</p>	<p>Single adopters at times are not aware they can adopt on their own and applicants from single males are few. However, our marketing does make clear it is not an issue (No action required).</p>

	gender, sexuality and relationships. There is also introductory training on PAL through LCC.	
Sexual Orientation	<p>OAWY recruitment procedures are anti-discriminatory and welcome applicants who are LGBT+ provided they meet all the relevant criteria and can meet the needs of the children with a plan for adoption.</p> <p>The assessment process for adopters conforms to the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (Coram BAAF) guidance.</p> <p>Some OAWY social workers have been trained in assessing gay and lesbian adopters.</p> <p>OAWY attends regional Pride events annually to promote adoption.</p>	OAWY are successful in recruiting gay and lesbian adopters however there may still be perceived barriers for this group. OAWY's marketing promotes adoption to members of the LGBT+ community and actively supports LGBT+ national events and campaigns (No specific action required).
Race	<p>Adopters from any racial background are recruited by OAWY, provided they meet all the relevant criteria and can meet the needs of the children with a plan for adoption.</p> <p>There is a transracial support group for adopters.</p> <p>The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement led to OAWY forming a BLM working group and action plan for 2021/22. This plan includes actions on access to services and support, training for adopters and staff, recruitment and representation. The OAWY BAME staff group will decide if a specific BLM action plan is needed for 2022/23 or if actions should be added to the strategic SIP.</p>	Recruiting adopters for children from non-white British 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 (see section 12, action 1 & 2).
<p>Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information? Please provide detail:</p> <p>N/A.</p>		
<p>Action required:</p>		

See section 12.

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

☒

Yes

☐

No

Please provide detail:

This document was emailed to Sam Parkin at Adoption UK for review and comment.
Feedback received March 2022.

Action required:

N/A

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

☒

Age

☐

Carers

☒

Disability

☒

Gender reassignment

☒

Race

☒

Religion
or Belief

☒

Sex (male or female)

☒

Sexual orientation

☐

Other

(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

☒

Services users

☒

Employees

☐

Trade Unions

☒

Partners

☒

Members

☐

Suppliers

☐

Other please specify

Potential barriers.

<input type="checkbox"/> Built environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location of premises and services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information and communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer care
<input type="checkbox"/> Timing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stereotypes and assumptions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation and involvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial exclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment and training
<input type="checkbox"/> specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function	

Please specify

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 prospective adopters to Information Events which are held virtually. Events being held virtually means that prospective adopters don't have any issues with the access limitations some building, and locations may have.
2. OAWY accepts and actively recruit adopters regardless of age, religion/ belief/ faith, disability, gender, sexual orientation or race if they are deemed to be able to meet the needs of the child/ children who have a plan for adoption.
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 or race. Our website uses positive images to promote our approach to equality within our advertising, see Appendix A.
4. OAWY have approved a diverse range of adopters, including same sex couples and single people. We have undertaken specific LGBT+ recruitment for adoptive families.
5. Adopter preparation events are held at virtually or at venues which can meet the needs of adopters with a disability.

Family Finding for Children

6. Profiling Events, which are aimed at approved adopters and adopters in assessment, are held virtually making them accessible to both internal and external adopters. This enables people to obtain information early about the reality of the children OAWY are seeking to place.
7. Fun days (post Covid-19) will be held in an accessible and child friendly locations – taking place at least 4 times per year aimed at approved adopters and adopters in assessment. Fun days allow a focused event for children who are deemed harder to place, typically older (5+ years old), BME, have a disability or are part of a sibling group. These events are designed to give children a greater chance of a timely match.
8. 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.
9. OAWY seeks to identify and meet any additional support needs adopters may have to care for children from different ethnic, cultural and religious groups and children with disabilities.
10. OAWY uses Link Maker to identify placements for those children who wait longer.
11. OAWY attends national exchange days and activity days (when they are held). These events allow OAWY to identify adopters who can meet the specific needs of the child with a plan for adoption.

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 individual needs of the person/people.
14. Initial advice and information are free, and most services are free to access.
15. Adoption Support is provided via a range of accessible means.

Adopters

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. A Peer Mentor service is available to OAWY adopters.
18. A support group for dads has been in place since June 2021.
19. A transracial adopter's support group has been in place since January 2022.
20. Adoption UK provides an arena for all adopters to access information and advice -

<https://www.adoptionuk.org/>

21. 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.

22. We run a number of monthly online support groups for adoptive parents including specific ones for single adopters, dads and adopters who adopt a child of different race or culture to themselves.

Birth Parent Groups

23. 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/>

Adopted Teens

24. OAWY work with ADOPTTEENS (adopted teens identity) to learn from feedback from adopted teenagers. ADOPTTEENS is a project that was originally set up by the Yorkshire & Humber adoption consortium (a group of local authority adoption teams and voluntary adoption agencies) back in 2014. Their vision is to offer adopted teenagers their own space online and as part of a group that has the power to speak out and make a difference! - <https://www.adopteens.org.uk/>

Tweens (9 to 12 years old)

25. OAWY runs a range of Tween support groups aimed at children aged 9 to 12 years.

Staffing

26. OAW have diverse interview panels when possible.

27. Social workers are trained regarding equality and diversity issues in their degree in social work.

28. All staff events are held at least twice a year which often have a training element to them i.e., unconscious bias, cultural awareness/ understanding, BLM.

29. All staff at the agency are working toward the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark.

Specialist Advice

30. 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:

See section 12.

8b. Negative impact:
<p><u>Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are insufficient adopters with a diverse background coming forward to adopt (see section 12, action 1 & 2). 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 (see section 12, action 1 & 2). <p>*Please note: Work has been undertaken with My Adoption Family to ensure that the messaging around adoption is clear regarding the needs of children waiting in England for adoption. Asking adopters to consider children of mixed heritage and older children and sibling groups is a key priority when working with the faith and community organisations to ensure that those coming forward are clear about the need for the service to prioritise those who can consider a range of children.</p> <p><u>Family Finding for Children</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. There can be unconscious bias from Children's Social Workers regarding considering single females and males for sibling groups they have waiting (see section 12, action 4). 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 (see section 12, action 1 and 2). <p><u>Adoption Support</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The feedback from 2020 adopter survey highlighted a need for more flexibility in the training and support we offer in terms of timings and day delivered. This would improve access for full-time parents and/ or working parents (see section 12, action 5).
Action Required
See section 12.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> No </div> </div> <p>Please provide detail:</p> <p>OAWY will always work to build and maintain positive and open relationships for people aiming to or being involved in the adoption process.</p> <p>Action required:</p> <p>None.</p>

--

10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other? (e.g., in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)
<div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>Yes</div></div> <div><div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div><div>No</div></div>
Please provide detail:
Action required: None.

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another? (e.g., where your activity/decision is aimed at adults could it have an impact on children and young people)
<div><div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div><div>Yes</div></div> <div><div><input type="checkbox"/></div><div>No</div></div>
Please provide detail: There could be the perception that certain groups are less likely to adopt than others. OAWY will always promote that this is not the case. 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 based upon any of their diversity characteristics.
Action required: None.

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. *Project underway, started 2019/20.	31/03/2022	A new approach to reduce waiting time for children who wait longer piloted.	Nicola Steele
Action 2 – Recruit and assess a diverse range of adopters to meet the needs of the children. *Covered in the 2022/23 SIP	31/03/2022	Improved wait times for children from diverse backgrounds.	Michelle Rawlings
Action 3 – Implement Black Lives Matter action plan, see Appendix B.	31/03/2022	BLM action plan actions created, assigned and monitored.	BLM working group
Action 4 – Identify and deliver appropriate training on unconscious bias for OAWY staff and children’s social workers. *Covered in the 2022/23 SIP (CCQM)	31/03/2022	Training delivered to staff.	SLT
Action 5 – Review existing support and training offer and identify which can be made more accessible in terms of times/ days delivered. *Covered in the 2022/23 SIP	31/03/2022	Support/ training offered with a wider variety of times/ days.	Julie Chew

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
Michelle Rawlings	Head of OAWY	March 2022
Date impact assessment completed		March 2022

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 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 Governance Services	Date sent: TBC
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent: TBC
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent: TBC



Who can adopt



Steps to adoption



The children



Events



Support



About One Adoption



Information and support for
first parents and relatives



Information for people who
have been adopted



Partner or step parent
adoption

Children from African, Caribbean, mixed ethnicity and Gypsy Roma backgrounds

In the West Yorkshire area especially we have a shortage of prospective adopters coming forward who can meet the needs of children from African, Caribbean, mixed ethnicity and Gypsy Roma backgrounds. If you are considering adoption and feel you can meet the needs of these children, please get in touch.



Children with unknown health needs or additional needs

All children need secure and loving homes. We are looking for adopters willing to help meet the needs of children with additional health needs or disabilities. Sometimes we do not know what the likely health or developmental outcomes may be for a child, for example if they have a chromosome abnormality. We need adopters who are willing to accept and understand these uncertainties and help the child develop and succeed at their own pace. With the right support and training, we aim to help every child reach their full potential.



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Corporate Parenting Board – Highlight Report

Date of Board: 24 January 2023

Data is as at 30th November 2022, unless stated otherwise.

*Benchmarking Source: Children's Social Care Benchmarking Tool (BMT) V3.29. Benchmarking data is from March 2022 unless stated otherwise. SN = Statistical Neighbours average, Eng. = England average. Where no equivalent published data is available, "N/A" is shown.

Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	SN	Eng.
4.02.01 Children in care - numbers in care per 10,000 of age 0-17 population.	Per 10,000 population aged 0-17	63.8 (625)	62.6 (614)	64.8 (635)	64.7 (634)	92.0	70.0
	Direction of Travel		↔	↑	↓		
4.02.04 Children in care by placement within and outside the LA boundary: Total placed outside Kirklees and more than 20 miles from home address	% (number)	12.5% (78/625)	12.7% (78/614)	11.0% (70/635)	10.6% (67/634)	12.0%	16.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↓		
4.05.01 Placement Stability Within Year - LAC with three or more placements	% (number)	7.0% (44)	9.0% (55)	8.7% (55)	8.7% (55)	9.0%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↔		
4.05.04 Social Worker change of LAC in care 12+ Months: Number of Social Worker changes	Number	276	302	292	264	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
Average number of SW changes	Average	0.55	0.63	0.61	0.57	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- The number of children looked after has been relatively consistent during the 12-month period from Dec 21 to Nov 22 from 63.8 (625 children) in Dec 21 to 64.7 (634 children) in Nov 22. The current 12-month average for Kirklees is 63.0 (618 children), above our 31 March 2022 published rate of 62.0, but below the England 2022 rate of 70.0 and significantly below our Statistical Neighbours 2022 rate of 92.0.
- Of the 67 children placed outside of Kirklees and more than 20 miles from their home address, the large majority are placed in fostering. The full breakdown is as follows:

Placement Type	Number	%
Fostering	55	82.1%
Placed for Adoption	5	7.5%
Residential	3	4.5%
S1 - Residential School	1	1.5%
Placed with Parents	1	1.5%
YOI or Prison	2	3.0%
Total	67	

- The Heads of Service continues to have oversight of permanency planning through Legal Gateway and Permanence Panel. The panels are held weekly to ensure consistency regarding decision

making and care planning for children and young people. The panels also provide a quality assurance framework and opportunity to evidence good practice and areas for development.

- An External Placement and Finance Review Panel is held every 2 weeks, chaired by the Service Director. The purpose of the panel is to ensure better oversight of children who are not placed in Local Authority provision and provides a quality assurance function in that it provides high support and challenge as required to avoid drift and delay in care planning for children and young people.
- The number of social work changes has seen a further decrease. This will remain a focus for us to ensure we are minimising the impact on children and young people as it is important that we maintain and continue to strengthen relationships. This will remain a challenge due to the recruitment of Social Work Practitioners, of which is not just specific to Kirklees Council. We are mindful of the impact this has on our children and young people and in order to address this we are in the process of recruiting youth engagement and family support practitioners to undertake non-statutory roles. We will also continue to focus on staff retention and consistency in case allocation.
- Although we have not seen an increase in relation to the number of children who have had 3 or more home in October and November 2022, we remain focused on reducing this number further. Due to the limited availability of foster carers for this age group of which is a national issue, this has resulted with the service having to utilise the temporary options that have been available, until a suitable home has been found, therefore having an impact on our performance data.

What do we want to improve?

- The service will continue to work with the Placement Support team and the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) team to collaboratively support improving placement stability for our children and young people with a focus on integrating strength-based approaches and tools into practice.
- Further worker needs to be undertaken to improve allocated social worker stability.
- Reduce number of children placed more than 20 miles from their home address. We aim to recruit more local foster carers to provide more local placement options.
- Ongoing work regarding placement stability is being undertaken jointly with practitioners and partners to address the challenges and ensure good homes are available for our children and young people.

Children Looked After Reviews, Visits and Missing

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	SN	Eng.
4.06.01: CLA Reviews Within Statutory Timescale	%	99.0%	98.0%	98.1%	98.1%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↔		
4.07.01: CLA visits within statutory timescale: % of CLA visited in line with Kirklees Practice Standards	%	92.5% (571)	93.3% (568)	94.2% (586)	93.8% (591)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.09.02: Missing children: a. No. of CLA having at least one Missing episode per month	% (number)	2.9% (18)	1.6% (10)	2.4% (15)	3.6% (23)	11%	11%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↑		
b. No. of LAC that have more than one missing episode in the month (repeat Mispers)	% (number)	72.2% (13)	70.0% (7)	100.0% (15)	78.3% (18)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
4.09.03: Independent Return Interviews for CLA offered within 72 hours of the child being located	% (number)	86.7% (13/15)	76.9% (10/13)	50.0% (8/16)	64.0% (16/25)	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- 13 requests for Initial Review forms were received by the Child Protection and Review unit in November 2022 relating to 13 children – unusually each of these referrals was for a single child. For all the referrals received, children and young people were allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) within 24 hours and Initial Child Looked After Reviews were arranged within 4 weeks of the children and young people becoming Looked After.
- In November the Child Protection and Review Unit held 173 Looked After Review Meetings for children, with all but one (for 3 siblings) of these being held within timescales. Independent Reviewing Officers closely monitor Child Looked After Review timescales to ensure that this high percentage is maintained whilst a clear rationale is recorded on a child's file if there are circumstances which result in a child's review meeting not being held within statutory timescales.
- IROs robustly review children's care plans. They provide time-bound actions, which are followed up in between review meeting to ensure that plans for children progress swiftly, and where drift is identified informal and formal resolution processes are used effectively. Children's reviews are well attended by a range of partner agencies, who commit to taking actions to improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- IROs robustly review children's care plans. They provide time-bound actions, which are followed up in between review meeting to ensure that plans for children progress swiftly, and where drift is identified informal and formal resolution processes are used effectively. Children's reviews are well attended by a range of partner agencies, who commit to taking actions to improve children's experiences and outcomes.
- The Children's Rights Team supported 13 young people at their CLA review in the month of September with 7 of these young people living out of area.
- There has been decrease in percentage of Children in Care who have received a statutory visit in line with practice standards. We continue to have weekly oversight and monitoring of the visits as part of our service performance meetings. The meetings focus on timeliness and quality of visits to young people as well as providing evidence of practice in relation key strengths and areas for further development.
- Missing CLA:**
 - The number of Children having at least one missing episode has reduced in November, however the average remains at approx. 3%. This average remains considerably below the national average and statistical neighbours (10.0% and 8.7% respectively).
 - The principles of 'Right Support, Right Person, at the Right Time' are consistently adopted when approaching an Independent Return Interview. Utilising familiarity and identifying the

right person for the circumstances and placing the Young Person at the centre of the decision is the consistent approach undertaken. With very specific exceptions all Children and Young people are offered an independent return home interview (97%).

- 99% of all Independent Return Home interviews offered and accepted were completed.
- The number of children having multiple missing episodes has fluctuated between 3 and 8 in the three-month period which is lower than the 12-month average. The percentage rate of these children is determined from a very low overall number in the cohort of missing children. The slight fluctuation in the overall number of Children therefore creates a significant shift in the percentage and as such presents a volatile range.
- As per previous reports, all children's homes are being encouraged to review missing reporting strategies with the placing Local Authorities to ensure they are fit for purpose and have a clear expectation on the home to try all avenues to locate the child before reporting them missing.
- Daily Risk Exploitation and Missing Meetings (DREAMM) occur with partners to discuss, intelligence, missing episodes and individual circumstances to ensure actions, and allocations are in keeping with the core principles placing the child at the centre.
- The Philomena Protocol is a Police initiative to help locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing. The basis of the scheme is for vital information about the young person to be recorded on a form so that this can be used to help locate them safely and quickly. The Philomena Protocol documents continue to be used by all children's homes and semi-independent providers in Kirklees (introduced in July 2020). A number of meetings have been held with providers recently to consider the protocol, the information within it and expectations that all providers use it. Feedback showed that children's homes and semi-independent providers like the protocol and that the information held means that children are located more quickly and that it aids the Police to do this. It was recognised by the police that more work needs to take place with the police call operators who receive the information as they are not all familiar with the protocol.
- Provider meetings are run 3 to 4 times per year. These have focussed on the Philomena Protocol and support through Covid-19. Meetings have continued to take place and attendance has been good, but more work is required, to increase understanding and fully implement the protocol across the partnership.

What do we want to improve?

- The report identifies the number of independent Return Home Interviews offered and accepted. Securing more IRI's remains a priority and together with securing those IRI's comes the requirement to ensure quality and value is maximised.
- The Service Managers to continue to provide oversight of statutory visit compliance through the weekly performance meetings that are held within the service.
- The Youth Engagement Service has developed a recording system to enable a more nuanced understanding of IRI outcomes. This recording is intended to inform discussion about how more productive and informative data might be able to be created regarding both the allocation of and outcomes of IRI's.
- Independent Reviewing Officers to continue to liaise closely with Social Workers and the Children's Rights team to ensure that children are enabled to participate in their Reviews, and that their voice is heard. The IRO Service is working towards giving every child the opportunity for in person Review Meeting and visit if this what they indicate they would want.
- Children's Rights Service have liaised closely with IRO Service and have relaunched updated online versions of Children's consultation documents for Looked After Reviews, and Evaluation forms for children to complete about their Reviews. The aim is to help children and young people gain understanding of what a Review meeting is, what they can expect, why it is important that their views are heard, the different ways they can make sure this happens, and to encourage improved participation of children and young people in their reviews.
- With others capture children's voices and experiences, and support young people's participation to inform service development.
- Introduce improved quality assurance mechanisms to support the development of the Children's Rights Service and the team, and benchmark the service against the new Advocacy Standards which are due to be published imminently.

Children Looked After Education Outcomes

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Spring Term 21/22	Summer Term 21/22	Autumn Term 21/22	Benchmarking	
					SN	Eng.
4.10.02 Personal Education Plans (PEP) up to date (current school age LAC with PEP in the last term)	%	100%	100%	100%		
	Direction of Travel	-	-	-		

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Cumulative	SN	Eng.
Initial PEP completed within 10 school days of Virtual School being notified child came into care	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	N/A

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	SN	Eng.
CLA Persistent Absentees	%	22.0%	23.5%	26.8%	18.5%	28.4% (2020/21)	30.4% (2020/21)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
LAC with a mid-year school move	%	3	8	9	1	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- The above published information shows outstanding performance at Key Stage 4 in 2021 and strong performance in terms of overall attendance and exclusions all in Quartile Band A.
- 100% of PEPs have been completed within the Autumn Term with 100% initial PEPs completed within 10 school days.
- The Virtual School is currently leading on all PEPs which are virtually held meetings.
- We continue to work closely with social care to improve young people's educational experiences.
- 73% of school moves since the start of the academic year have been carefully planned across the service to ensure a smooth transition with no break in provision.

What do we want to improve?

- Issues as a result of the pandemic remains a priority. This includes Catch up and Emotional Wellbeing.
- Reducing the number of unauthorised absences in both frequency and duration
- Reduction in the number of young people who are classed as PA (Persistent Absenteeism (90%))
- Increase in overall attendance percentage
- Reducing the time young people are not in full time provision.

Children Looked After Health

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	SN	Eng.
4.11.11 Dental Checks within last 12 months - timeliness	%	66.1%	61.6%	60.4%	61.5%	73.0%	70.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
4.11.12 Initial health Assessments completed on time - within 20 days	%	85.3%	80.5%	77.8%	76.8%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
4.11.13 Annual health assessments: a: Under 5's 6 month Developmental Assessments -percentage up to date	%	84.4%	89.0%	86.2%	86.9%	82.6%	89.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
b: Over 5s Annual Health Assessments – percentage up to date	%	89.3%	93.7%	93.7%	91.0%	92.2%	91.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
4.11.16 No. of LAC in care more than 12 month and identified as having a substance misuse problem during the last year	% (number)	1.38% (7)	1.26% (6)	1.26% (6)	1.08% (5)	3.0%	3.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↔	↓		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

Initial health assessments (IHA):

- LA rolling 12-month data shows that **76.8%** were completed in the statutory timescale.
- Locala monthly data for Nov. shows that **28 IHA's were completed + 3 for OLA, 100%** in timescales. The number of IHA's have doubled from the previous month & sees the largest increase since 2017. A telephone & F2F model is used due to clinic restrictions, allowing the majority of the IHA to be completed virtually supporting timescale completion. Team capacity continues to be affected. *Update - From Dec 22 a temporary bank nurse (7.5hrs/wk.) is supporting preparation of IHA templates, significantly easing pressure on the Nurses, but is not substantive.*

Review health assessments (RHA):

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **86.9% & 91%** of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales.
- Locala monthly data for Nov. shows that **54%** of under 5-year-olds and **62%** of over 5-year-olds RHA's were completed in timescales, showing a **continuing downward trend**. There were 19 in-house breaches, with capacity and carer arrangements being the most common reasons.
- A Business Case has been presented to the Commissioners to request additional nursing resources.

Dental Checks (attended) within last 12 months:

- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that **61.5%** of children aged 1+, at the point of their RHA had attended the dentist. Comparison differences with Locala due to minor age range difference, rolling annual collection & non-inclusion of children who attended 12 months prior to coming into care.
- Locala monthly data for Nov shows that 86% & 98% of children age 18months to under 5 yrs., and 5 to 18 yrs., had attended the dentist.

Registered at dentist:

- Locala data shows **87% & 100%** of children age 18m to 4 years and 5 years+ respectively at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' has supported CLA and care leavers to register. We have seen recent staff changes in some practices affecting some availability. The Designated Nurse is to attend the 'Kirklees Oral Health Advisory Group', to advocate for vulnerable children and care leavers.

Substance misuse:

- 5 young people (1.08%) have admitted or are known to use substances that have a significant impact on their daily life when asked at their last RHA. All have been discussed with the local Substance Misuse Outreach worker, to ensure support has been offered. The reduced number is due to young people reaching 18yrs and being removed from the data.
- If a young person declines their RHA, a check is made with the social worker to ascertain if substance use is an issue.

Any young person misusing substances at any level is offered support.

Children Looked After Convictions

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Quarter				*Benchmarking
		Jan-Mar 21/22 Q4	Apr-Jun 22/23 Q1	Jul-Sep 22/23 Q2	Oct-Dec 22/23 Q3	
4.12.01 Number of young people who have been looked after continually for 12 months or more aged between 10 and 17 who have offended and received a substantive outcome (Youth Caution/ Conditional Caution or a Court Order)	%	0.00% (0/364)	1.75% (6/343)	1.75% (6/343)	0.00% (0/363)	(2021/22) Eng.: 2.0% SN's: 4.0% Y&H: 2.0%
	Direction of Travel	↓	↑	↔	↓	

Service Narrative

What difference have we made?

- For the year 2018/2019 65.8% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions but is however a much-improved picture from 2016 when less than 30% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions
- For the year 2019/2020 90.9% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions which in comparison with the last year is an increase of over 25% (65.8%).
- For the year April 20 to March 21, 87.7% of Children Looked After successfully completed their interventions. Whilst this performance is slightly worse than the same period of the previous year, it remains in line with that of the general population successfully completing their intervention.
- For the April 21 to March 22 period 64.3% of interventions completed by Children Looked After were completed successfully compared to 72.8% of the general population. This is a reduction in Children Looked After completion from the same period of last year which was 87.7%, whilst the general population remains broadly the same.
- Whilst the numbers of Children Looked After offending remain small in the cohort, we are seeing an increase in the numbers compared to the same period last year. In the year to date we have seen an increase in the percentage of CLA offending from 2.47% (21/22) to 3.50% (22/23). However in the Oct to Dec 2022 period no Children Looked After have received convictions.

What do we want to improve?

- Continued reduction in the numbers of Children Looked After offending. The overall cohort for the 22/23 year is smaller than the 21/22 year (343 compared to 364), but through continued interventions by the YOT, restorative processes, liaison with Children's Homes and creative out of court disposals it is hoped the offending rate will remain low.
- There is a focus around Looked After Children in our subgroups – specifically Subgroup 2 – Reducing offending and reoffending.

Care Leavers

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	SN	Eng.
5.01.04 Children in care aged 17 years and 4 months with a Personal Advisor	%	79.4%	97.9%	100.0%	94.0%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
5.01.08 Local Authority In Touch with Care Leavers	%	94.0%	93.3%	96.7%	95.0%	95.0%	92.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
5.01.09 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	%	90.4%	88.3%	91.7%	90.3%	91.0%	88.0%
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
5.01.10 Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET)	%	55.7%	60.3%	61.3%	58.0%	50.0%	55.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↓		
5.01.11 Number of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan that is up to date	%	85.8%	68.7%	64.3%	72.7%	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- *Contact with care leavers* – There has been a slight increase in relation to the number of Care Leavers we were in touch with during this month. This also has, to be viewed in the context of this group being aged 18 plus and, in some situations, young people do not wish to keep in contact with their Personal Advisor. The team continue to work innovatively to keep in touch with all young people.
- *Number of young people in suitable accommodation* – There has been a significant impact on the increasing demands for tenancies. However, we continue to work with our housing colleagues who have agreed to prioritise the properties for our young people, and this has helped to improve our performance. We will continue to work with our Housing providers to ensure that suitable accommodation is available, we have also maintained strong links with private housing providers. We have continued to provide virtual and face to face life skills and pre-tenancy training and continue to explore collectively how we can improve independence training for our young people.
- *Children in Care aged 17 years with an allocated Personal Advisors* – There has been a decrease in performance on this indicator this month. Further work is to be undertaken as a priority with the team to address Personal Advisor (PA) allocation, but it is important to note that all the young people under 18 have an allocated Social Worker.
- *Education Employment Training* – Our performance in relation to Employment, Education and Training (EET) indicator is a focus for improvement. We have a C&K Careers Advisor in the Leaving Care Service. We have a pro-active multi-agency group to improve opportunities in partnership working and there is a real desire to ensure our young people are afforded the best of opportunities in relation to EET. In order, to offer support to our young people we have recently established a virtual clinic where extra support is available from our Careers Advisor.
- *Pathway Plans* – We have seen an increase in the numbers of young people who have an up-to-date pathway plan this month. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings. This is monitored at our performance meetings chaired by the service manager. Work is being undertaken to identify and address the issues that are impacting the timeliness of pathway plan reviews being undertaken.

What do we want to improve?

- *Number of young people with a pathway plan* – The number of young people with a pathway plan has increased. Work is currently ongoing within the service and it is expected that the measure will improve further. We continue to work with the Personal Advisors to ensure pathway plans are completed in a timely manner to meet targets with a focus going forward on the improvement of the quality of plans, the involvement of young people and ensuring we capture their wishes and feelings.
- We have recently reviewed our financial offer to our care leaver along with our staying put policy and they will be launched following approval. We aim to review our commitment to care leavers, and both will significantly improve and enhance our offer to our young people.
- To improve the allocation timeliness of Personal Advisors and the timeliness and quality of visits to young people.
- This is a key priority area for the service to address and increase the number of our young people who will have access to Education, Employment or Training.

Adoption

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				*Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	SN	Eng.
5.02.01 Number of children adopted as a percentage of children leaving care (12 month rolling period)	% (number)	9.5% (21)	5.5% (11)	5.3% (10)	5.3% (10)	13.0%	10.0%
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↓		
A10 Average timescale (days) between the child coming into care and being placed with the adopter adjusted for foster carer adoptions (12 month rolling period)	Number	496.5	473.8	446.3	456.8	396.7 (17-20)	367.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
A2 Average timescale (days) between receiving court authority to place a child and the council deciding to match the child with an adoptive family (12 month rolling period)	Number	206.5	215.4	202.8	204.2	180.0 (17-20)	175.0 (17-20)
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- We have prioritised brothers and sisters growing up together.
- We have established closer working relationships between Kirklees and One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), to address challenges at the earliest point.
- Monitoring of the adoption cases and outcomes takes place through monthly tracking of adoption cases by Kirklees and OAWY Service Delivery Managers.
- Training from OAWY has been and will continue to be provided to Kirklees staff, to ensure understanding of the complexities of the adoption process and awareness raising from research/practice.
- Support from OAWY to practitioners to Kirklees staff in relation to adoption practice.
- Timely identification of harder to place children and provision of appropriate resources to progress linking and matching outside of One Adoption where needed.
- OAWY attend Legal Gateway with a view to being able to provide support and assistance for any adoption cases including consideration of Early Permanence.

- Kirklees has reinstated the Early Permanence Meetings, which are held fortnightly to discuss all children and their plans for adoption, this is to further ensure permanence planning is considered as early as possible in a child's journey.
- OAWY and Kirklees have taken part in, and will continue to take part in, Practice Learning days, where a dip sample of adoption cases are more closely considered. This is for children with a plan for adoption, as well as children who have been adopted, but required adoption and social care support post order.
- Agreed escalation processes where drift is identified from tracking and monitoring processes.
- OAWY have secured national funding to support family finding for children who wait the longest for adoption and local provision of Early Permanence for older children/sibling groups. Kirklees children will be eligible for and benefit from these resources as the projects progress.

What do we want to improve?

- To increase the numbers of children placed through Early Permanence through early identification of children and increasing the number of EP adopters.
- To improve timeliness in agreeing transitional payments for foster carers adopting the child in their care to reduce delay; Heads of Service are working on a pathway to avoid delay in these circumstances.
- To ensure all children considered 'harder to place' are identified early for OAWY to commence family finding. For OAWY to continue taking an innovative approach to family finding for these children, ensuring that all avenues are proactively explored.
- To increase staff understanding of adoption, including Early Permanence, through training.
- Continue to jointly review cases where adoptions disrupt or breakdown to understand contributing factors to inform future practice.

Fostering

Key Indicator	Type of measure	Month End				Benchmarking	
		Dec 21	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	SN	Eng.
6.02.07 Total New Carer Approvals in Month:	Number	7	8	1	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↑		
In-house Fostering approvals in the month	Number	2	8	1	5	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↑		
In-house Fostering De-registrations in the month	Number	1	2	5	2	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↓	↑	↓		
6.02.09 Placements split: a. In-house foster placements	Number	200	177	174	179	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↔	↓	↑		
b. Family and friend placements	Number	106	124	129	134	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↑	↑		
c. Independent Fostering Agency Placements	Number	173	174	165	165	N/A	N/A
	Direction of Travel		↑	↓	↔		

Service Narrative

What difference did we make?

- In November there were 5 new foster carer approvals, of which 7 were connected carers and 1 mainstream carer.
- The total number of approved Kirklees Foster Carers is 160 households and the number of Approved Connected registered Foster Carers is 60 households (source is Tableau)
- The number of children placed with Kirklees foster carers stood at 179 at the end of November 22, just below the 12-month average of 183
- The number of Family and Friends Placements stood at 134 at the end of September 22, inclusive of Reg 24 Placements. The 12-month average is 116.
- The September 22 figure of 165 Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements for IFA placements is further a decrease over the 12-month high of 185 seen in Mar 22. The 12-month average is 176.
- The data shows a net gain of 7 fostering households in the past 12 months.

What do we want to improve?

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a priority. We are focussed on recruiting internal foster carers who can help us to meet our sufficiency needs around placements for older children, children with complex needs, offering short and long-term placements, and short notice / emergency placements.
- We want to ensure that new foster carers receive the right level of support particularly in their first year of fostering; induction, training and support from a Supervising Social Worker are all essential aspects of supporting and retaining new foster carers.
- The new website for foster carers is being further developed, to include additional information for that will inform prospective foster carers
- We now have in post a new Head of Service for sufficiency who will lead on implementing our modernisation plan for the Fostering Service. This service improvement plan will include further integration with the Placement Support Service, this work will be overseen by the Homes For Children Board.

Appendix – Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
A&I	Assessment & Intervention (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (for a newly qualified Social Worker)
BSM	Business Support Manager
BSO	Business Support Officer
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CIC	Child(ren) in Care (see also CLA and LAC)
CIN	Child(ren) in Need
CLA	Child(ren) Looked After (also see CIC and LAC)
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CPRU	Child Protection & Review Unit
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CWD	Children with a Disability
D&A	Duty & Advice (part of Family Support & Child Protection)
DCS	Disabled Children's Service / Director of Children's Services
EET	Education, Employment or Training
EHC	Education, Health and Care (Plan)
EITS	Early Intervention and Targeted Support
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
Form F	Assessment form for approval of Foster Carers
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HOS	Head of Service
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
IHA	Initial Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KNH	Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child(ren) (also see CIC and CLA)
LAIT	Local Authority Interactive Tool (DfE tool for access to nationally published data)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
PA	Personal Advisor (to Care Leavers)
PEP	Personal Education Plan (for a Looked After Child)
PLO	Public Law Outline
QSW	Qualified Social Worker
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
RHA	Review Health Assessment (for a Looked After Child)
S17	Section 17 of the Children Act – Relates to Children in Need
S20	Section 20 of the Children Act – Relates to a child accommodated by the LA
S47	Section 47 of the Children Act – Relates to Child Protection
SDQ	Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability

Term	Description
SM	Service Manager
SN	Statistical Neighbours (closest match Local Authorities for benchmarking)
SW	Social Worker
TM	Team Manager
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
Y&H	Yorkshire and the Humber
YOT	Youth Offending Team

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 24th January 2023

Title of report: Children's Services Annual Complaints Report

Purpose of report: To inform the Board of compliments and complaints regarding Children's Social Care during the period of 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2022 (annual report executive summary)

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	<p>" Not applicable"</p> <p>If yes give the reason why</p> <p>.</p>
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	<p>"Not applicable"</p> <p>If yes also give date it was registered</p>
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	<p>"Not applicable"</p> <p>If no give the reason why not</p>
<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?</p>	<p>13/01/2023: Tom Brailsford</p> <p>Not applicable</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr. Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

This is the 2020/2022 Executive Summary, Statutory Annual Compliments, Representations and Complaints report for Kirklees Children and Young People Service. Under the Children's Act 1989, the provision of an annual complaints report is a statutory requirement. Each financial year, the Local Authority must publish the Childrens Act Complaints Annual Report (under regulation 13(3) of the Childrens Act).

The report has been shared with Senior Leaders in Children's Services and is required to be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board. It will be published on the intranet and is available to the general public under Freedom of Information.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

a. Working with People

The Children's Complaints team works with adults and children who receive a service from Children's Social Care

b. Working with Partners

The Service works with partners within the Council and across the wider partnership, and national Bodies such as the Local Government Ombudsman.

c. Place Based Working

Not applicable

d. Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

e. Improving outcomes for children

Improving Outcomes for Children

The Complaints Procedure informs learning from complaints, and the Complaints team, works with partners to help ensure learning extracted from Complaints informs practice improvement, service development, that the voice of the child is heard and the child's right to complain is adhered to.

3.4 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

The Annual report will be posted on the intranet.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be received and noted by the Corporate Parenting Board as per Section 13 of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Helen Sanderson, Complaints and Compliments Manager,
Helen.Sanderson@Kirklees.gov.uk

Yasmin Mughal, Complaints and Compliments Manager,
Yasmin.Mughal@Kirklees.gov.uk

Kate Richardson, Complaints and Compliments Manager,
Kate.Richardson@kirklees.gov.uk

Childrens.Complaint@Kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Tom Brailsford, Service Director, Resources, Improvement, Partnerships.

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Compliments & Complaints **for Children in Care**



Care Leavers /Children looked After/ Fostering **Executive Summary** **2020-2022**

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

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1. Introduction

This is a summary report of the Annual Reports of the Children's Services Compliments and Complaints 01 April 2020 to the 31 March 2022. This Executive Summary focuses on the **Care Leavers, Children Looked After and Fostering service areas** only.

Kirklees Children Social Care are committed to responding to complaints as a priority, despite the unprecedented challenge on the services by the impact of Covid 19. There were undoubtedly, significant challenges for the appointed responding manager/s to respond to complaints within timescales. Complaints were received and processed continuously, through consistent continued service delivery throughout the pandemic.

2. Complaints

The Council operates two separate Complaint's procedures that consider complaints from all members of the public related to Children's Social Care.

- Complaints about Children Social Care Services (as per statutory regulations under the Children's Act 1989).
- Corporate complaints procedure – this relates to Complaints which fall outside of the above regulations.

There are 4 stages to the complaints process. Resolution at the earliest stage is the preferred outcome.

Local Resolution (LR) is a restorative approach within the process that encourages Responding Managers to intervene early, have open and honest communication, even if challenging and resolve complaints received with a positive outcome. It allows the service to resolve matters as swiftly as possible and helps prevent drift and delay.

Stage One. Childrens Social Care Service teams and Independent Providers providing services on the Council's behalf are expected where possible, to resolve complaints at this initial point. The Statutory complaints procedure requires complaints at Local Resolution / Stage One to be responded to within 10 working days (with an extension of a further 10 days where necessary).

Stage Two. This stage is generally implemented when a Complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of Local Resolution / Stage One. Stage Two is an investigation usually conducted by an Investigating Officer with an Independent Person. An Independent Person must be appointed to the investigation (regulation 17(2)). The Independent Person must be involved in all aspects of consideration of the Complaint, including any discussions about the action to be taken in relation to the child. The Manager responsible for the service which has been complained about, adjudicates

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

on the findings. Stage Two Complaints should be dealt with within 25 days, although in certain cases this can be extended to 65 days.

Stage Three. This is a Review Panel to which Complainant's who are not satisfied with a Stage Two response can proceed their Complaint to, which the Council is required to establish. The Panel makes recommendations to the Service Director who makes decisions about the complaint and any action to be taken. Complaints Review Panels are made up of three independent panelists. There are various timescales relating to Stage 3 complaints. These include:

- Setting up the Panel as soon as is reasonably practicable
- Producing the Panel's report within a further 5 days
- Producing the Local Authority's response within 15 days.

A further option for Complainant's to progress a complaint is the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), who is empowered to investigate where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint. Complainant's can refer their complaint to the LGO at any time, although the Ombudsman normally refers the matter back to the Council if it has not been considered under the Council's procedure.

3. Highlights

- The number of complaints resolved at early stages of the Complaints procedure was high, positively **78%** of complaints received were resolved through the Local Resolution (LR) process. Compared to the previous year, this was an increase of **10% (68%)**.
- **1** complaint progressed to Stage Two of the Statutory Complaints Procedure, and subsequently to Stage 3. (It progressed to this stage in the next reporting period)
- No complaints were recorded at Stage Three of the Statutory Complaints Procedure or through to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
- **15%** of the complaints registered at Local Resolution of the Statutory Complaints Procedure were from children and young people.
- **17%** of the complaints registered at Stage One of the Statutory Complaints Procedure were from children and young people.
- **71%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales.

4. Contacts

In total, **60 contacts** were recorded by the Compliments and Complaints Team in 2021 to 2022 relating to Care Leavers, CLA and Fostering.

- **8** were resolved by other means,
- **11** were logged as Compliments and
- **41** were recorded as Complaints.

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

See table below showing the breakdown of figures into the different types of contacts and complaints recorded.

TYPE OF CONTACT Children and Young People	Care Leavers	Children Looked After	Fostering	Total
Compliments	2 (1)	-	9	11 (1)
Resolved by Other Means (Enquiries, Referrals, NFA)	2 (2)	3	3	8 (2)
Total compliments & Resolved by Other Means logged by CYP	3	-	-	3
Total compliments & Resolved by Other Means	4	3	12	19
Local Resolution / Service Resolved	3 (3)	20 (3)	9	32 (6)
Stage 1	2	1	3 (1)	6 (1)
Stage 2 *Did not proceed	-	-	1	1
Stage 3	-	-	-	-
Corporate	-	1	1	2
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	-	-	-	-
Total complaints	5	22	14	41
Total complaints logged by children and young people	3	3	1	7
Total contacts	9	25	26	60

Of the **60** contacts, **10** of these were made by children and young people; equating to **17%** of all contacts received by the three areas considered for the purpose of this report. In the previous year this figure was **38%**.

1 contact was a compliment and **2** were resolved by other means, with only **7** recorded as complaints, compared to previous year's figure of **26**.

15% of the complaints from children and young people recorded were registered at the Local Resolution stage. In the previous year this figure was **49%**. **1** out of **6** of the complaints registered at Stage One of the Statutory Complaints Procedure was received from a child /young person.

5. Compliments

Of the **60** contacts received from the three areas in the reporting period **19** contacts received were recorded and categorised as - resolved by other means and **18%** of these contacts were recorded as compliments, **11** in total in this reporting period. This is a reduction from the previous year in which **15** compliments in total were recorded. The remaining contacts were enquiries, signposting / referrals to other services or no further action required.

Of the **11** compliments recorded; 9% (**1**) was received from a child/young person 18% (**2**) were received from parents / relatives, 45% (**5**) were received from foster carers / adopters, and 27% (**3**) were from colleagues from other services /areas and other professionals.

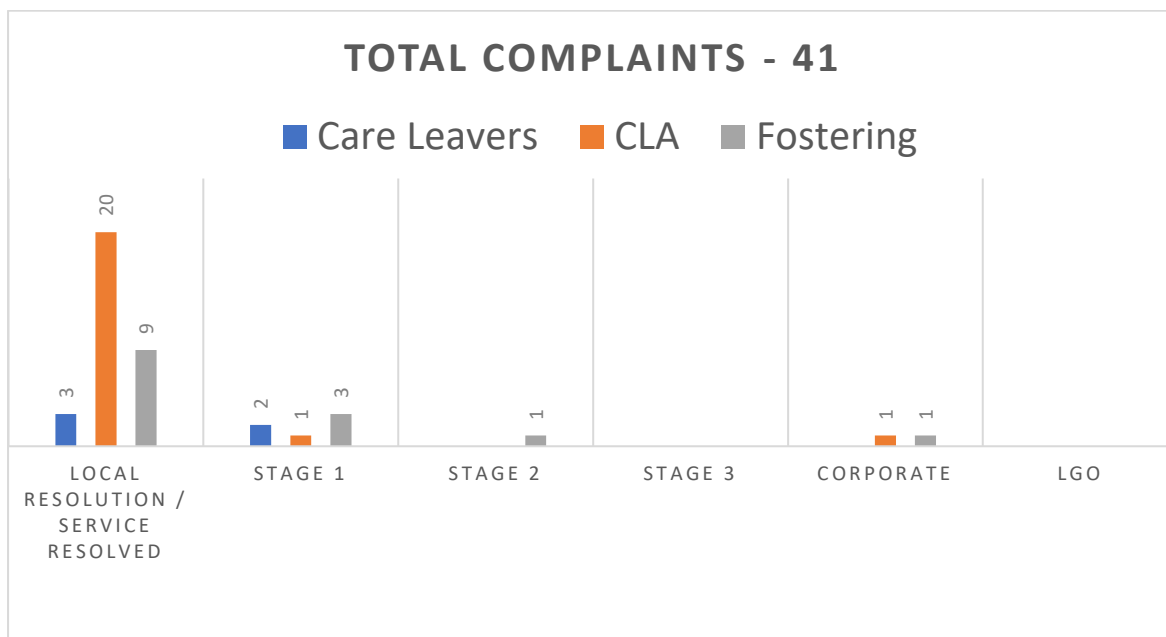
The number of compliments received in over the past two reporting periods (**26** in total) highlights that development and improvement is required with regards to how compliments are shared with and recorded formally by the Children's Compliments and Complaints team

Examples of compliments received: Most of the compliments recorded related to similar themes as in the previous year. They demonstrate an appreciation of thanks for their worker and how those involved felt comfortable and respected during conversations. They acknowledge success in forming positive working relationships with families, despite often difficult situations.

6. Complaints

Of the total contacts received, **68%** were recorded as a complaint, **41** in total: averaging at **3.4** complaints per month - across all three service areas. This is a reduction from the previous year when an average of **4.5** complaints per month were received.

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022
 Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering



Of the **41** complaints recorded, **32** of these were resolved positively via the Local Resolution process: **78%** of all complaints received. This is an increase from the previous year's figure of **68%**. Whilst there were **6** Stage One complaints recorded 15% of all complaints received, which is a reduction from the previous year when **13** were recorded and responded to.

Local Resolution and Statutory Stage One Complaints make up **93%** of all complaints recorded across the services, **38** complaints in total. All complaints made by children and young people were resolved at this stage to the satisfaction of children and young people.

The total number of Corporate Complaints logged in respect of the three service areas was **2**. These were responded to by the Children Looked After service and the Fostering service and both were resolved at Stage One within timeframes.

There was **1 Stage Two** complaint, which following independent investigation, progressed to a Stage 3; this will be reported on in the next reporting period.

7. Timescales

It is important to note that there are statutory timescales applied to responding to Complaints that are monitored and reported upon. Whilst all complaints recorded in the period did receive a response, **71%** were responded to within timescales, 29% being outside of timescales. a reduction in the previous year's performance of **17%**. All complaints were responded to, and information relating to any delay in response to complaints was shared with Senior managers in the service areas to allow exploration of presenting issues and the opportunity to address these with Responding managers.

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

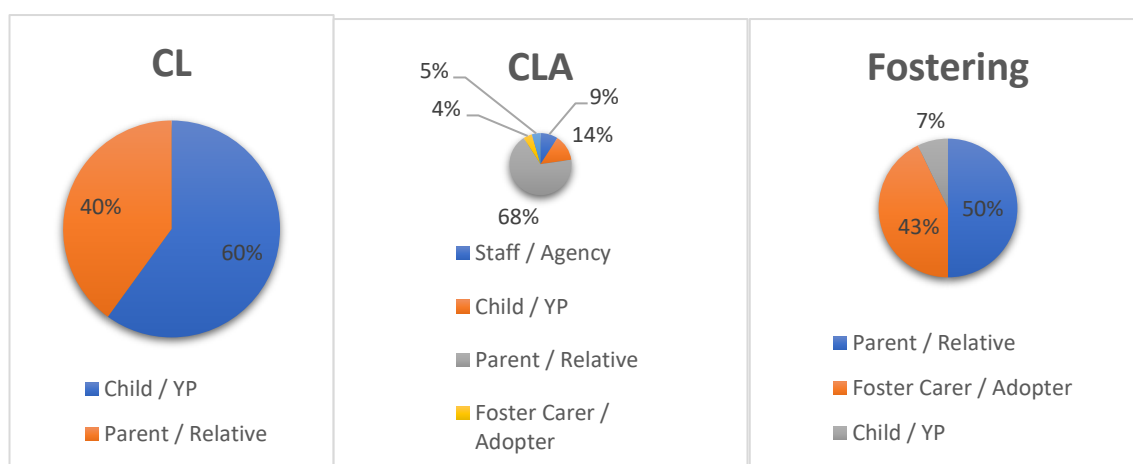
	Care Leavers	Children Looked After	Fostering	Total
Responded to within timescales	2	15	12	29
Outside of timescales	3	7	2	12
No response received	-	-	-	-
Total Complaints	5	22	14	41

8. Complaints received

The data shows that **41** complaints were recorded relating to the three service areas considered in the reporting period, **7** of these were received from children and young people, approximately **17%** of all the complaints recorded. This has decreased from 2020-21, when **48%** of all complaints received, across the three areas were raised by children and young people, either directly or through advocacy.

Further exploration around this reduction in the number of complaints made by/or behalf of children and young people will be monitored. Regular information sharing and joint meetings are held between Childrens Rights Team and the Compliments and Complaints Unit. This increases awareness and improves communication. Moving forward this will need to extend to the service areas addressed in this report. Consideration has been given to using other new forms of media to inform children and young people of the complaints process and how to utilise this, e.g., podcast and this is to be explored further

Of the **41** complaints recorded, **7** were raised by children or young people, **24** by parents and relatives, **7** by foster carers / adopters, and **3** were raised by a professional /Councillor.



Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

60% (3) of the complaints relating to the Care Leavers service were raised by young people. This is less than the previous year's figure of **82%**. **14% (3)** of the complaints relating to the Children Looked After service were received from children and young people. Again, this is a reduction from the previous reporting period (**55%**.) **15** complaints were received in relation to the Fostering Service, **1** of these (**7%**) was from a child or young person.

4 of the **7** complaints raised by children and young people were supported by a Children's Rights Advocate, equating to **57%**, which is a slight reduction compared to the previous year's figure of **62%**. Children and young people are often supported by the Children's Rights Team to raise a complaint, to ensure that they receive support to ensure that their views are heard.

9. Issues

Each complaint is categorised (as agreed with the Complainant) before it is shared with a Responding Manager to investigate. There can often be more than one issue per complaint. Of the **41** complaints received, there were **82** complaint issues recorded across the three services.

Complaint Issues Children and Young People	Care leavers	Children Looked After	Fostering	Total
Failure to consult listen communicate effectively	3 (2)	15 (2)	7 (1)	25 (5)
Issue Relating to staff	1	5 (1)	3 (1)	9 (2)
Financial Issue	1 (1)	-	5	6 (1)
Failure to provide services	2 (2)	-	1	3 (2)
Delay in provision / assessment	-	2	-	2
Standard / quality of service	-	-	1	1
Inaccurate decision making	1 (1)	1 (1)	1	3 (2)
Information not provided	-	3	4	7
Inaccurate information provided /on file	-	1	1	2
Confidentiality	1 (1)	3	1	5 (1)
Request for support	-	1	2	3
Welfare issue of child	-	1	1	2
Contact arrangement issues	-	9	5 (1)	14 (1)
Total	9	41	32	82 (14)

Of the **7** complaints raised by children and young people, **14** separate issues were highlighted. The main trends of the complaints received from children and young people related to:

- Failure to consult / listen / communicate effectively; **36%** of all children and young people complaint issues, **5** in total.

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

- Issue relating to staff; **14%** of all complaint issues, **2** in total.
- Failure to provide services **14%**
- Inaccurate decision making also accounted for **14%** of all children and young people complaint issues recorded.

10. Complaint Outcomes

Following investigation of a complaint, the Responding Manager will decide whether they agree to uphold the complaint issue or not; they can also agree to partially uphold individual elements of a complaint.

Approximately **23%** of all complaints across the three service areas were upheld, an increase from **11%** in the previous year, whilst approximately **22%** were partially upheld, a reduction from **31%** in 2020-21. If a complaint issue is partially or fully upheld, this suggests that learning from the complaint could be identified by the service area to inform practice improvement. More complaints made were substantiated, across all of the service areas and therefore learning must be extracted from these and applied to future practice to reduce the presenting issues that warrant a complaint being made.

- **45%** of complaints relating to the Care Leavers Service were upheld (**11%** in the previous year) and **22%** partially upheld (**21%** previous year).
- The Children Looked After service upheld **20%** of their overall complaint issues (7% previous year) and partially upheld **20%** (**37%** previous year).
- The Fostering Service upheld **22%** of their overall complaint issues (15% previous year) and partially upheld **25%** (33% previous year).

The data also shows that complaint issues not upheld across the services, equated to **44%** of all complaint issues. Whilst **11%** of complaint issues were not confirmed as to whether they were upheld by the Responding Manager. It is positive that this has reduced from the previous reporting period figure of **24%**, however, there should be no complaints received that do not have a recorded response.

The trends in the desired outcomes from complaints raised by children and young people complaints were similar to previous reporting periods and related to request to change a worker, to request an investigation into what has happened regarding their concerns raised, provide a clear explanation of the procedure / policy that Children's Services were following and to seek assurance that the issue(s) they had experienced would not happen to any other children and young people.

11. Children and young people - Upheld or partially upheld Complaints

The below graph shows complaint issues raised by children and young people that were upheld and partially upheld across the services.

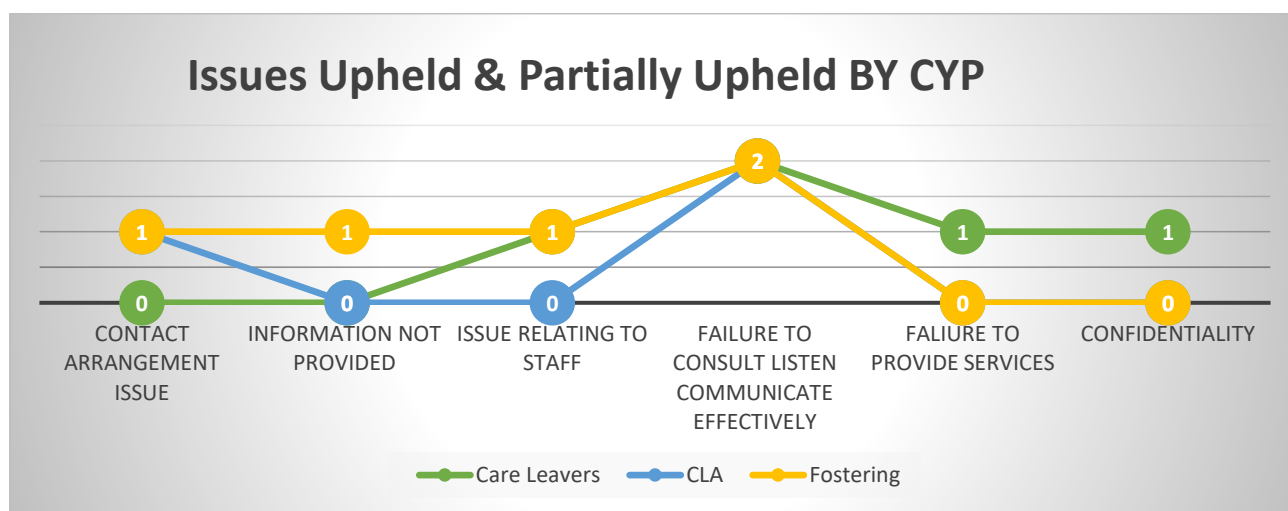
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Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

Of the **37** complaint issues that were upheld or partially upheld, **12** were raised by children and young people. The Care Leaver service (shown in green) upheld **5** children and young people complaint issues, the Children Looked After service (shown in blue), upheld **3** children and young people complaint issues and the Fostering service (shown in yellow), upheld **5** children and young people complaint issues.

The **12** issues that the service areas agreed to uphold or partially uphold are detailed in the graph below.

The most prevalent were, **Failure to consult / listen / communicate effectively**



12. Learning from Complaints

When Responding Managers have completed a response to a complaint, they are requested to submit a completed 'Learning from Complaints' form to the Compliments and Complaints team. This provides a summary of learning identified and how this will be shared/addressed. This form also specifies which of the complaint issues have been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.

Care Leavers Service - **5** learning forms were shared with the Compliments and Complaints team relating to **5** complaints. Areas of learning identified related to; information sharing, communication of significant events by partner agencies and how new policies and guidance are implemented. How best to communicate with children and how to respond when staff have unplanned absence. These were all areas for consideration.

Children Looked After Service - **13** learning forms were shared with the Compliments and Complaints team, relating to **22** complaints.

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

Learning was identified regarding, Communication, information sharing, confidentiality, and recording. Timeliness of decisions made, and responses given, were all presenting themes of the completed learning forms

Fostering Service – 4 learning forms were received in relation to 14 complaints, a summary of the learning identified is shown below.

Clarity around presenting issues such as contact, communication with parents and how changes in finance are communicated were taken for consideration for learning moving forward.

The continued sharing of learning from Compliments and Complaints is essential for the increased understanding of best practice across the whole service. Continued contribution by the Compliments and Complaints team to the induction of Managers, regular reports, and communications to management teams across the service, presentations at panels and events and a sustained approach to raising awareness of the process of learning from complaints is essential. When learning is collated centrally it is shared with the Learning and Development service and incorporated into training courses to facilitate improved practice across all service areas.

13. Conclusion.

This Executive Summary addresses the three service areas relating to children Looked After, as requested by the Corporate Parenting Board.

Complaints are sometimes complex, covering several issues. Complaints are in the main resolved early in the process and to the satisfaction of complainants; in most cases complaints are responded to in a timely manner. When learning from these complaints is received by the Compliments and Complaints team, this is shared to support practice improvement.

14. Areas for development:

- Strengthen liaison with Responding Manager to ensure that all complainants receive a full response, in accordance with the guidance as laid out by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Capture and report on the child's voice being listened to and responded to consistently under the Complaints procedures
- Further develop the work already started in terms of building relations between service areas and the Compliments and Complaints team.
- Create a robust training package which can be delivered as and when required, across the service areas.
- Create and deliver a training programme for Responding Managers in the service areas, with focus on learning from complaints, to ensure learning is captured and recorded effectively.

Kirklees Council – Executive Summary 2020-2022

Compliments and Complaints for Care Leavers, Children Looked After & Fostering

- Create induction training and refresher Compliments and Complaints eLearning courses to be accessed via the intranet as required by those undertaking the role of responding manager.

Regular presentations at the Children's Services Quality Assurance Panel, and attendance at engagement events and information sharing reports between the Compliments and Complaints team and the 3 Service areas will support the outlined areas for development and improve opportunities for shared learning.

We will strengthen how we inform and support children and young people to better access and engage with Compliments and Complaints. Together with the work being undertaken with the Children's Rights Team, we will ensure that we improve how the voice of children and young people is heard.

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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2022/23

Date of Meeting	Issues for Consideration	Officer Contact
<p>Tuesday 12th July 2022</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 30th June 2022</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 4th July 2022</i></p>	<p><u>Pre-meeting (private)</u></p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p>Care leavers/ Children Looked After Overview Report</p> <p>Ambition Board Data Slides</p> <p><u>Public Items:</u></p> <p>Membership of the Board</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>OFSTED and Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane /G Addy</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane /G Addy</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Tolly/O Rix/ E McShane</p> <p>Cllr Pattison /J Tolley</p> <p>E McShane</p> <p>Board members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2022/23

9 th August (Cancelled)		
<p>Tuesday 27th September 2022</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 15th September 2022</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 19th September 2022</i></p>	<p>Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p>Overview reports (Children Looked after and Care Leavers)</p> <p>Public Items:</p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Children's Rights Team Annual report</p> <p>JTAI Inspection Outcome Report</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children's Ambition Board Update</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>M Meggs Strategic Director for Children and Young people</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane /I Mottershaw/ J Tolley</p> <p>A Gledhill /S Miles</p> <p>E McShane</p> <p>Cllr Pattison/J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford/ E McShane</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2022/23

<p>Tuesday 15th November 2022</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 3rd November 2022</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 7th November 2022</i></p>	<p>Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p>Overview Reports</p> <p>Children with Disabilities – External Specialist Provision Report</p> <p>Public Items:</p> <p>Update from Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Annual Health Report</p> <p>Virtual School Annual report</p> <p>Presentation on Voice of the Child</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>C Bennett</p> <p>M Meggs</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>G Addy</p> <p>L Hallas</p> <p>A Gledhill</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Plan 2022/23

	<p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>Cllr Pattison</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
<p>Tuesday 24 January 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 12th January 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 16th January 2023</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p>Overview Reports</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report</p> <p>Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>O Rix</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>M Rawlings</p> <p>Rachel Fairhurst</p>

Corporate Parenting Board

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	<p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children's Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/23</p>	<p>Cllr Pattison / J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford /E McShane</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
<p>Tuesday 7th March 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline: Thursday 26th February 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 30th February 2023</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-meeting (Informal)</p> <p>Performance Monitoring report (Children's Services)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public Items:</p> <p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Supported Lodgings / Post 18 Provision</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children / Post 16 Education</p> <p>Statement of Purpose for Residential Care</p>	<p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ V Metherringham</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(SD TBC)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ E McShane</p> <p>J Hanna / O Rix</p> <p>L Hallas / O Rix</p> <p>J Hanna</p>

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Agenda Plan 2022/23

	<p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children's Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan</p>	<p>CLlr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford / V Metherringham</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>
<p>Tuesday 7th April 2023</p> <p><i>Report Deadline:</i> <i>Thursday 13th April 2023</i></p> <p><i>Agenda Publish: Monday 17th April 2023</i></p>	<p>Attendance by Strategic Director on the Role of the Corporate Parent</p> <p>Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes</p> <p>Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)</p> <p>Children's Ambition Board Update (verbal)</p> <p>Updates from Board Members on interaction with services</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board Agenda</p>	<p>(SD TBC)</p> <p>O Rix/ J Tolley/ V Metherringham</p> <p>CLlr Pattison/ J Tolley</p> <p>T Brailsford / V Metherringham</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>J Harris</p>

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Standing Items (as on Agenda Plan)

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Attendance by Strategic Director Update on the Role of Corporate Parent

- (SD Growth and Regeneration) Last seen March 2022
- (SD Environment and Climate Change – Last seen March 2022
- (SD CCG's Chief Officer – Last seen February 2022)
- (SD Children's Services – September 2022
- (SD Adults and health – January TBC)
- (SD Corporate Strategy/Public Health – tbc)
- (Police Colleague (TBC)

Children's Performance Highlight Report CIC and Fostering/Children's Homes

Virtual School Governing Body Update (verbal)

Ambition Board Update (verbal)

Updates from Board Members on interaction with services

Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/23

Items for consideration /to schedule :

Statement of Purpose for Fostering

Statement of Purpose for Residential Care

Report on Accommodation

Fostering Annual Report

Pathway planning report

Missing report

The Sufficiency strategy

Corporate Parenting Board

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Supported Lodgings Scheme

Report of Adoption – to consult with OAWY new municipal year

A report from the virtual School re Post 16 attainment.

Ethnicity of LAC and foster carers.

Annual / 6 monthly reports:-

- ~~6 monthly report on Children's Rights (Oct to March) – A Gledhill (June)~~
- Annual Report on work of the Children's Rights) April onwards
- 6 monthly report on Independent Visitors Scheme (Oct to March)
- Annual report on Complaints and Compliments for Children in Care (January)
- Annual report on children who go missing from care
- Annual report on children and young people placed outside the Kirklees boundary
- ~~Annual Health Report (report on health of looked after children)~~
- Annual Report on Kirklees Fostering Service
- ~~OAWY – Annual (highlights report on Kirklees performance data)~~
- OAWY – 6 monthly report (June/July)