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Portfolio(s)

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Originating Service Group(s)

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES

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Title

ADOPTION SCORECARD

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received and noted.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In 2011 the government introduced a way of measuring the performance of Local Authorities in relation to adoption expressed in a scorecard format.

2.2 Since then the scorecard has become an annual report which covers a rolling 3 year history.

2.3 In response to feedback, the measures used have undergone some improvement and if read as a whole, the scorecard is a valuable form of feedback on some key aspects of performance.

2.4 Reading “as a whole” is important as for instance, an adoption agency that has primarily babies would expect to operate to much shorter timescales than a more inclusive service which believes that adoption is the best outcome for a wider range of children – even if it takes longer to find the right family.

3.0 WOLVERHAMPTON SCORECARD

3.1 Our timescales in 2011 illustrated that our care planning processes were poor and that this resulted in delays through to adoption that were too long and occurred in too many cases.

3.2 These poor timescales led to the Department for Education visiting Wolverhampton to investigate our practice further.

3.3 The engagement with Department for Education went well and they recognised legitimate reasons for some of our timescales and accepted what we were doing to improve on other areas.

- 3.4 Following this visit we volunteered to undergo a diagnostic assessment of our adoption processes to help us understand where our delays were and how we could improve.
- 3.5 The impetus given by the scorecard, by the diagnostic assessment and by our rising numbers of Looked After Children, has resulted in the creation of improved care planning and adoption planning processes and this is beginning to be reflected in our scorecard.
- 3.6 Our analysis of our latest scorecard measures show that while timescales still suffer from historical problems, timescales for adoption of children becoming looked after more recently have improved significantly, while we have maintained our commitment to achieve adoption as the best outcome for a wide range of children.
- 3.7 Care Planning and Adoption Improvement plans have been in place for some time and were developed further by the diagnostic assessment referred to above; the improved outcomes resulting are evidenced in the attached.
- 3.8 We are taking forward further improvement through our use of a new government grant part of which will be committed to improved recruitment of adopters through the sub-regional body "Adoption in the Black Country".

4.0 THE SCORECARD ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The analysis of the scorecard measures is attached. This analysis is based on the targets used in the 2011/12 scorecard as the 2012/13 scorecard has not yet been produced.
- 4.2 This analysis has been forwarded to the Department for Education for the attention of the Children's Minister as requested by them, and is being presented to Councillors in various forms to invite questions, challenge and scrutiny.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has received a 2013/14 Adoption Reform Grant Allocation of £1,081,932 made up as follows:

Part A:	£499,722
Part B:	£582,210.

- 5.2 Part A is not ring-fenced giving local authorities the freedom to target the funding at all or any part of the entire adoption process as local circumstances require. Part B of the grant is ring-fenced to support local authorities in addressing structural problems with adopter recruitment and particularly in relation to any problems presented by the equalisation of the inter-agency fee.

The expectation is that Part B will be specifically targeted at adoption recruitment, and will help to reduce the backlog of children awaiting adoption.

(JB/14062013/I)

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Adoption Scorecards introduced by statutory guidance “An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay (March 2012) are a component to address delay in the adoption system.”

[FD/11062013/C]

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Wolverhampton continues to make improvements in adoption outcomes for Looked After Children and continues to perform well when compared with the national average in placing older children and children of Black Minority Ethnicity backgrounds

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no environmental implications.

Wolverhampton City Council



ANALYSIS OF ADOPTION SCORECARD INFORMATION 2012-2013

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Wolverhampton City Council

KEY PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS FOR YEAR 2012-2013

Wolverhampton adoption service continues to make improvements in adoption outcomes for its looked after children. The following key performance indicators demonstrate this.

In addition, Wolverhampton City Council was inspected by Ofsted in October 2012 and received an overall rating of good, an improvement on the previous inspection that rated the service as adequate.

1. In the year 2012-2013, 36 children have been adopted in Wolverhampton compared to 60 in total over the previous three year period 2009-2012 (an average of 20 adoptions per year).

The A4 indicator confirms improved performance in this area. For the year 2012-2013 23% of children left the care of Wolverhampton City Council via adoption. This is almost double the England average and shows an increase of 9% compared to the three year period 2009-2012.

2. The timeliness for children placed for adoption in the period 2012-2013 has also improved with the average number of days from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption decreasing from 936 for the three year period 2009-2012 to 876 for the year 2012-2013 (Indicator A1).
3. The new indicator A10 demonstrates that for the children we are placing in new adoptive families, this is being achieved in timescales that are well below the A1 indicator target of 639 days. For this indicator in the year 2012-2013 Wolverhampton's average figure is 412 days.
4. Analysis of the detail behind the A2 indicator data shows improved performance in timeliness for children with placement orders granted since July 2011. For these children the average number of days between the placement order being granted and the child being matched is 154 days. This performance is much better than the England average and the government target. This indicator demonstrates the effectiveness of the adoption action improvement plan.
5. Wolverhampton has continued to improve on good areas of practice. In the period 2012-2013 24% of black and minority ethnic children leaving care were adopted. This is four times the England average of 6% (Indicator A6).
6. Wolverhampton continues to pursue adoption for what would be regarded as harder to place children including those aged five years or older. 11% of children adopted in the period 2012-2013 were aged five years or above. This is significantly higher than both the England average of 7% and Wolverhampton's performance of 7% for the three year period 2009-2012 (Indicator A7).

7. Wolverhampton's commitment to adoption as a positive outcome for many of our looked after children remains strong. In the year 2012-2013 only 8.7% of the children (15) with a plan of adoption had their plan of adoption changed compared with 14% in previous 3 year period (2009-2012) (Indicator A5). 87% of these children had their plan changed to enable them to stay with their current carers on an alternative permanent arrangement, or returned to family members.
8. In the year 2012-2013 the number of children awaiting adoption has decreased from the previous three year period 2009-2012 (Indicator A9)

Areas for continued development

- To continue to build on improvements in all areas via the monitoring of the adoption action improvement plan.
- To effectively use the Adoption Reform Grant to support continued improvements enabling more children to be placed for adoption in a more timely way.

A1 AVERAGE TIME FROM CHILD ENTERING CARE AND MOVING IN WITH ITS ADOPTIVE FAMILY

We have increased the number of children adopted this year from 19 last year to 36 children this year, almost doubling this cohort.

This indicator shows a decrease in the number of days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family from an average over 3 years (2009-2012) of 936 days, to 876 days in the year 2012-2013.

Children Placed within Timescale:

Of the 12 children placed within the expected 639 days, 11 were aged two years or under and 11 were White British.

Children Placed outside Timescale:

Of the remaining 24 children, who took longer than 639 days:

17 of the 24 (71%) were adopted by their foster carers. (See Indicator A10).

Sibling Groups:

11 of the 24 children were placed as sibling groups:

8 children were placed as sibling groups of two. These children were aged at least 2+ years with the majority being school age.

3 children were placed as a sibling group of 3. The children were from a travelling background and were aged 4, 6 and 8.

Ethnicity:

9 of the 24 children were from a BME background (38%)

Age groups:

11 children were aged 3-4 years when placed (46%) and 8 children were aged 5-9 years (33%) giving a total of 79% who were 3 years or older when placed.

A2 AVERAGE TIME BETWEEN RECEIVING COURT AUTHORITY TO PLACE AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DECIDING A MATCH

Almost half of the children in the cohort (44%) were placed within government set timescales (16 of 36).

Of the children meeting required timescale (16 children), 6 children were aged 4+ years with three of those children being placed together in a sibling group of 3.

The A2 data shows improved performance in terms of timeliness for children with placement orders granted more recently.

For children with a placement order granted since July 2011, the average number of days taken to match to their adoptive family is 154 days. This is well below the England average and the government target.

This evidences improved practice in terms of timeliness.

Of Children with Placement Orders granted since July 2011 only 5 have exceeded the target and only by a small margin. 4 of these children were part of a sibling group, all of whom have been adopted by their foster carers. The other child was due to be placed with his older sibling, but given their closeness in age, we needed to ensure the older sibling was settled enough to adapt to her brother joining her.

Outlying children:

Within this indicator there were two children whose timeliness did not fit the overall pattern.

Child A (1206 days):

Had serious bowel and heart conditions which needed corrective surgery and we were unable to family find for a significant time whilst he recovered from both operations and his prognosis became clearer.

This child is a dual heritage White African Caribbean male child aged 5 when adopted.

He was adopted by his foster carers.

Child B (1221) days:

Following a plan of adoption being agreed this child was the subject of Child Protection concerns in his foster placement and following an investigation he was moved to an alternative foster placement.

He took some time to settle and his development began to progress well.

Extensive family finding took place and his current carers advised of their intention to adopt when we were unable to secure a suitable adoptive family.

This child is a dual heritage White African Caribbean male child aged 4 when adopted.

Demography of Children adopted in 2012-2013:

This data shows that a significantly higher number of children have been adopted this year. The majority of those children would be regarded as harder to place based upon their complexity of need, their age and their ethnicity. This is supported by our A6 which shows 24% of our black and minority ethnic children leaving care are adopted compared to the England average of 6%.

In addition, indicator A7 demonstrates the high number of children aged 5 or over who are adopted, with our performance at 13% compared with the England average at 7%.

Of the 36 children in total:

Age:

14 were 0-2 years old when placed

10 were 3-4 years old when placed

12 were 5-9 years old when placed

Ethnicity:

25 are of White British background

11 are of BME backgrounds.

A3 THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO WAIT LESS THAN 21 MONTHS BETWEEN ENTERING CARE AND MOVING IN WITH THEIR ADOPTIVE FAMILY

See analysis for A1 and A10

A4 ADOPTIONS FROM CARE

This year has seen an increased number of adoptions, 36 in total.

In the previous 3 year period 2009-2012, there were a total of 60 adoptions in Wolverhampton (an average of 20 adoptions per year).

The performance in this area is 23% which is an increase from 14% in the 3 year period 2009-2012. This statistic is almost double the England average of 12%.

This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to adoption as a positive outcome for many of our LAC who are unable to return home.

A5 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN FOR WHOM THE PERMANENCE DECISION HAS CHANGED AWAY FROM ADOPTION

This indicator at 8.7% shows an improvement from 2009-2012 and supports our commitment to adoption as an outcome for LAC.

This data relates to 15 children:

11 had their plan changed to permanent fostering and have been linked to their current carers. (7 of whom were part of sibling groups).

2 children went to live with family members, following a plan of adoption being agreed.

Only 2 children had plan changed to permanent fostering who were not staying with their carers. In relation to these specific children:

- 1 child aged 8 has suffered significant sexual abuse.
- 1 child aged 8 has had two previous adoption placement breakdowns.

87% of children who had their plan changed, enabled them to stay with their current carer or live with a family member.

3 of these children have significant development delay.

A6 THE PERCENTAGE OF BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC CHILDREN LEAVING CARE WHO ARE ADOPTED

Wolverhampton continues to perform well in this particular area. In the year 2012-2013 24% of black and minority ethnic children leaving care were adopted. This is an increase from the three year period 2009-2012 of which the measure was 13% and well above the England average of 6%.

A7 THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 5 OR OVER LEAVING CARE WHO ARE ADOPTED

This indicator shows a big increase from the 3 year period 2009-2012 which measured 7%, to the year 2012-2013 which measured 11%.

This continues to show Wolverhampton's commitment to placing older children for adoption. Continuing to secure appropriate adoptive placements may take longer given the ages and circumstances of many of the children. This figure is well above the England average of 7%.

As A1 shows, we are successfully able to place young White British children in a timely way. However, as one would anticipate, older and harder to place children are likely to take longer to identify a suitable adoptive family.

A8 AVERAGE LENGTH OF CARE PROCEEDINGS LOCALLY (WEEKS)

Figures are provided by CAFCASS.

A9 NUMBER OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

This indicator is showing a decrease.

In the 3 year period 2009-2012 there were 95 children awaiting adoption. This has decreased to 88 in the year 2012-2013.

Although we continue to have a significant number of children each year with a new plan of adoption (in the year 2012-2013 – 63 children), the number of children awaiting adoption is declining.

This is, in part, due to the increased number of children we have matched at Panel this year compared to last year. This number has more than doubled.

2012-13 number of children matched = 43

2011-12 number of children matched = 20

Given the high number of children we currently have placed for adoption, and the continued support offered to foster carers to adopt; and with the effective use of the Adoption Reform Grant and key sub regional developments via ABC; Wolverhampton are confident that we will continue to increase the number of adopted children to at least 50 in 2013-2014.

In addition to this the focus will remain, not only to continue to increase the number of children adopted but also to ensure this is undertaken in a timely manner.

A10 AVERAGE TIME BETWEEN A CHILD ENTERING CARE AND MOVING IN WITH ITS ADOPTIVE FAMILY – ADJUSTED FOR FOSTER CARER ADOPTIONS

The data for this year shows Wolverhampton has supported a considerable number of foster carers in adopting the child they have placed with them.

For the child, the positive of this scenario is that they remain within the family environment in which they feel secure and stable thus reducing the need for a placement move or transfer of attachment to new parents and family.

Indicator A10, demonstrates that for children for whom we find alternative adoptive families, we are achieving well below the A1 target of 639 days. Our average figure for the year 2012-2013 is 412 days.

For the children who did take over 639 days, 73% were 3 years old or above, and 55% were 5 years old or above.

Appendix Wolverhampton Adoption Scorecard indicators update for year 2012-2013

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2008 - 2011	3 year 2009 -20012	Single year 2012/13	Target	England 3 yr 2009-12
A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 that were placed for adoption immediately prior to their adoption.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between a child starting to be looked after and their placement for adoption, i.e. the date they move with their adoptive family. Only children with valid data are included.</p> <p>3. Figures are rounded to the nearest day.</p>	Average (days)	810 days	936 days	876 days Note see also the new A10 indicator)	639 days	636
A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012 that were placed for adoption and on a placement order or freeing order immediately prior to their adoption.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between receiving court authority to adopt (granting of placement order/freeing order) and matching with adopters. A time of zero is assigned to children who were matched before court authority was received.</p> <p>3. Figures are rounded to the nearest day.</p>	Average (Days)	166 days	239 days	344 days or 293 days with 2 outliers removed. The 21 children with Placement Orders after July 2011 show dramatic improvement (average 154 days!)	213 days	195

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2008 - 2011	3 year 2009 -2012	Single year 2012/13	Target	England 3 yr 2009-12
A3 The number and percentage of children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012 that were placed for adoption immediately prior to their adoption and all children with a current adoption plan at 31 March 2012 (excluding those where the decision to adopt has been reversed). When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between a child starting to be looked after and their placement for adoption, i.e. the date they move in with their adoptive family. Only children with valid data are included. Children are flagged if they waited less than 21 months (measured at 639 days) between starting to be looked after and being placed for adoption or had not yet been looked after for 21 months at 31 March 2012.</p> <p>3. The numerator is therefore all adopted children who were placed for adoption first who were placed less than 21 months after becoming looked after and all children looked after at 31 March 2012 with a current adoption decision who were placed less than 21 months after becoming looked after or who had not yet been looked after for 21 months."</p> <p>4. The denominator is therefore all adopted children who were placed for adoption first and all looked after at 31 March with a current adoption decision.</p>	<p>Number Children</p> <p>% Children</p>	<p>50</p> <p>41%</p>	<p>65</p> <p>39%</p>	<p>59 / 157</p> <p>38%</p>	<p>Not set</p>	<p>10,180</p> <p>56%</p>

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2008 - 2011	3 year 2009 -20012	Single year 2012/13	Target	England 3 yr 2009-12
A4 Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted)	<p>1. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in each year has been counted. A child who ceased to be in care in more than one year will be counted more than once.</p> <p>2. This indicator compares the number of children who ceased to be looked after in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012 with the number of children who were adopted during that period.</p>	<p>Number Adopted</p> <p>% adopted of leaving Care</p>	<p>65 Children</p> <p>16%</p>	<p>60 Children</p> <p>14%</p>	<p>36 / 157 Children</p> <p>23%</p>	Not set	<p>9,740</p> <p>(12%)</p>
A5 The number and percentage of children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption	<p>1. The denominator includes all children with an on-going adoption decision in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012. (The adoption decision date may be prior to 1 April 2009.) The numerator includes all children with an on-going adoption decision in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012 for whom the decision was reversed in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012.</p>	<p>Number rescinded</p> <p>%</p>	<p>20 children</p> <p>16%</p>	<p>30 children</p> <p>14%</p>	<p>15 / 173 children</p> <p>8.7%</p>	Not set	<p>1360</p> <p>(7%)</p>

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2008 - 2011	3 year 2009 -20012	Single year 2012/13	Target	England 3 yr 2009-12
A6: The percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted	<p>1. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted.</p> <p>2. The numerator includes all children with a known ethnicity of Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed or Other who were adopted in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012. The denominator includes all children within these ethnic groups who ceased to be looked after for any reason in the same time period. Numerators and denominators exclude all children where ethnicity was refused or not obtained.</p> <p>3. Percentages show the proportion of all black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted. Therefore if a local authority has a low proportion of black and minority ethnic children in their care population then the denominator will reflect this low number.</p>	<p>Number</p> <p>%</p>	<p>25 Children</p> <p>18%</p>	<p>20 Children</p> <p>13%</p>	<p>10 / 42 children</p> <p>24%</p>	<p>Not set</p>	<p>1,490</p> <p>6%</p>
A7: The percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted	<p>1. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted.</p> <p>2. Age on leaving care.</p> <p>3. The numerator includes all children who were adopted in period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012 who were aged 5 or over. The denominator includes all children who were aged 5 or over when they ceased to be looked after in the same time period.</p>	<p>Number</p> <p>% adopted age 5 or over of all care leavers aged 5 or over</p>	<p>20 Children</p> <p>7%</p>	<p>20 Children</p> <p>7%</p>	<p>12 / 106 Children</p> <p>11%</p>	<p>Not set</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7%</p>

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2008 - 2011	3 year 2009 -20012	Single year 2012/13	Target	England 3 yr 2009-12
A8: Average length of care proceedings locally (weeks)	<p>1. Figures are provided from the Cafcass National Case Management System (CMS).</p> <p>2. The unit of measurement is a care application. An application can involve multiple children. CMS is a live system and any late entries will be accounted for at the time of release of subsequent updates to this data."</p> <p>3. Average care duration is calculated from date of care application to the court to date application completed on CMS in the selected time period. Averages are based on care applications completed in the period.</p> <p>4. The average length of care proceedings locally includes all care proceedings which the local authority has initiated, including care proceedings which take place in courts outside of the local authority area.</p> <p>5. All data updated on 25 September 2012. Changes to figures are due to late updates in information within the CMS</p>	Weeks	57	56	Not available	Not set	56
A9: Number of children awaiting adoption	<p>1. This indicator includes all children with an adoption plan in year ending 31 March 2012 that were still looked after at 31 March 2012 and who had not been placed for adoption at 31 March 2012. When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan.</p>	Number	50 Children	95 Children	88 Children	Not set	95

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2008 - 2011	3 year 2009 -20012	Single year 2012/13	Target	England 3 yr 2009-12
A10 Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted (days)	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2012 that were placed for adoption immediately prior to their adoption.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between a child starting to be looked after and their placement for adoption, i.e. the date they move with their adoptive family. Where children are adopted by their foster carer, the time is measured until the date they moved in with their foster carer. Only children with valid data are included.</p> <p>3. Figures are rounded to the nearest day.</p>	Average Days	New in October	529 days	412 days	Not set but A1 Target = 639 days	546