

Corporate Parenting Board

14 September 2017

Time 5.30 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Oversight
Venue Temporary Committee Room - First Floor - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)
Vice-chair

Labour

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Martin Waite

Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Helen Tambini
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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Apologies for absence |
| 2 | Declarations of interests |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting - 13 July 2017 (Pages 3 - 8)
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record] |
| 4 | Matters arising
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting] |
| 5 | Schedule of outstanding matters (Pages 9 - 12)
[To consider and comment on the schedule of outstanding matters] |
| 6 | Care Leavers Forum - Birthday Money
[A presentation by representatives of the Care Leavers Forum] |
| 7 | Impact of New Belongings Project and Outcomes of Care Leavers Survey 2017 (Pages 13 - 18)
[Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children to present report] |
| 8 | Annual Adoption Agency Report (Pages 19 - 46)
[Dawn Deans, Senior Social Work Manager – Adoption to present report] |
| 9 | Performance Monitoring Report (Pages 47 - 62)
[Emma Bennett, Director of Children’s Services to present report] |

PART 2 - ITEMS NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | Councillors visits to establishments
[To receive feedback on any visits to establishments undertaken by Councillors since the last meeting] |
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Corporate Parenting Board

Agenda Item No: 3

Minutes - 13 July 2017

Attendance

Chair Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama

Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Rita Potter

Cllr Paul Sweet

Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills

Employees

Dawn Deans
Esther Douglas
Michelle Earp-Gaskell
Alison Hinds
Andrew Scragg
Helen Tambini
Alice Vickers
Laura Wood

Senior Social Work Manager - Adoption
Social Worker/Foster Care Worker
Senior Social Work Manager
Head of Looked After Children
Youth Service Participation Worker
Democratic Services Officer
Corporate Parenting Officer
Senior Social Work Manager - LAC Transitions

The Chair welcomed Sarah Peace, County Manager for Looked After Children's Services at Staffordshire County Council who was attending the meeting as an observer.

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Moran and Waite, Linda Sanders, Strategic Director and Emma Bennett, Service Director for Children and Young People.

2 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 Change to the Order of Agenda Items

The Chair moved that agenda item 6, Children in Care Council (CiCC) – My New Friend Activity, be considered after item 4, Matters arising and before item 3, Minutes of the previous meeting and item 5, Schedule of outstanding matters.

Resolved:

That agenda item 6 be considered after item 4 and before items 3 and 5.

4 Matters arising

The Chair introduced Laura Wood, Senior Social Work Manager – LAC Transitions who would be briefing the Board on the number of Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL) who were expectant parents and/or young parents and what support the Council offered.

Laura Wood referred to some of the issues facing LAC and CL which could result in them becoming teenage parents including; a culture of low aspiration and attachment related difficulties, disrupted education and lack of education regarding sexual health, substance misuse and generally negative assumptions towards LAC and CL.

There were currently 51 expectant parents and/or young parents, three were LAC and 48 CL. Three of those have more than one child.

The Council was recording data on the new ICT system Eclipse to help identify trends and target support.

In respect of preventative work, the LAC Transition team were supporting young people in several ways. The LAC nurse was co-located one day a week within LAC to support increased partnership working and encourage young people to access weekly support. That included Drop in Friday for CL where the LAC nurse offered advice, support and guidance. Information regarding city-wide sexual health services was being distributed, including contraception clinics such as EMBRACE. Members of the LAC team were also trained in C card distribution.

In respect of support services, the LAC transition team provided good quality care regarding looking after children. There was a young parent group every Sunday morning at The Way. There were early help services to ensure the young person has specific support regarding parenting skills, this was a 'whole' family approach.

Specialised midwives visited young people twice a week until the child was two and the team monitored pregnancies more closely to ensure adequate support was available.

Members of the Board asked how LAC and CL coped with looking after their babies, the percentage of babies removed and how those figures compared to the general population.

Laura Wood confirmed that assessments were made and young people could be referred for more specialised support, the percentage of babies removed was low and it would be possible to look at comparative figures for the general population and notify the Board.

Councillor Potter queried how young people coped if they continued to become pregnant.

Laura Wood confirmed that independent support was offered to identify if circumstances had changed since the previous pregnancy and if not, how those circumstances could be changed before a person became pregnant again.

Resolved:

1. That the verbal update be noted and a copy of the briefing note be circulated to the Board.
2. That comparative figures for the general population in respect of the number of babies removed from parents be circulated to the Board.
3. That an update report be submitted to the Board in six months.

5 Children in Care Council (CiCC) - My New Friend Activity

Members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) attended the meeting and took part in an introductory activity with members of the Board, facilitated by Andrew Scragg, Participation Officer.

Members of the Board thanked the children for attending and stated that they looked forward to seeing them again soon.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting - 18 May 2017

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2017 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

7 Schedule of outstanding matters

The Chair presented the report on current progress on matters previously considered by the Board.

In respect of the Corporate Parenting Strategy Update, Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer confirmed that she had sent a request to identify who had completed the training. A Councillor Induction Programme was being developed and an introduction to all councillors was scheduled for 11 January 2018.

In respect of Councillor visits to establishments, Councillor Potter confirmed that her visit to Merridale Street West had now been arranged.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 **Wolverhampton Fostering Annual Report April 2016 to March 2017**

Michelle Earp-Gaskell, Senior Social Work Manager presented the Wolverhampton Fostering Annual Report April 2016 to March 2017 and highlighted key points.

Michelle Earp-Gaskell confirmed that of the 20 carers that had been deregistered in 2016/17, none had been offering placements for a significant period and had sat on a dormant list. They had been dormant for a variety of reasons including; health issues, career break or adoption leave. The approval of 21 fostering households in 2016/17 meant that although the foster care numbers had only increased by one, placement capacity had increased by 21.

Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children confirmed that the Council was striving towards increasing resources for foster carers. The number of internal foster carer placements had increased from 158 in 2014 to 193 as at 31 March 2017 and it was hoped to build on that.

Councillor Potter asked for assurance that foster carers were well supported to ensure their retention.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 **Foster Carers**

Esther Douglas, Social Worker/Foster Care Trainer introduced Laura and Stephen Bayliss, Emma Goodwin and Marie Spragg to the Board.

The Chair welcomed the foster carers and thanked them for attending the meeting. She referred to the recent Ofsted inspection which had graded Children's Services as good and asked the foster carers if that was their experience of the service and if they could identify any improvements.

Emma Goodwin stated that she had been caring for the same child for seven years, since they had been 15 months old and during that time she had been well supported. In terms of contact with siblings, her child kept in contact with their sibling and they shared the same Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

Marie Spragg stated she had experienced difficulties when her social worker had been on maternity leave and then working part time; however, now her social worker was back she received the necessary support.

Michelle Earp-Gaskell confirmed that rather than having four part time posts, there were now two full time posts which worked more effectively. Part time working could be effective in those roles, if it was carefully managed.

The Chair asked the foster carers if the training offered was appropriate and helpful?

Marie Spragg stated that when she was looking after a baby it had been hard to attend all the mandatory training. Training was essential; however, sometimes it felt like the training was too late and it was then hard to understand why children behaved in a certain way.

In response, Esther Douglas, Social Worker/Foster Care Trainer confirmed that additional courses had been arranged for the evenings and weekends to ensure that people working could attend. It was hoped that Joginder Shoker-Kang who undertook the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) training on therapeutic parenting would be able to do that as a course.

Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children confirmed that Joginder also had one to one consultations which foster carers might find helpful.

Marie Spragg stated that she was pleased to see new faces at the Forum meetings. People had also been asked to suggest discussion items.

Laura Bayliss commented that some people were put off attending the Forum meetings as the same issues were continually discussed and often arguments occurred which discouraged some people from attending.

Esther Douglas confirmed that she was currently chairing Forum meetings; however, it should be a foster carer and it was hoped that someone would volunteer. It was also pleasing to have officers attending meetings. It was hoped to set up a Facebook page, with the assistance of an experienced Marketing officer.

Emma Goodwin suggested that it would be helpful if foster carers could regularly attend Board meetings.

Members of the Board stated that it would be advantageous to have regular input from foster carers and agreed in principle to two representatives being nominated. It was suggested that in the interim, foster carers be invited to nominate two people to attend as observers at the next meeting.

Members of the Board thanked the foster carers for attending the meeting and providing input and looked forward to their future attendance.

Resolved:

That the Board recommends in principle that two foster carers be nominated to join the Corporate Parenting Board in order that one foster carer can attend each meeting.

10 **Adoption Scorecard 2013-16 Analysis**

Dawn Deans, Senior Social Work Manager presented the Adoption Scorecard 2013-16 Analysis report and highlighted key points.

The Chair stated that every child should have the opportunity to be adopted where appropriate even if that took time and if that affected the A1 indicator that was acceptable.

Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children confirmed that the Ofsted inspectors had recognised and acknowledged the considerable work undertaken to decrease the timescales and the difficulties associated with placing children with more challenging issues.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 **Performance Monitoring Report**

Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children presented the Performance Monitoring Report for May 2017 and highlighted the key points.

Alison Hinds stated that during the last three months a number of children over 13 had not been placed and that was due to them being a hard group to place internally.

Alison Hinds referred to the continued decrease in the percentage of children that participated in their own reviews and she confirmed that the reasons for that were being investigated. It had been hoped that the introduction of the MOMO app would encourage participation; however, since its introduction the percentage had continued to fall. Officers would need to look historically at the way reviews were undertaken to find the best way forward.

Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer confirmed that the Children in Care Council (CiCC) had welcomed the introduction of the app; however, members were not using it. The issue was discussed at the Foster Carers Conference and it was hoped that would encourage its use. It was also important to remember that teenagers often did not think that LAC reviews were important, particularly if they were happy with their current circumstances.

Alison Hinds confirmed that the percentage of health checks had fallen from 91% to 87%. That was due to the majority of those children living out of the city; however, the situation would continue to be monitored.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12 **Exclusion of the press and public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information contained in paragraph 1 of the Act, namely information relating to an individual.

13 **Councillors visits to establishments**

The Chair confirmed that she would be undertaking a formal visit to Pendleford Farm in the Autumn.

Corporate Parenting Board

14 September 2017

Report title	Schedule of Outstanding Matters	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
Originating service	Governance	
Accountable employee(s)	Helen Tambini	Democratic Services Officer
	Tel	01902 554070
	Email	Helen.Tambini@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Recommendations for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to consider and comment on the summary of outstanding matters.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to appraise the Board of the current position with a variety of matters considered at previous meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.

2.0 Background

2.1 At previous meetings of the Board the following matters were considered and details of the current position is set out in the fourth column of the table.

<u>DATE OF MEETING</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER</u>	<u>CURRENT POSITION</u>
13 July 2017	Care Leavers up to age 18 that are pregnant or teenage parents	Laura Wood	Comparative figures for the general population in respect of the number of babies removed from parents be circulated to the Board Update report be submitted to the Board in six months
13 July 2017	Foster Carers	Helen Tambini	Implementation of nomination of foster carers to join the Board
13 July 2017	Councillor visits to establishments	Alice Vickers	Update on visit by Councillor Potter to Merridale Street West establishment

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

3.2 The financial implications of each matter will be detailed in the individual report submitted to the Board.

[NM/06092017/H]

4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report. The legal implications of each matter will be detailed in the report submitted to the Board.
[TS/06092017/Q]

5.0 Equalities implications

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report. The equalities implications of each matter will be detailed in the reports submitted to the Board

6.0 Environmental implications

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report. The environmental implications of each matter will be detailed in the report submitted to the Board.

7.0 Human resources implications

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report. The human resources implications of each matter will be detailed in the report submitted to the Board.

8.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report. The corporate landlord implications of each matter will be detailed in the report submitted to the Board.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

- 9.1 Minutes of previous meetings of the Board and associate

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Corporate Parenting Board

14 September 2017

Report title	Impact of new Belongings Project and Outcome of Care Leavers Survey 2017	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
Originating service	Looked After Children's – Transitions Team	
Accountable employee(s)	Laura Wood Tel Email	Senior Social Work Team Manager 01902 556439 Laura.wood2@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the report and provide feedback on the City of Wolverhampton Council Annual Care Leaver Survey Action Plan for 2017-2018.

Recommendations for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note:

1. The report details the work of the City of Wolverhampton Looked After Children's (LAC) Transition Service in the year of July 2016 – July 2017.
2. The action plan for the year of August 2017 – July 2018.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the City of Wolverhampton's New Belongings project 2016-2017:
- To review the impact the New Belongings project had and what it has achieved.
 - To review how the project has improved outcomes for Care Leavers.
 - To present the new action plan which we will continue to drive forward local service provision, this is now called the care leaver annual survey as the New Belongings initiative has ceased.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Historically Wolverhampton's Looked after Children's Transitions Team has struggled to raise the profile of young people leaving care. The New Belongings project was an innovative and ambitious initiative aimed at raising the expectations and aspirations for Care Leavers.
- 2.2 Wolverhampton were successful in our bid to partake in The New Belongings project, our care leaver survey was completed which informed our action plan in regards to improving overall service delivery for Wolverhampton Care Leavers. The action plan was implemented, when this was reviewed at the end of 12 months it was evident from the care leaver annual survey that they felt service delivery had improved and care leaver provision city wide had increased.
- 2.3 Wolverhampton agreed that the ethos and culture New Belongings had embedded, was vital when ensuring Care Leavers were supported to achieve the best possible outcomes. The LAC Transition team continues to survey care leavers on an annual basis to ensure the service receives feedback in terms of service delivery, these results are then analysed and a new action plan is formulated which is launched in Care Leaver week every October.
- 2.4 The annual care leaver survey analysis and work plan attached details the performance of the City of Wolverhampton LAC Transition service in the year July 2016 – June 2017.
- 2.5 The report outlines the progress made and the areas of improvement needed over the next 12 months in respect to LAC transition services practice. The attached work plan has been formulated to ensure improvements are actioned and reviewed regularly via a monthly care leaver steering group and the care leavers forum.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

- 3.1 The care leaver survey has assessed the impact of the New Belongings action plan 2016-2017 for Wolverhampton Care Leavers. 73 young people took part, which was an increase of 10 young people compared to last year, however, due to an increase in the care leaver cohort (341), the total response rate has decreased to 21%. The main cohort that responded was young people between the ages of 17 – 19 years old.

3.2 The survey showed that the main strengths were as follows:

LAC Transition service:

- 92% of young people felt they were involved in their decision making.
- 93% of young people felt that they are getting the right help.
- 84% of young people felt they left care when they were ready compared to 48% last year.
- 94% of young people feel they are being supported/were prepared when they left care compared to 58% last year.
- 64% of young people are aware of Friday drop in compared to 41% last year. 19% of the young people who did not know about this service live out of city.

Accommodation:

- 90% of young people feel safe in their accommodation compared to 80% last year.
- 90% of young people feel their accommodation meets their needs compared to 73% last year.
- 90% of young people feel that they can adequately budget compared to 70% last year.

Education, Employment and Training (EET):

- 62% of young people are in an EET provision compared to 46% last year.
- 44% of young people have an aspiration to attend university.

Health:

- 96% of young people feel supported with their health and well-being compared to 70% last year.
- 14% of young people have received the new leaving care health summary.

Participation:

- 93% of young people attend their LAC/Pathway Plan reviews.
- 44% of young people are aware of the new Indi group, 72% of these young people thought it was useful, 11% of young people would like to join.
- 64% of young people are aware of the Care Leaver Forum compared to 57%, of the 33% that were not aware 26% live in out of city placements.
- 81% of young people feel that the Care Leaver Forum is valuable compared to 29% last year.

Entitlements:

- 79% of young people leaving care are aware of their entitlements compared to 60% last year.
- 79% of young people leaving care feel they are getting what they are entitled to compared to 68% last year.

Three things LAC Transition Service do well:

- Accommodation options.
- Stay in touch and provide good support and advice.
- Participation activities like Indi group.

3.3 The results were collated and analysed; Care Leavers stated that the following improvements needed to be made during 2017-2018:

LAC Transition Service:

- 81% of young people have a good relationship with their worker this is a decrease from last year where it was 98%.
- 78% of young people who have a young person's advisor have a good relationship with their YPA.
- 84% of young people who have a social worker felt they have a good relationship with them.
- 39% of young people who attended Friday drop in felt it helped.

Participation:

- 63% of young people are aware of the Facebook page Lacey's child compared to 59% last year, of the 37% that were not aware, 23% live in out of city placements.
- 52% of young people are aware of the LAC website compared to 49% last year, of the 48% that were not aware 36% live in out of city placements.
- 30% of young people have received a Care Leavers' newsletter compared to 21% last year, of the 68% that had not, 52% live in out of city placements.
- 87% of young people found this useful compared to 14% last year.
- 31% of young people are aware of the new Mind of My Own (Momo) app, of the ones that are aware only 8% are using it, 78% of these young people think it is useful. 45% of young people who were not aware of the app live out of city.
- 20% of young people who are pregnant/have a child attend the young parent's group at The Way, all that attended felt it was valuable, 71% of young people who were not attending live out of city.

Entitlements:

- Some young people surveyed had not met their Young Person's Advisor (YPA) despite being allocated prior to their 16 birthday.
- Some young people felt their YPA could have been better matched to their personality.
- 70% of young people feel they are making decisions regarding their future compared to 80% last year.

Three things LAC Transition Service could do better:

- Give more financial support – clothing allowance, birthday allowance, holiday money, driving lessons.
- Sort savings out on time.
- Stop changing social worker.
*63% of young people stated they would like to remain open post 21, young people stated they would like the following support post 21.
- To continue as it is.
- To make sure young people are on the right track and maintain it.
- Someone to talk to when need advice.
- Keep in contact four to -six months

3.4 The care leaver survey action plan 2017-2018 has been produced taking into consideration the results of the care leaver survey and the views taken from the young people at the Care Leavers' Forum.

3.5 We expect that the combined efforts to address the above points will decrease barriers for Care Leavers in the community, providing them with increased support, by engaging the abilities of the whole of the Local Authority, its key service partners and the wider community. Creating an action plan that reflects the priorities that the Local Authority and its Care Leavers consider important to them, for example, increased participation, on-going education, training and employment opportunities, housing options and access to health and wellbeing services via our local services and partners, will raise the profile of Care Leavers. This should promote aspirations and opportunities for our Care Leavers so that they can be encouraged, supported and empowered to achieve better outcomes for their future. Breaking down these barriers will automatically improve our Care Leavers' experience of entry from childhood to adult life.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The approved budget for 2017-2018 for the Looked After Children's Transition Team is £2.4 million.

4.2 If the decision is made to give more financial support in relation to clothing allowances, birthday allowances, holiday money, driving lessons as referred to in paragraph 3.3 then this would be the subject of a further report. Any additional costs associated with this would have to be contained within the existing budget.
[NM/06092017/J]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications.
[AH/06092017/J]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

Corporate Parenting Board

14 September 2017

Report title	Annual Adoption Agency Report	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
Accountable employee(s)	Dawn Deans Tel Email	Senior Social Work Manager (Adoption) 01902 550842 Dawn.Deans@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	CICC and PLT	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to consider the report and provide feedback on the City of Wolverhampton Council Annual Adoption Agency Report for 2016-2017.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report details the work of the City of Wolverhampton Adoption Service in the year April 2016 to March 2017.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Adoption Annual Report attached details the performance of the City of Wolverhampton Adoption Service in the year April 2016 to March 2017. The statutory regulations require that Councillors should be informed of the Adoption Agency's activity on a regular basis. The annual report provides information that will assist Councillors in respect of their responsibilities as corporate parents for Looked after Children.
- 2.2. The report outlines legislative, policy and adoption reform programmes in respect of Adoption practice.
- 2.3. Included in Adoption Reforms is the development of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA's) who are expected to deliver all adoption recruitment, matching and support functions. The Department for Education (DfE) provided funding to assist in the setting up and establishment of the RAA and practical support from a coach and policy information to achieve the programme's aims.
- 2.4 In November 2015, six Local Authority partners - Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin and their five Local Authority Adoption Agencies, together with Voluntary Adoption Agency Adoption Focus, were accepted by the Department for Education (DfE) as an early adopter project to work together to design and develop a new Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption@Heart was established.
- 2.5 In February 2017 Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin made the decision to withdraw from Adoption @Heart RAA. Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton LA's remain committed along with VAA partners; Adoption Focus, Adoption UK and After Adoption to the operating and delivery model. Work continues in progressing a series of work streams to develop the Adoption@Heart model.

3.0 Adoption Inspection

- 3.1 All Adoption Services became regulated in 2003, under the Care Standards Act 2000 and were subject to inspections against National Minimum Standards. The inspecting Authority is OFSTED.
- 3.2 OFSTED inspected Wolverhampton Adoption Service in January 2016. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the agency's compliance with the adoption regulations and National Minimum Standards. The inspectors identified many areas of strength in the adoption service and they judged the service as Good.

3.3 Ofsted reported that; good use is made of adoption to achieve permanence for those children for whom it is the right solution. This includes older children and those with complex needs regardless of their ethnic identity. The timeliness of court proceedings, and matching and placing children with adoptive families is improving (OFSTED 2017).

4.0 Adopter Approval

4.1 The two-stage recruitment and approval process is embedded and tracked in terms of impact and timeliness. A stage one worker undertakes all initial visits and tracks references and medical checks etc. up until stage two. This model was trialled in 2016 and there was a significant improvement in progressing adopters during stage one and two with an 89 day reduction within timescales.

4.2 Wolverhampton continued to utilise an Independent Agency Social Work Assessment Consultancy (SWACS) to complete stage two Prospective Adopter Reports (PAR's)

4.3 The report continues to show improvements in the recruitment and assessment of adopters. There have been 28 approvals of prospective adopters, this represents an increase in the approval of prospective adopters and surpasses the sufficiency target for the year set at 25 approvals.

4.4 Early Permanency Placements were an initiative subject to the Children and Families Act (2014). Wolverhampton has made four early permanence placements via Foster for Adoption (FFA) / Concurrency during April 2016 to March 2017. Two children have been adopted by their dual approved carers, a third is awaiting a celebration hearing date and one child was rehabilitated home to parents.

4.5 The intention is to continue to recruit and assess suitable adopters in a timely manner who can meet the needs of Wolverhampton children with a care plan of adoption.

5.0 Links of children with prospective adopters

5.1 There have been forty-five links during 2016-2017.

5.2 The report outlines Wolverhampton Adoption Team's performance in detail in relation to the adoption scorecard. Despite a significant improvement in performance year on year, for 2013 to 2016 Wolverhampton was rated 'double red' for A1 and A2 indicator.

5.3 Wolverhampton continues to pursue adoption for what would be considered harder to place children. Continuing to secure appropriate adoptive placements may take longer given the ages and circumstances of many of the children. Ofsted judged that 'Wolverhampton achieves permanence through adoption for more 'harder to place' children than similar local authorities' (OFSTED 2017).

5.4 The City of Wolverhampton has always been ambitious about adoption, the use of a three-year average for the scorecard indicator presents a challenge for the authority, and Wolverhampton constantly balances the need for swift placement with not giving up on finding families for older children and children with complex needs. There are occasions

where timescales have been sacrificed in the interest of placing older children, sibling groups and children with complex needs. OFSTED judged; although the average length of time taken between children becoming looked after and moving into their adoptive families is above the national average, there is an improving picture (OFSTED 2017).

- 5.5. There have been three adoption disruptions pre-order in this reporting period involving a sibling group of two children who were aged five and six years old and a single female child aged three years old. The sibling group had significant challenges and despite adoption support being in place, the placement was unsustainable. Disruption meetings have been held and an action plan devised which is going to be shared with Wolverhampton Adoption Panel to inform practice.
- 5.6 In August 2015 the Government made a grant available to local authorities in England for the purposes of reimbursing eligible expenditure under the Adoption Inter-Agency Fee Grant, for hard to place children whose plan is adoption. This ceased in October 2016. During 2016-2017 Wolverhampton received £458,000.

6.0 Adoption order/s

- 6.1 Forty-six Adoption Orders have been granted during this reporting period, this is a decrease on the previous year. The delay is in part due to an increased number of birth parents contesting the Adoption Order, which results in extending court timescales causing a number of Adoption Orders being granted post March 2017.
- 6.2 OFSTED recommended that we ensure that once children are placed for adoption, there is no unnecessary delay in applying for the adoption order. We have had historical cases where extensive adoption support was required due to children's challenging behaviour in the adoption placement. This caused adopters delaying in applying for the adoption order and it resulted in three children waiting three years to secure permanence via an Adoption Order. We have found that where harder to place children are placed with adoption support provision identified early in the placement; adopters have lodged their application in a timely manner.

7.0 Adoption support

- 7.1 Wolverhampton Adoption Team recognises that adopted children and their families need to be able to access appropriate, timely and sensitive adoption support at any time in their lives. OFSTED inspectors highlighted 'that adopters valued the support and responsiveness of the adoption team' (OFSTED 2017).
- 7.2 Wolverhampton has undertaken 34 Assessment of Need assessments and applied for 30 therapeutic packages. Services have included Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Assessments, Circle of Security therapeutic parenting course; therapeutic life story work and psychotherapy. Three monthly reviews are undertaken to identify family satisfaction and clinical outcomes. Adoption support social workers supported in excess of 60 children during 2016-2017 and three birth children. OFSTED commented that 'children and families receive good post adoption support' (OFSTED 2017).

7.3 In line with good practice the City of Wolverhampton Adoption team do not operate an adoption support waiting list, with phone enquires requesting adoption support responded to and a home visit arranged and an assessment of need completed within 20 days of the visit. Our intention is to continue to provide pre-order support however this remains a challenge due to resource capacity.

8.0 Children's Decisions

8.1 There has been an increase of "Should be Placed for Adoption" (SBPFA) decisions, with 62 during 2016-2017.

8.2 This reporting period has also seen an increase in older children with a plan of adoption from four children in 2015-16 to eighteen. Most of these children are placed in foster placements and have been with the same carers for some time. The 'carer' adoption according to research is on the increase and has many benefits for the children. Berry and Barth's (1990) research sees that children are less likely to experience disruption than children in non-foster parent adoption.

8.3 There has been a significant decrease in the number of children who have had their plans for adoption rescinded with five rescinded plans of adoption during 2016-2017. For one group of children, a sibling group of four their plan is long term fostering which will now mean that the sibling group will not be separated. The other rescinded plan was for a child with complex health needs. For all children who had become subject to placement order significant family finding had taken place prior to considering a change of plan. For most children, a change of plan to permanent long term fostering enabled children to be permanently fostered with their current carers.

9.0 Strategic issues and forward plans

9.1 Wolverhampton Adoption Team's objective will be to secure children's permanence in a timely manner once children are placed in adoptive placements.

9.2 Additionally Annex A's will be completed by ten weeks of placement when adopters can lodge their adoption order application and ten days following the ADM in fostering families.

9.3 Increase the recruitment of adopters who can consider offering Early Permanence Placements to children either through concurrency or foster to adopt.

9.4 Improve recruitment of adopters willing to adopt children deemed harder to place; including older children, children with disabilities and black and minority ethnic children and boys.

9.5 Wolverhampton will continue to lead the development of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and continue to work with partner agencies in respect of developing the operating model and service delivery. Regionalising the service is consistent with the Government agenda and will widen the pool of adopters for Wolverhampton's looked after children and will enable us to provide a regional adoption support service which will continue to be accessible and responsive to the needs of adopters.

9.6 Furthermore the Government aspires to develop a system with a spirit of innovation and excellence at its heart; we have an opportunity to co design, streamline and enhance adoption services across the region.

10.0 Financial implications

10.1 The approved budget for the Adoption Service for 2016-2017 is £2.4 million.

10.2 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
[NM/14082017/V]

11.0 Legal implications

11.1 The relevant legislation, statutory requirements and guidance is set out in the body of the report. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.
[TC/14082017/F]

12.0 Equalities implications

12.1 The City of Wolverhampton Adoption Team seeks to recruit and purchase adopters who are able to meet the needs of a diverse range of children. This includes children of different black and minority ethnic groups, both young and older children, male and female children. This is reflected within the recruitment strategy and all new policies have been subject to an equalities analysis.

13.0 Environmental implications

13.1 There are no environmental implications.

14.0 Human resources implications

14.1 Regionalisation will have human resources implications but the extent of these is not known at present. Human resources are being considered as part of the development of Adoption@Heart model.

15.0 Corporate landlord implications

15.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

16.0 Schedule of background papers

16.1 Comments from the Children in Care Council.

16.2 Appendix one.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON C O U N C I L

**ANNUAL ADOPTION AGENCY REPORT
APRIL 2016 – MARCH 2017**

AUTHOR: Dawn Deans SENIOR SOCIAL WORK MANAGER (ADOPTION)

Introduction

This report details the performance of the City of Wolverhampton Adoption Service in the year April 2016 to March 2017. The statutory regulations require that Elected Members should be informed of the Adoption Agency's activity on a regular basis. This annual report provides information that will assist Elected Members in respect of their responsibilities as corporate parents for looked after children.

The Adoption Service is located within the People Directorate of the City of Wolverhampton Council. The Adoption Service recruits, trains and supports adoptive parents, locates external adopters, places children for adoption, undertakes LAC statutory functions and provides adoption support services to adoptees and adoptive families.

Adoption Inspection

All Adoption Services became regulated in 2003, under the Care Standards Act 2000 and were subject to inspections against National Minimum Standards. The inspecting Authority is OFSTED.

OFSTED inspected Wolverhampton Adoption Service in January 2016. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the agency's compliance with the adoption regulations and National Minimum Standards. The inspectors identified many areas of strength in the adoption service and they judged the service as Good.

Ofsted reported that; Good use is made of adoption to achieve permanence for those children for whom it is the right solution. This includes older children and those with complex needs regardless of their ethnic identity. The timeliness of court proceedings, and matching and placing children with adoptive families is improving (OFSTED 2017).

The National Agenda-Adoption Reforms

In 2012, the Government launched an Adoption Reform Programme in response to the fact that in 2011 the lowest numbers of adoptions were made despite the numbers of children under 5 in care rising sharply. It also focused concern regarding the length of time taken for children to be placed for adoption. This resulted in a raft of reforms and measures being implemented to increase and speed up adoption these include:

- An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay, March 2012, which introduced the Adoption Scorecard.
- Further Action on Adoption: Finding More Loving Homes, January 2013 which introduced the National Adoption helpline; First4Adoption and a six months two stage process for assessing adopters.
- The Adoption Leadership Board was launched in April 2014.
- Children and Families Act 2014; introduced care proceedings limited to 26 weeks apart from exceptional cases, promotes Fostering for Adoption, repeal of due consideration to ethnicity in placing children in England, and adopter led matching with access to adoption registers.
- Regionalising Adoption, June 2015. Outlined how the development of Regional Adoption Agencies will create a wider pool of adopters who could

potentially meet the needs of child/ren for whom they were considering adoption and adoption support would be easily accessible, additionally the Government aspired to develop a system with a spirit of innovation and excellence at its heart.

- Adoption: A Vision for Change policy paper 2016 identifies how the Government wants to invest in the workforce with plans to equip the workforce with the professional skills and knowledge to navigate complex assessment, analysis and decision making and enable adoptive families to access the right support.
- The Education and Adoption Act 2016; measures in the Act allow the Government to require local authorities to make arrangements for their adoption functions to be carried out by another adoption agency, allowing for regional approaches. Adoption functions include:
 - (a) the recruitment of persons as prospective adopters;
 - (b) the assessment of prospective adopters' suitability to adopt a child;
 - (c) the approval of prospective adopters as suitable to adopt a child;
 - (d) decisions as to whether a particular child should be placed for adoption with a particular prospective adopter;
 - (e) the provision of adoption support services.

Regionalising Adoption Agencies

In November 2015, six Local Authority partners - Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin and their five Local Authority Adoption Agencies, together with Voluntary Adoption Agency, Adoption Focus, were accepted by the Department for Education (DfE) as an early adopter project to work together to design and develop a new Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).

Regional Adoption Agencies are expected to deliver all adoption recruitment, matching and support functions. The DfE provided funding to assist in the setting up and establishment of the RAA and practical support from a coach and policy information to achieve the programme's aims.

As a result of the scoping exercise Adoption@Heart was developed. Having considered Adoption@Heart design principles, feedback from stakeholder engagement workshops it is planned the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) will deliver services from function focused teams which will enable staff to focus on a specific area of work; Adopter Recruitment (adopter journey), Family Finding (child's journey) and Adoption support service.

The region covers a large geographic area, to maintain a locally accessible service presence it is envisaged a hub and spoke model will be planned. This model will include a hub centrally for the delivery of core services and various spoke locations across the region which will offer workspaces; they could be co-located within

children's services. A proposal of a LA Hosted operating model is yet to be determined by each of the Local Authorities.

In February 2017 Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin made the decision to withdraw from Adoption @Heart RAA. Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton LA's remain committed along with VAA partners; Adoption Focus, Adoption UK and After Adoption to the operating and delivery model. Work continues in progressing a series of work streams to develop the model and is on track to launch in July 2018.

Regional and local developments

Adoption Leadership Boards

The West Midlands Adoption Leadership Board continued to be chaired by Tony Oakman (Strategic Director People Services at Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council) until January 2017 when John Gregg (Director Children Services at Coventry) took over. The board is made up of senior leaders from the 14 local authorities that make up the West Midlands region.

The ALB is a national board with a remit to drive significant improvements in the performance of the adoption system in England. It has a particular focus on supporting and challenging the adoption system to maximise the likelihood that:

- Children for whom adoption is the best way of achieving permanence are adopted without unnecessary delay;
- There are enough prospective adopters to provide homes for all the children approved to be adopted;
- Adoptions do not breakdown through the right adoption support being readily available to all people who need it.

The data at April 2017 identified there has been a 25% decrease of Placement Orders from 2013-2014 and 2015-2016. The fall was typically linked to the Supreme Court judgement Re B and Re BS. A key issue in both cases was proportionality in permanency decision making where an overarching phrase when considering permanence options in adoption 'is nothing else will do'. The decline in placement orders coincided with a rise in SGO's.

Adopt West Mids

Adopt West Mids. (AWM's) remains a strong regional consortium, which offers training, peer learning and development. Adopt West Mids. is made up of adoption strategic and operational managers. It developed to support adoption agencies locally.

'AWM's funding has been agreed to 31 March 2018, during which time the proposal for a wider Permanence Hub is being developed by the regional Adoption Leadership Board. AWM's work continues to focus on commissioning & facilitating specialist training for both adoption/LAC social work staff, and also events for adopters. Peer support networks are also continuing and meet on a bi-monthly basis.

Black Country Consortium (Adoption in the Black Country and Adoption focus) (ABC&AF)

Wolverhampton continues to be a part of the ABC&AF consortium with Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall local authorities and Adoption Focus a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA), looking at joint initiatives in adoption. This consortium has continued to work collaboratively over the last twelve months.

The original remit of Adoption Black Country (ABC) was to recruit adopters for older children, sibling groups and those of minority ethnic groups. However, although all promotional materials and campaigns still reflect this, enquiries are also accepted from potential adopters who fall outside this category. The enquiries are equally shared throughout the four local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agency.

ABC has continued to jointly purchase services from Adoption U.K. for example 12 monthly memberships for all approved adopters and from After Adoption who undertakes birth record counselling on our behalf.

Adoption Focus appointed a family finder who continued to liaise with ABC consortium to ensure that links are made quickly within the consortium. It resulted in six links being made during April 2016- March 2017.

Team structure

SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER MANAGER

Family Finding & Adoption Support ADOPT 1 **Social Worker Unit Manager**

Social Workers x 5
Family Support Worker x 1

Adoption Social Work Team ADOPT 2 **Social Worker Unit Manager**

Social Worker x 5
Family Support Worker x 1

Recruitment and Assessment ADOPT 3 **Social Worker Unit Manager**

Social Worker x 4
Family Support Worker x 1

Unit Administrators x 2

Adoption Panel Advisor x 1
Panel administrator x 1

The Adoption Team

Since 2014 Wolverhampton Adoption Team has been reconfigured into three units with a recruitment and assessment unit, a family finding and adoption support unit, and a LAC adoption unit co-located in the adoption team.

We are enthusiastic about this model and believe it improves the timeliness and outcomes for children, and also improves the quality of the service. It has developed a shared understanding about adoption among social workers including transitioning children to adoptive placements, therapeutic support, and supporting children's educational issues. We are able to offer support early and establish a close working relationship between the three units for the benefit of adoptive families.

There have been on going challenges recruiting permanent Social Work Unit Managers to ADOPT 2 and 3, in part due to uncertainty regarding the delivery model of the regional adoption agency, however recruitment continues to seek to address this.

An interim Senior Social Work Manager left the service in September 2016 and was replaced by the Social Work Unit Manager in Adopt 1 on a six months secondment.

Staff training

Wolverhampton LAC service remains committed to providing good quality training for all adoption staff, with a range of internal and external provision as well as mandatory and specialist training. Quarterly staff briefings and an annual social work conference are part of a workforce development plan.

The current service design enables adoption staff to develop expertise regarding the impact of attachment, loss and separation and trauma for adopted children. Training events have included Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Therapeutic Life Story Work, Assessment and Analysis Training and Restorative Practice Training which is being delivered across Wolverhampton Children and Young People (CYP) service.

Training by AWM has been offered to the wider CYP service in order to develop a greater understanding and whole service approach, for example life story work training has enhanced understanding about the importance of acquiring information to inform life story work and expanded skills in explaining care plans to children.

The Adoption service objectives

Recruitment and Assessment of adopters

Prospective adopters are recruited to meet the placement needs of children with a care plan of adoption. Adoption in the Black Country & Adoption Focus (ABC&AF) consortium's recruitment strategy endeavours to recruit adopters for older children, who may have experienced neglect and or abuse and now need a permanent adoptive home; sibling groups and those of minority ethnic groups where children require adoptive parents who can reflect or promote their heritage. ABC&AF also accept prospective adopters who fall outside this category. The enquiries are equally shared throughout the four local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agency.

Our consortium centralised front door service and the central recruitment website is essential however this simply is not enough; ABC&AF go further delivering a concierge support approach with an individually named personal contact to every new enquirer/perspective adopter. Through a digital cluster program (that has been nationally recognised as a leader and innovator within the adoption sector) within three minutes regardless of the time of day a personal messaging conversation (non-automated) is held with the enquirer to answer any questions that they may have. This digital cluster program demonstrates the innovative ways adopters can engage with us for example, through regular Vlogging, live video question and answer sessions, adopter lead blogging and Adoption Info Event Live (an adoption info event simultaneously delivered over social media).

Prospective adopters do not have to wait for a significant amount of time to attend an information event. ABC&AF have hosted 33 info events during the last year and two surgery sessions; where appointments are pre-booked for those who have already been to an information event. On average, prospective adopters have to wait a maximum of 10 days to attend an event.

We hold information events within ABC&AF region to enable prospective adopters to access local events, for this reason events are held at targeted venues around the Black Country (and wider) to maximise recruitment from targeted groups. Information events are held on all nights of the week (except Fridays) to ensure that those individuals who work shift patterns or non 'regular office hours' etc are able to attend. Our analysis has also identified a need for more weekend information events which has resulted in the new information event schedule having one weekend event per month.

Previous analysis by an external agency identified that recruiting adopters from the Black Country alone will not be able to provide sufficiency to the Local Authorities and a wide recruitment campaign is required. Recruitment from outside the Black Country boundaries has continued to grow rising to 39% in 2016-2017 and includes new areas, such as Tamworth.

Additionally ABC&AF continue to use media partners Free Radio using Freewind/Mid-morning and afternoons/early drive slots and Signal 107 plus traditional large outdoor poster billboards and smaller target poster sites have been used to support traditional press adverts (in a range of publications linked to the location of the Information Event e.g. Shropshire Star, Dudley News, Bromsgrove Observer, etc).

Adoption Recruitment and Assessment Unit

The two-stage recruitment and approval process is embedded and tracked in terms of impact and timeliness. A stage one worker undertakes all initial visits and tracks references and medical checks etc. up until stage two. This model was trialled in 2016 and there was a significant improvement in progressing adopters during stage one and two with an 89 day reduction within timescales.

ABC jointly trains adopters via online training and three days group training. The program has been jointly devised and includes early life trauma, loss, attachment, abuse, adoption parenting 'parenting plus', post adoption contact, post adoption

support and guest speakers. The adopter's feedback on training is very positive and they report feeling better prepared for the journey to adoption.

Wolverhampton continued to utilise an Independent Agency Social Work Assessment Consultancy (SWACS) to complete Stage two Prospective Adopter Reports (PAR's). The adopters are also allocated a Wolverhampton Supervising Social Worker who visits them three times during the assessment phase and attends adoption panel. The PAR reports remain of a consistently high quality, timely and were commented on by OFSTED; 'PAR's that were seen by inspectors were of a consistently high quality, however the panel process acknowledged variability which has resulted in taking action to strengthen quality assurance processes' (OFSTED 2017).

During 2016-2017 55 initial assessments were undertaken.

There have been 28 approvals of prospective adopters during 2016-2017. This represents an increase and surpasses the sufficiency strategy target for the year set at 25 approvals.

There were twenty families waiting to be linked as at 31 March 2017:

One approval was an inter country adoption.

Three adopters were on hold for a variety of reasons.

Three adopters with three foster children placed are waiting for placement orders.

Former foster carers adopting a sibling group of two and another child were exploring an extension so the link was placed on hold.

One set of adopters who were linked with an external local authority for a sibling group of two.

Three adopters with a preference for a girl 0-2.

Two adopters to be linked at April Adoption Panel.

One adopter to be linked at May Adoption Panel.

One placement with a sibling group placed under Placement with Parent regulations.

Four mainstream adopters approved not yet linked.

Early Permanency Placements were an initiative subject to the Children and Families Act (2014). Wolverhampton has made four early permanence placements via Foster for Adoption (FFA)/ Concurrency placements during April 2016 to March 2017. Two children have been adopted by their dual approved carers, a third is awaiting a celebration hearing date and one child was rehabilitated home to parents.

The rehabilitation home resulted in a complaint. A root and branch investigation was undertaken followed by the development of an action plan which identifies a number of remedial actions including; Early Permanence Placements (EPP) training to be delivered across the CYP services. Additionally EPP training to be delivered to Prospective Adopters who consider the option and Prospective Adopter Reports

identify whether Prospective Adopters are to be dually approved for Concurrency or FFA.

The Government is keen for adoption to develop an adopter led approach where adopters can take part in considering links; Adopter's profiles are placed on the ABC&AF work share system upon approval if no link has been identified. Adopters are encouraged to register on Adoption Link (Link Maker) so they can consider children profiled. It is a statutory responsibility that when Adopters have been waited 90 days they will be featured on the Adoption Register; Adoption Match. In 2016-2017 five sets of adopters were placed on the Adoption Match register.

Wolverhampton deregistered one set of adopters that had been approved who were unsuccessful in linking due in part to the adopters living in Wolverhampton.

Family Finding

Early Permanency planning is embedded and provides oversight and scrutiny of permanence options for children. There are a range of activities that support the policy; the Senior Social Work Manager for Adoption attends a weekly admission to care panel, this enables cases to be tracked and allocated as 'early alerts'. This is followed by Care Planning Tracking Meetings that monitor activity and Family Finders regularly attend permanency planning meetings that are coordinated with cases where there is a possibility of a care plan of adoption. Family Finding Meetings on a monthly basis enable cases to be discussed and early in house matches proposed.

There is a drive to eliminate delay in the family courts and to conclude care cases within 26 weeks, Wolverhampton is demonstrating improvement and have concluded cases on average at 26.7 weeks compared with a national average of 28.1 Weeks.

The Adoption and Fostering service trialled a system of permanency clinics on a monthly basis where children's social workers could book a slot to discuss the available permanency options which also included connected persons /special guardianship order carers. The clinics were not well attended so they have been abandoned in favour of visiting CIN/CP units to discuss permanency options and panel requirements.

Wolverhampton linked 45 children for adoption during 2016-2017:

Linked with in house adopters	23
Linked with ABC&AF adopters	6
Linked via Link Maker	16
BAME	14
Single children	29
Sibling groups of two	8
Children open to Disability team	2
Aged over 5	10
0-2	17
Female	10
Male	35

Wolverhampton continues to pursue adoption for what would be considered harder to place children. Continuing to secure appropriate adoptive placements may take longer given the ages and circumstances of many of the children. Ofsted judged that 'Wolverhampton achieves permanence through adoption for more 'harder to place' children than similar local authorities' (OFSTED 2017).

A Family Support Worker (FSW) assists in progressing family finding actions taking photographs, filming DVD's and completing a child's profile. Where we are unable to match children with Wolverhampton or ABC&AF adopters the FSW will refer the children to Adoption Match (Adoption Register) and Adoption Link (Link Maker) web based family finding services that approved adopters can view once a Placement Order is granted.

We continue to utilise five free places in Children Who Wait magazine publicised by Adoption UK for hard to place children, however this medium has not yielded any links.

Wolverhampton Adoption Team attended four Coram BAAF exchange events in London, Leeds, Manchester and Walsall. We feature the profiles of children who have been waiting for a lengthy period or who are likely to prove more difficult to match.

Wolverhampton attended three ABC&AF Exchange events held in Birmingham where a sibling group were discussed and subsequently linked post March 2017.

During 2016-2017 Wolverhampton attended two activity days held across the region where we took six children, while there was interest, no links progressed following sharing of information in the form of Child Permanence Reports (CPR's) and PAR's.

A new family finding activity has been developed; 'blind viewings' where adopters get the chance to observe children at play. An older child was observed and the adopters decided not to proceed following a Child Appreciation Day (CAD). A sibling group of two were observed and have been successfully linked and placed in their adoptive family.

The partnership with ABC&AF consortium enables children to be placed locally without the risk of being placed in the local authority in which they were born. There are significant advantages for children and families as adoption support can be delivered locally. We placed six children with ABC&AF adopters.

Prior to a family being identified, Family Support Workers (FSW's) begin 'moving on work' with older children who have a plan of adoption. The work is child centred and individualised. The work along with Life Story Books was judged by OFSTED as being; 'sensitive, purposeful and child centred' OFSTED 2017. During 2016-2017 two FSW's completed moving on work with seven single children and five sibling groups.

Adoption Support consultations continue to be undertaken with prospective adopters with harder to place children. This work is preventative in nature as it serves to support new adoptive placements by meeting with adopters prior and during introductions and following placement. The outcome of the support is that adopters feel more confident, have a greater understanding of therapeutic parenting and feel

supported so are willing to apply for the adoption order sooner. During 2016-2017 Adoption Support social workers' worked with adopters with nine single children and four sibling groups.

The Government made funds available that would allow local authorities to claim an interagency fee for hard to place children whose plan is for adoption. This ceased in October 2016. During 2016-2017 Wolverhampton received ££458,000.

There have been three adoption disruptions pre adoption order in 2016-2017 involving a sibling group of two children who were aged five and six years old and a single female child aged three years old.

In 2014 Julia Selwyn undertook research called Beyond the Adoption Order and identified factors that are associated with disruptions. These include child related factors such as older age at placement and behaviour difficulties, birth family factors such as child maltreatment and domestic violence, and system related factors such as delay and lack of support to adoptive families. All of the above were features of the sibling group's background and experience. Although extensive support was provided the adoptive parents were unable to maintain the placement and the children were subsequently returned to local authority care and placed with foster carers. Subsequent care planning has ratified a plan of long term fostering for the children.

The single female child was placed with City of Wolverhampton adopters and they sought to end the placement in the first week, she settled remarkably well with a newly recruited foster carer. The child's social worker has provided therapeutic support and we have recommenced family finding.

Disruption meetings have been held in respect of both disruptions and an action plan devised which includes; ensuring the Child Permanence Report is fully updated prior to case responsibility transferring to the LAC Adoption SW team; minutes of CAD's to accurately reflect the discussions and if an identified "match" is made shortly after the transfer of case responsibility to the LAC Adoption SW Team the previous SW who has updated the CPR should be involved in the visit to prospective adopters as he/she is the person who knows the child. The disruption minutes and action plan will be shared with the adoption panel to benefit practice.

Adoption Order

Forty-six Adoption Orders have been granted during this reporting period, this is a decrease on the previous year. The delay is in part due to an increased number of birth parents contesting the Adoption Order which results in extending court timescales causing a number of Adoption Orders to be granted post March 2017.

Single children	24
Sibling groups of two	8
sibling groups of three	2
Children open to Disability team	2
BAME	4
Aged over 5	13
Female	19
Male	27

OFSTED recommended that we ensure that once children are placed for adoption, there is no unnecessary delay in applying for the adoption order. We have had historical cases where extensive adoption support was required due to children's challenging behaviour in adoption placement. This caused adopters delaying applying for the adoption order and it resulted in three children waiting three years to secure permanence via an Adoption Order.

We have found that where harder to place children are placed with adoption support provision identified early on in the placement, adopters have lodged their application in a timely manner. Wolverhampton adoption team provides a preventative adoptive support service pre-order by way of consultations for children deemed harder to place; we have evidence that adopters feel supported, confident and contained and willing to lodge their adoption application despite experiencing challenging behaviour or disturbance following transition.

Additional Functions of the Adoption Team

In addition to the functions outlined above, the Adoption Team continue to offer services;

- Support for birth family members - pre-adoption.
- Notified adoption service, for e.g. step parents.
- Inter-country adoption service.
- Voluntary relinquishments.

Adoption scorecard

Adoption Scorecards have been published by the Department for Education on an annual basis since 2012. They measure Local Authorities performance against two key indicators.

A1 indicator measures the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family for children who have been adopted.

A2 indicator measures the average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.

In 2014 a new indicator was introduced; A10. This measures the average time between a child entering care and being placed with their prospective adopters adjusted for foster carer adoptions (where times for children who are adopted by their foster carers are stopped at the date children were placed with their foster carers).

Despite a significant improvement in performance year on year, for 2013-2016 Wolverhampton was rated 'double red' for A1 and A2 indicator.

A1 Indicator – 672 days (decrease of 62 days from 2012-2015) against a target of 426 days.

A2 indicator – 242 days (decrease of 21 days from 2012-2015) against a target of 121 days.

Average days for the A2 indicator have decreased although not at the same rate as the A1 indicator.

	2011/14	Target	% of Target	2012/15	Target	% of Target	2013/16	Target	% of Target
A1	873	547	159.60%	734	487	150.72%	672	428	156.78%
A2	294	152	193.42%	263	121	217.36%	242	121	208.26%

There were 135 adoptions in 2012-2015 compared to 163 in 2013-2016. This is another large increase that shows that whilst the time taken for a child to be adopted decreases the number of children being adopted have increased.

In Wolverhampton 2013-2016 45 or 16% of BAME children leaving care were adopted compared to an England average of just 9%.

Wolverhampton continues to pursue adoption for children aged five years and older. In 2013-2016 35 or (8%) were adopted compared to an England average of 5%.

The City of Wolverhampton Adoption Team has always been ambitious about adoption, the use of a three year average for the scorecard indicator presents a challenge for the authority, and Wolverhampton constantly balances the need for swift placement with not giving up on finding families for older children and children with complex needs. There are occasions where timescales have been sacrificed in the interest of placing older children, sibling groups and children with complex needs. OFSTED judged; although the average length of time taken between children becoming looked after and moving into their adoptive families is above the national average, there is an improving picture (OFSTED 2017).

Adoption support services

- Research shows that there are factors which influence the success of an adoptive placement;
- Timeliness – the speed with which a child finds their way to their stable and long term family;
- Quality of care – the ability of the carer to adequately meet the needs of the child; and stability – whether the placement endures over the long term.

Wolverhampton Adoption Team recognises that adopted children and their families need to be able to access appropriate and sensitive adoption support at any time in their lives. OFSTED inspectors highlighted that adopters valued the support and responsiveness of the adoption team (OFSTED 2017).

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was established by the Government in May 2015 as they became aware that access to therapeutic support following adoption was required. Funding has been confirmed until 2020.

Wolverhampton has undertaken 34 Assessment of Need assessments and applied for 30 therapeutic packages. Services have included Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Assessments, Circle of Security therapeutic parenting course;

therapeutic life story work and psychotherapy. Three monthly reviews are undertaken to identify family satisfaction and clinical outcomes. Adoption support social workers supported in excess of 60 children during 2016-2017 and three birth children. OFSTED commented that children and families receive good post adoption support (OFSTED 2017).

The Adoption Team commissioned a therapeutic parenting programme based on the Circle of Security model which ran for eight weeks and was attended by five adoptive parents and was very successful in extending their understanding regarding impact of abuse while developing greater awareness about attachment and barriers to implementing therapeutic parenting. The feedback from adopters was very positive, with one commenting 'it was very helpful, understanding the concept of attachment on the circle and it helped me to think where my child was and where I am on the circle as I parent him'. Wolverhampton runs an adoption support group open to adopters who have accessed the Circle of Security Parenting Programme on a monthly basis where adopters can share highlights and challenges of parenting in a safe reflective environment.

The post adoption contact (PAC) coordinator manages in excess of 400 post adoption contacts which results in over 600 exchange arrangements. Additionally the following activities have taken place over the last year:

- Supporting and advising eighty plus birth parents writing post adoption contact letters.
- Informing five adopters regarding birth family deaths/terminal illness.
- Reinstating ten Post Adoption Contact arrangements that had ceased.
- Liaising with Solicitors for three cases where Post Adoption Contact had ceased.
- Liaising with other Local Authority's (LA's) in respect of six children regarding placement breakdowns.
- Liaising with other LA's with regards to setting up PAC agreements with new siblings.
- Arranging initial direct contact for six children.
- Liaising with adopter and recovery worker for birth parent re: contact issues.
- Tracing birth parents.

Wolverhampton has provided an annual newsletter to adopters outlining training, contact issues and testimonials from adoptive parents outlining accessing adoption support services.

ABC&AF are expected to provide five training sessions annually; Wolverhampton delivered a 'Telling' Training session to consortium members during 2016-2017, this training is always popular and adopters benefit from understanding the importance of discussing adoption, barriers to telling and practical suggestions to ensure it is on-going.

Commissioned Adoption Support Services

Additional adoption support services are commissioned from Adoption UK and After Adoption. Adoption UK run local support groups on a bi-monthly basis, the meetings

schedule speakers and presentations and a time to socialise. Adopters are also able to access Adoption UK training workshops and a lending library.

After Adoption continue to provide services on behalf of Wolverhampton. The organisation supports intermediary services, counselling, and helping adopted adults to trace their birth family. Additionally they also offer independent counselling to all birth parents where the plan is adoption for their child. After Adoption provided services to adopted persons, adopters, birth parents and relatives totalling fifty-eight in the period 2016-2017.

Service User Type	Allocations
Adopted person	16
Adopter	2
Adoptive family <18	1
Birth father (historical intermediary service)	1
Birth mother (historical intermediary service)	4
Birth siblings historical intermediary service	5
Current birth father	5
current birth mother	20
Birth relative (current)	2
Birth relative (historic)	1
birth parents referred together	1
total	58

After Adoption continue to run 'Breaking the Cycle' (BtC). BtC provides intensive one-to-one and group support to birth mothers in the Black Country (Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall, and Dudley) who have lost at least one child to adoption. Birth mothers receive an initial assessment. Following this there are six group work sessions focusing on change, concentrating on building self-esteem whilst supporting positive life choices to break repetitive cycles. For women who want to have future children there are further sessions on nurturing parenting. At the end of the programme birth mothers can continue to attend support groups with other women who have completed the programme. Five birth mothers have attended BtC; one accessed additional counselling, one has been supported to remain in employment, all five birth parents made significant progress and have not become pregnant or had further children removed.

In partnership with ABC 'After Adoption' is commissioned to deliver 'Safebase' twice per year within the Black Country. Two families attended locally and a third one in Luton. A further two families were referred and accessed a MIMS assessment but failed to attend the programme.

Adoption and Adoption & Permanency Panel

The Wolverhampton Adoption and the Adoption & Permanence Panel considers approvals of prospective adopters, Family and Friends carers and match /link of adoptive and long term fostering placements. This is working within the terms of Wolverhampton Permanence Policy. It will also consider Family and Friends fostering arrangements.

The Adoption & Permanence Panel complies with 2002 Childrens Act, Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013; Fostering Regulations 2011; Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England)(Miscellaneous) regulations 2013 and guidance relevant to both adoption and fostering. Panel members from the Central list with both adoption and fostering experience make up the Permanence Panel.

There has been a 50% increase in the use of the Adoption and Permanency Panel during this financial year, with two panels a month there is increased capacity and availability of slots for matches and approvals to ensure we have positive outcomes for the LAC population.

Panel membership

The Panel continues to function well supported by its committed members and support staff. We currently have eighteen panel members on the central list who can sit on both the Adoption and the Fostering panels. We have two panel Chairs and four Vice Chairs. There is a further need to increase the number of men on the panel and other people who are representative of the community we serve. We have one person who was a Looked After Child, and a newly appointed Family and Friends foster carer. On every panel, there should be a social worker representative, and this could be an independent social worker or social workers from within the agency. During this year, we have lost a few long standing social workers and so have struggled on occasions to be quorate for panel business. There is a concerted effort to recruit more social workers from within the agency to support the panels and to widen their knowledge base.

Panel Business

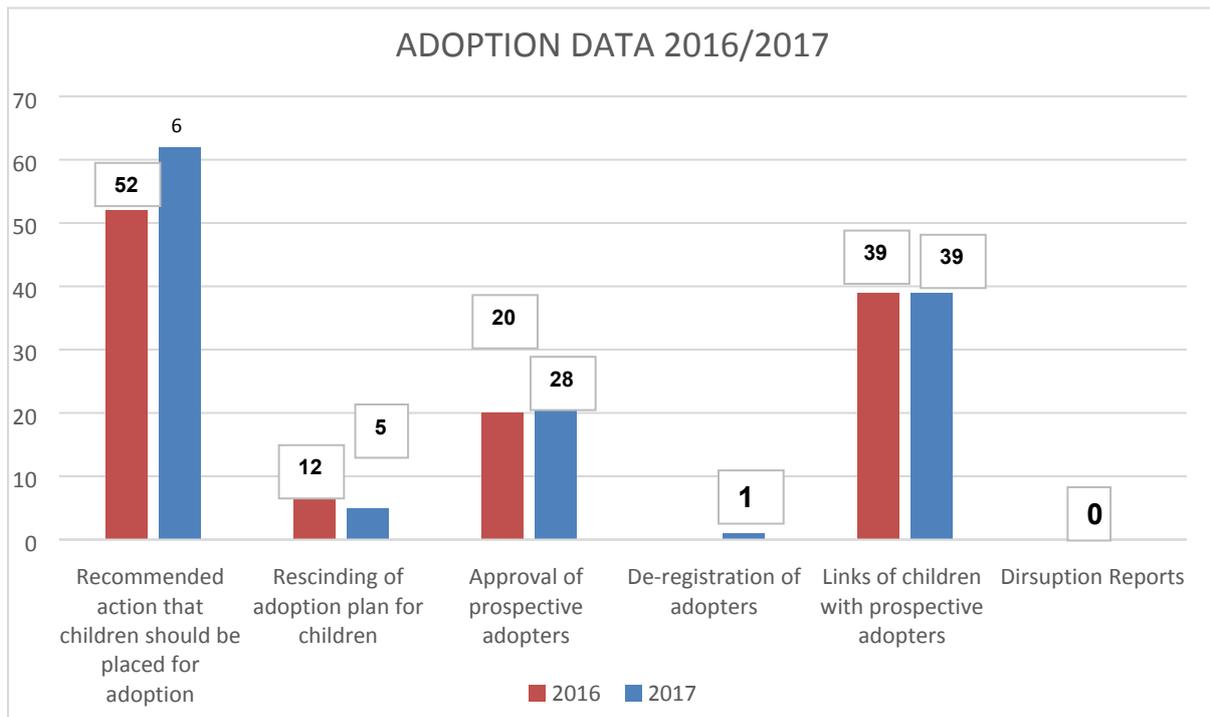
Panel met on twenty-nine occasions during 2016-2017, with at least three opportunities a month for adoption matters to be heard. There is great flexibility within the panel system to enable emergency matters to be heard, as and when directed by the courts.

The panels no longer use paper documents and have been paperless for the past two years. Panel members have adjusted to the electronic system with ease, despite the initial concerns from individual members. The site used to store the documents is secure and accessible by only those invited to view the site. It is a progressive site that gives panel members access to the learning hub, and other links of relevance to adoption and fostering matters outside the department. The site is to be upgraded in July 2017.

We have been creative in our use of technology and have used Skype to enable matters to be heard when either social workers or adopters have not been able to

attend adoption panel This has prevented further delay for the child in terms of matching, and for the adopters.

Panel members had their first Away Day in January 2017. This was very well received as it gave panel members the opportunity to meet colleagues and look at some aspects of the policies and procedures that affect their work. This is part of the annual training that all panel members must undertake, and will be an on-going feature for the panels going forward.



Adopter approval

There have been twenty-eight approvals of prospective adopters in this reporting period. This is more than the previous year. Of these one family was approved as concurrent carers.

There are currently 20 families waiting to be matched. Of those families four are foster carers wishing to adopt a child in their care.

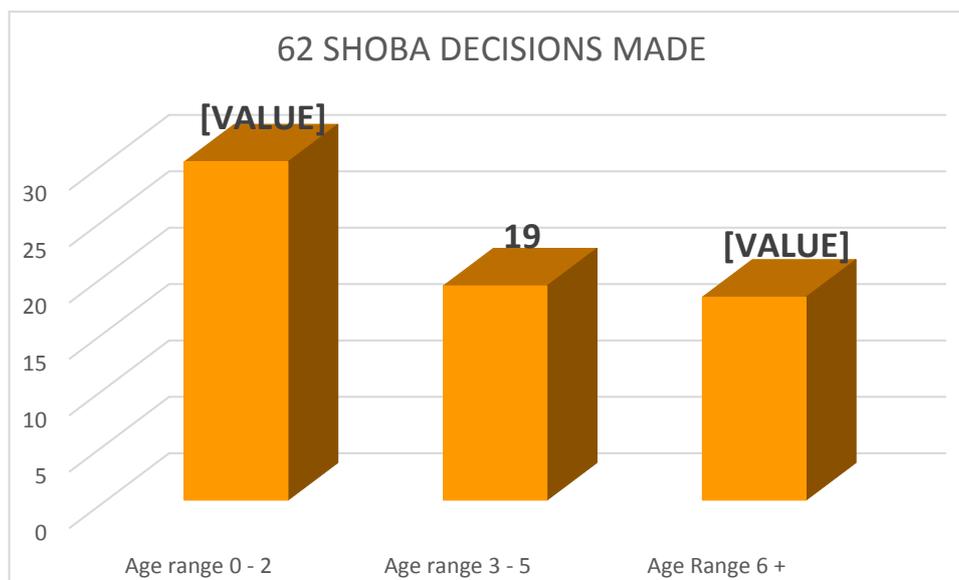
There are Two Asian and one dual heritage Asian families currently waiting. This year three children of Asian or Asian dual heritage background have become subject to a plan of adoption in Wolverhampton. This compares to no children last year and up to eight in the previous years. Thus, these families have waited longer than anticipated for a link. Family finding has been active on their behalf and they have been advised to attend national exchange days. They have also been featured on the Adoption Register and Adoption Links.

Should Be Placed for Adoption decisions

Children requiring a “Should Be Placed for Adoption Decision” continue to make a steady presence in the adoption arena. The Agency Decision Maker sits twice a month but is also able make emergency decisions as necessary and when required.

There has been a slight increase the number of children for whom Wolverhampton is pursuing a plan of adoption. The highest percentage of children who should be placed for adoption is in the age 0-2 age range, which accounts for 45% as depicted in the table below.

This reporting period has also seen an increase in older children with a plan of adoption from four children in 2015-16 to eighteen. Most of these children are placed in foster placements and have been with the same carers for some time. The ‘carer’ adoption according to research is on the increase and has many benefits for the children. Berry and Barth’s (1990) research sees that children are less likely to experience disruption than children in non-foster parent adoption. The children also remain in an environment within and out of the home that is familiar to them to name but a few. There is also the fact that children in this placement should have a shorter time to permanency than other types of adoption.



Breakdown of should Be Placed for Adoption Decisions:

White British	46
Black British	6
Asian/White	4
Mixed BC/WE	7
White European	1
Asian	3

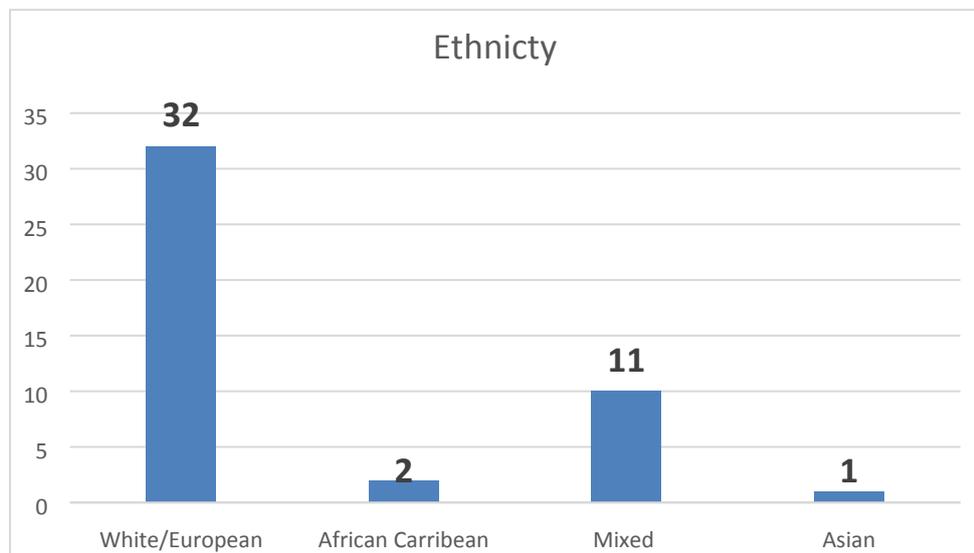
There has also been an increase in the number of children with disabilities who have a plan of adoption. Of the sixty-seven children within this cohort three children who should be placed for adoption were referred from the Children with Disabilities Team.

Rescinds

There has been a significant decrease in the number of children who have had their plans for adoption rescinded with five rescinded plans of adoption. For one group of children, a sibling group of four their plan is long term fostering which will now mean that the sibling group will not be separated. The other rescinded plan was for a child with complex health needs. For all children who had become subject to placement order significant family finding had taken place prior to considering a change of plan. For most children, a change of plan to permanent long term fostering enabled children to be permanently fostered with their current carers.

Matches of children with prospective adopters

During this reporting period April 2016 to March 2017, forty-five children were matched with prospective adopters compared with sixty seven in the preceding year.



14 of the 45 children were of BAME (black and minority ethnic) background. This equates to 30% of children matched. Of these children 4% were Black and one was Asian.

Panel aims for the forthcoming year:

- To continue to provide an effective service to the looked after population of Wolverhampton.
- To work in partnership with other members of the RAA to affect the programme of assimilation/integration with our partners at Heart of England.
- To increase the number of social workers who to sit on the panel.

Complaints/compliments

Wolverhampton Adoption Team received eight complaints. Two complaints related to one case that has received multiple complaints following the granting of a placement order. One complaint was related to contact, others related to life story work and one followed a disruption. There have been no complaints received by Panel during this period.

Wolverhampton Adoption Team received nineteen compliments during 2016-2017. Adopters complimented family finders, children LAC adoption social workers, supervising social workers and adoption support social workers, they commented on the support, professionalism and dedication of workers.

Strategic issues and future service development

- Wolverhampton remains committed to adoption as a positive permanence choice for children who cannot be cared for by their birth relatives. The service welcomes the Government's challenge around timeliness for children who have a plan of adoption, it is known that timeliness; the speed with which a child finds their way to their stable and long term family is an indicator for positive outcomes for children who are placed for adoption.
- Wolverhampton Adoption Team's objective will be to secure children's permanence in a timely manner once children are placed in adoptive placements.
- Annex A's will be completed by ten weeks of placement when adopters can lodge their adoption order application and ten days following the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in fostering families in order to secure timely permanency.
- Increase the recruitment of adopters who can consider offering Early Permanence Placements to children either through concurrency or foster to adopt.
- Improve recruitment of adopters willing to adopt children deemed harder to place; including older children, children with disabilities and Black and minority ethnic children and boys.
- Introduction of chemistry visits prior to linking.
- As part of the workforce strategy the adoption service will ensure that staff has access to training and development to ensure that the government Vision for Adoption is fully implemented.
- Wolverhampton will continue to lead the development of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and continue to work with partner agencies in respect of developing the operating model and service delivery.

Regionalising the service is consistent with the Government agenda and will widen the pool of adopters for Wolverhampton's looked after children and will enable us to provide a regional adoption support service which will continue to be accessible and responsive to the needs of adopters.

Furthermore the Government aspires to develop a system with a spirit of innovation and excellence at its heart; we have an opportunity to co design, streamline and enhance adoption services across the region.

Dawn Deans

Senior Social Work Manager for Wolverhampton Adoption Service.

July 2017

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Corporate Parenting Board

14 September 2017

Report title	Performance Monitoring Information
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People
Wards affected	All
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Children and Young People
Originating service	Communications, Insight and Performance Team
Accountable employee(s)	Helena Kucharczyk Insight and Performance Manager Tel 01902 555440 Email Helena.Kucharczyk@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Corporate Parenting Board 14 September 2017

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the report and request any additional indicators or data items that they would like to see reported in future performance updates.

Recommendations for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note:

1. The most recent performance relating to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the latest performance relating to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Corporate Parenting Board has regularly received a performance report. The report in its current format has been presented to the Board since January 2015, with some additions and enhancements made to the report over time at the request of the Board.

3.0 Update

3.1 All current indicators in the report have been updated with data as at July 2017. Please note that this data is provisional and may not directly reflect the end of year out-turn which will not be confirmed until statutory returns are submitted at the end of July.

3.2 The nationally published results for Looked After Children at key stage 2 and key stage 4 have been included on page eight.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
[NM/06092017/A]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
[TS/05092017/Y]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The report contains some demographic data, however, there are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no direct corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 There are no background papers related to this report.

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Key Points to Note

Demographics

A considerably lower proportion of LAC are from BME backgrounds compared to the Wolverhampton CYP population.

The number of Looked After Children remains fairly static after decreases through early 2016. Further reduction is required to bring Wolverhampton in line with our comparators.

Placements

In-house Foster Carers trend data shows that the percentage of children placed with in-house foster carers has fallen slightly over the past two months.

The proportion of LAC placed more than 20 miles from home remained at 14%.

The indicators that look at placement stability have remained strong in the month against a backdrop of static LAC numbers and increased adoptions. Stability generally continues to show positive results and demonstrates that Looked After Children in Wolverhampton benefit from stable placements.

Routes into Care and Ofsted Ratings

This data shows which proportion of LAC were known to children's services in the 30 days prior to becoming looked after and the proportion of LAC that are asylum seekers and UASC (unaccompanied asylum seekers). Please note that children are classed as CiN if they are in the process of being assessed and may not have been CiN for very long or the subject of formal CiN plans. On-going work is being undertaken to identify how many children were also known to Early Help services and it is anticipated that this will be available by the end of the year.

The report now also shows the number of children placed in children's homes and the Ofsted ratings of those homes - of the 36 children currently placed in children's homes, 29 (80%) are in homes that are rated good or outstanding.

Assessments and Reviews

Assessments of Looked After Children in Wolverhampton remain up to date and performance remained strong at 99% . Reviews completed on time in the year have increased again to 93% in comparison to 82% in 2016-17 year out turn. The percentage of children that participated in their reviews has increased after lower rates of performance in early 2017/18 and stands at 91%.

Education

The 2016 KS2 and KS4 results show that Wolverhampton LAC performed better than LAC nationally, regionally and within statistical neighbours, however, there remains a significant gap between the performance of LAC and all Wolverhampton children.

Please note that small numbers can make these measurements volatile. For further information about the education attainment of LAC in Wolverhampton please refer to the Virtual School Head teacher annual report.

Health

The percentage of children with up to date dental checks increased in the month to 90% in the month however is lower compared to 91% at year out-turn 2016/17. The result remains significantly higher than the 60% of children in the general Wolverhampton population that have seen a dentist in the past 2 years which is falling.

The percentage of health checks that are up to date has increased in the month to 90% compared to 82% at year out-turn 2016/17. Most children who do not have up to date health checks are placed outside of the city.

Leaving Care

Adoption

Adoption timeliness in 2016-17 continue to perform above national targets. There were been 13 adoptions in 2017/18 with 62% within A1 indicator timescales. Average timescales are higher than expected due to one long term adoptions of over 1500 days on the A1 indicator.

Care Leavers

The percentage of Care Leavers in Employment Education and Training cohort has changed to include all children and young adults who turn 17 to 21 in the year. At the end of July 61% of 17-21 year olds were in Education, Employment or Training. NALM (not available for the labour market) data has now been included and shows that out of 246 care leavers in the cohort, 79% of care leavers are available for work with 17% (44 young people) not available due to pregnancy or young motherhood, illness or disability or because they are in custody.

Work continues in this area to ensure that education, employment and training information is recorded and updated.

The proportion of care leavers currently deemed to be in suitable accommodation is also included and shows that 91% of the cohort are currently in suitable accommodation.

Demographics



58167 children aged 0-17 live in Wolverhampton
22.9% of the total population

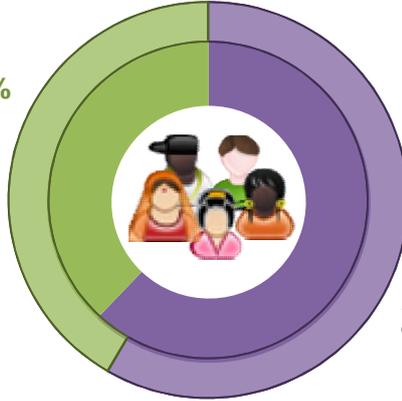
ONS 2014 mid-year estimate

48.8% of the CYP population and 41.3% of LAC are female



51.2% of the CYP population and 58.7% of LAC are male

41.6% of the CYP population and 37.9% of LAC are BME

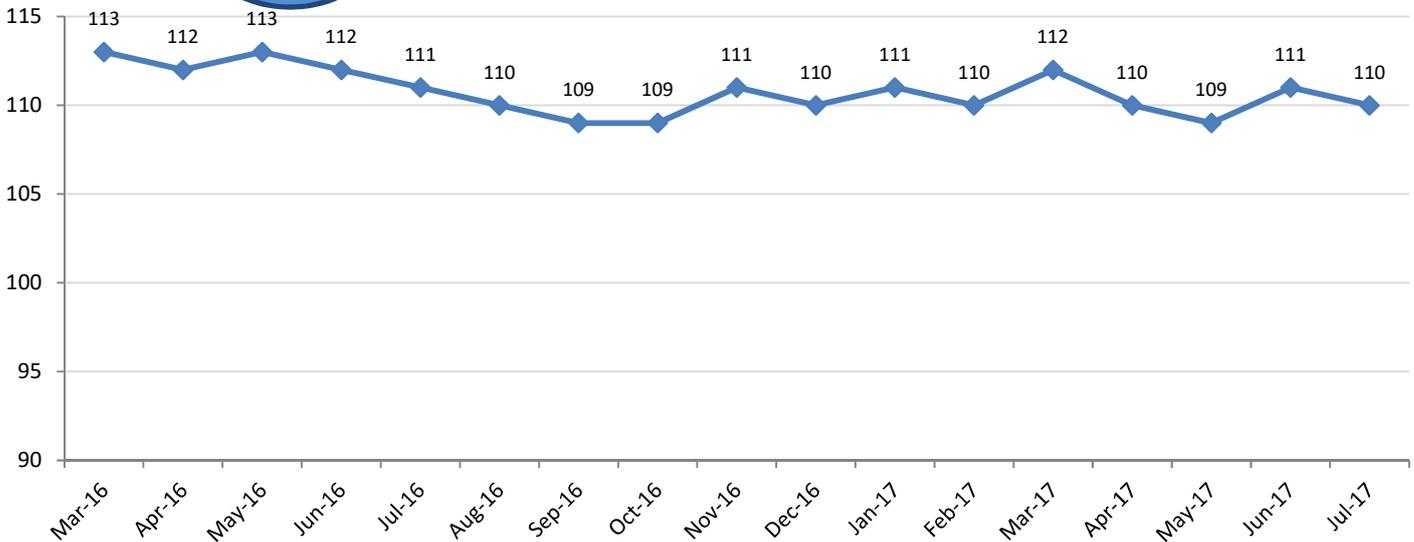
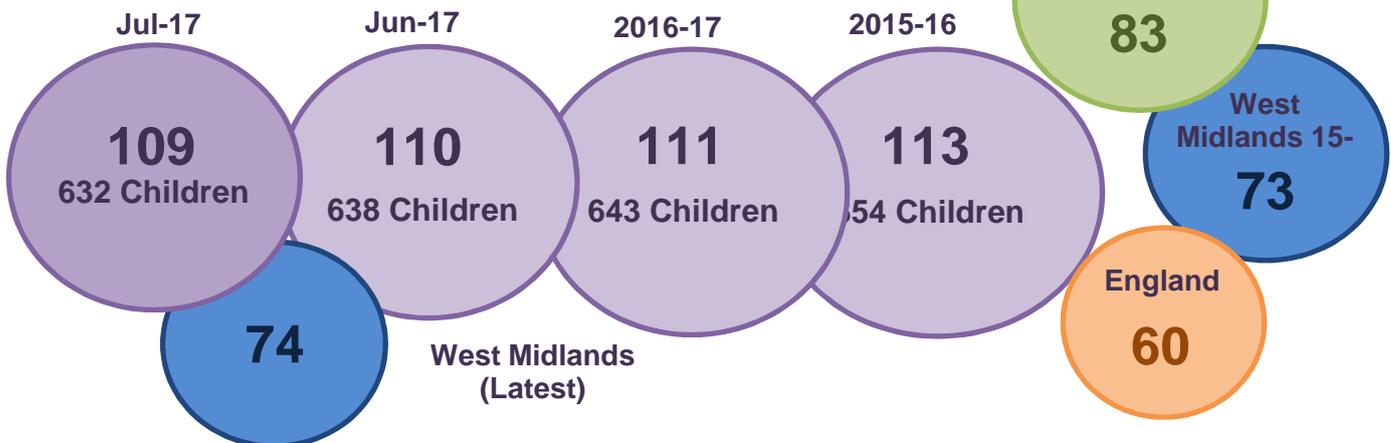


58.4% of the CYP population and 62.1% of LAC are white

Inner circle represents the LAC population, the outer circle is the CYP population

Looked After Children Population

Rate of LAC per 10,000 population aged 0-17



Placements

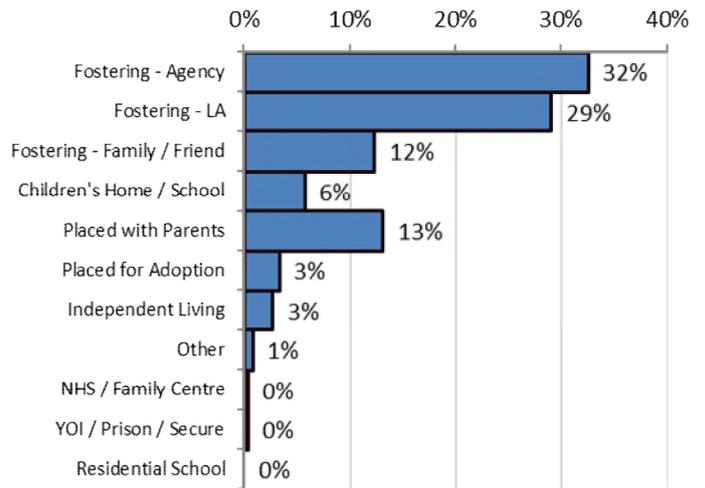


% LAC Placed 20 miles + from home

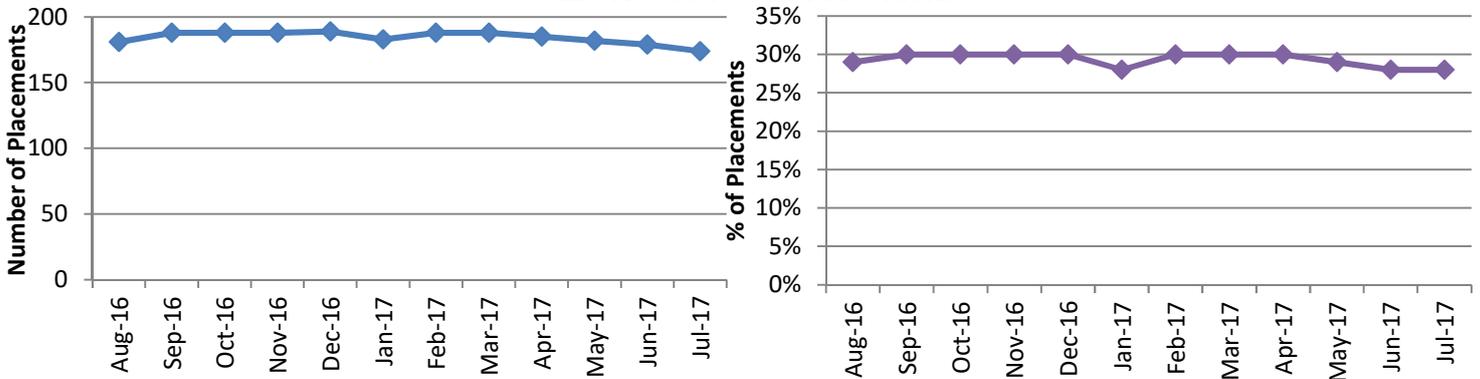


2016-17 Out-turn = 14%
2015-16 Out-turn = 16%
2014-15 Out-turn = 16%

LAC Placements



In - House Foster Placements

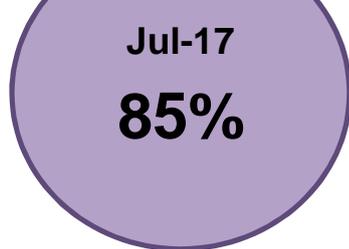


The proportion of LAC Placed with in-house foster carers has reduced in the past two months and is now at 28% The gap has narrowed between the proportion of internal and agency foster placements.

Placement Stability

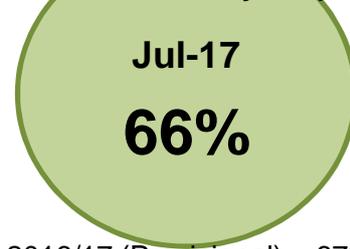


LAC with fewer than 3 placements in the last 12 months



2016-17 (Provisional) = 86%
2015-16 = 85% 2014-15 Out-turn = 88%

% of children in same placement for 2 years or more or placed for adoption (when looked after for more than 2.5 years)



2016/17 (Provisional) = 67%
2015/16 = 67% 2014/15
Comparator = 67% 2014/15
England = 67%

Performance shows that Looked After Children in Wolverhampton benefit from largely stable packages and percentages of stable relationships has remained fairly static in the year

Routes into Care and Ofsted Ratings



% of LAC know to LA 30 days prior to becoming LAC

88%

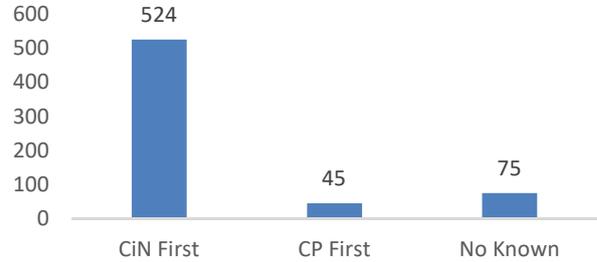
% of LAC who are Asylum Seekers

1.7%

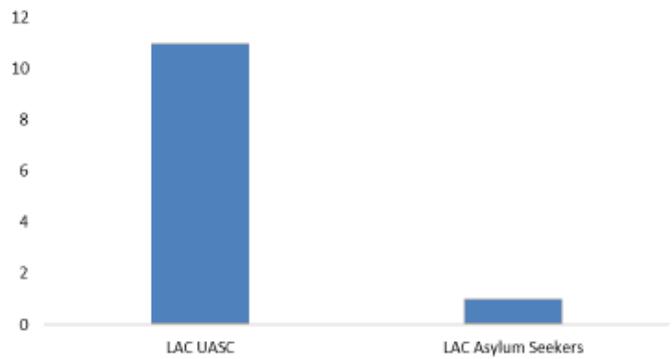
% of LAC in Good or Outstanding Children's Homes

80%

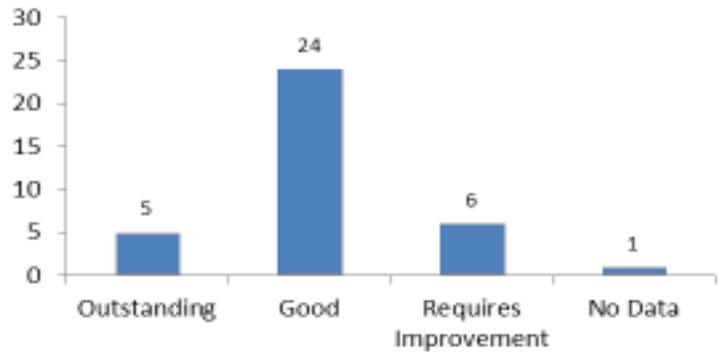
Knowledge of Child Pre LAC (30 Days)



How many LAC are Asylum Seekers



Number of Children in Residential Care Homes by OFSTED Rating



Assessments & Reviews

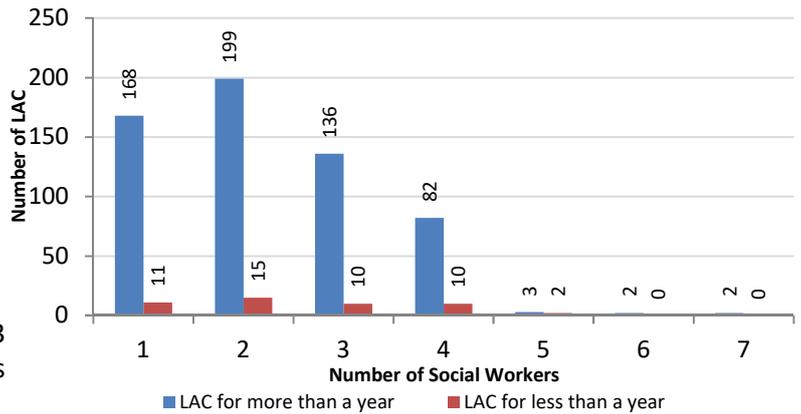


Average caseload of LAC children for LAC social workers

20

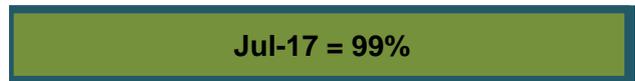
The most cases assigned to a social worker is 24. 13 social workers hold over 20 cases. The fewest cases allocate to a worker is 1.

Number of Social Workers LAC have had in the past 12 months



Looked After Children with up to date assessments

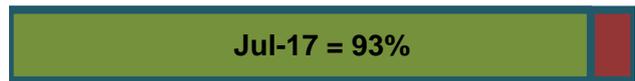
An up to date assessments is one that has been authorised within the last six months.



2016-17 Out-turn = 98%
2015-16 Out-turn = 97%

Looked After Children whose reviews have been completed on time

First Review is within 20 working days. Second review within three months. Third and subsequent reviews every six months



2016-17 Out-turn = 82%
2015-16 Out-turn = 90%

99% of LAC assessments are currently up to date, compared with 98% at the end of March 2017

Since 1 April 2017, 457 reviews have been completed with 36 not completed within timescales.

The proportion of LAC reviews where the child was present or contributed by other means since 1 April 2017

91%

Performance in LAC participation in reviews since year end has increased to 91%

Jul-17

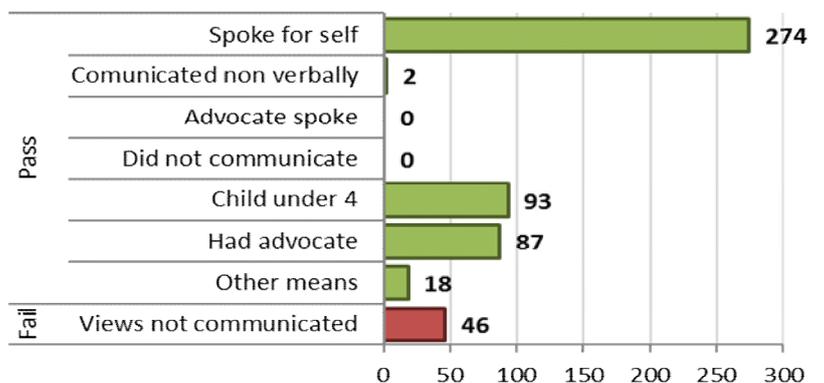
90%

2016-17 Out-turn

93%

2015-16 Out-turn

Full Answers for Participation



Education



KS2 Expected Standard	Maths	Reading	Writing	Reading, Writing and Maths	Key Stage 4	GCSE A* - C in Eng & Maths	Attainment 8	Progress 8
Wolverhampton LAC 2016	51%	60%	58%	37%		20.0%	24.1	-1.16
Wolverhampton 2016	70%	65%	75%	53%		58.8%	47.7	-0.13
West Midlands 2016	41%	38%	43%	23%		17.1%	23.4	-1.07
Statistical Neighbours 2016	40%	35%	43%	25%		18.0%	22.2	-1.17
England 2016	41%	41%	46%	25%		17.5%	22.8	-1.14

PLEASE NOTE: Small numbers in the cohort reaching each key stage can cause results to be volatile making comparison difficult.

National results show that looked after children reaching KS2 level 4 in Maths, Reading and Writing in 2016 performed better than regional, statistical neighbour and national results. Performance in GCSEs is also better. However, there remains a significant gap between the performance of all children and LAC.

Detailed analysis of LAC educational performance was presented to the Panel via the Virtual School Head teacher report. Please note that there is some discrepancies when nationally published data is compared with locally held data - it is the national data that is presented here.

The proportion eligible LAC with an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)



95%
2016-17 Out-turn

90%
2015-16 Out-turn

90%
PEPS (Years 1 -11)
- Jul-17

79%
PEPS (Years 12 and 13)
- Jul-17

LAC Absence from School - 2015
(taken from nationally published data)

* Children looked after for 12 months or more

Unauthorised Absence *

1.1%

West Midlands - 0.70%
Statistical Neighbours - 0.91%
England - 1.00%

Overall Absence *

3.8%

West Midlands - 3.70%
Statistical Neighbours - 3.78%
England - 4.0%

LAC Persistent Absence

3.70%

West Midlands - 3.60%
Statistical Neighbours - 4.45%
England - 4.90%

There has been an decrease in the number of PEP's in the month and both indicators still show a strong result.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT: Work is continuing to develop a detailed, local, virtual schools report. As that work progresses, further information will be reported here.

LAC Health



60% of children in the
Wolverhampton Local Authority
Area have seen a dentist in the last
two years

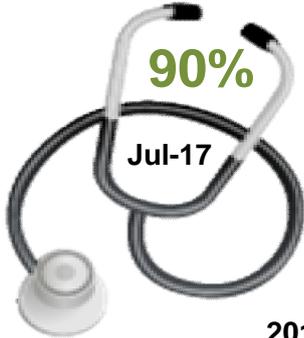
Dental Checks



2016-17 Out-turn = 81%

2015-16 Out-turn = 89%

Health Checks



2016-17 Out-turn = 91%

2015-16 Out-turn = 88%

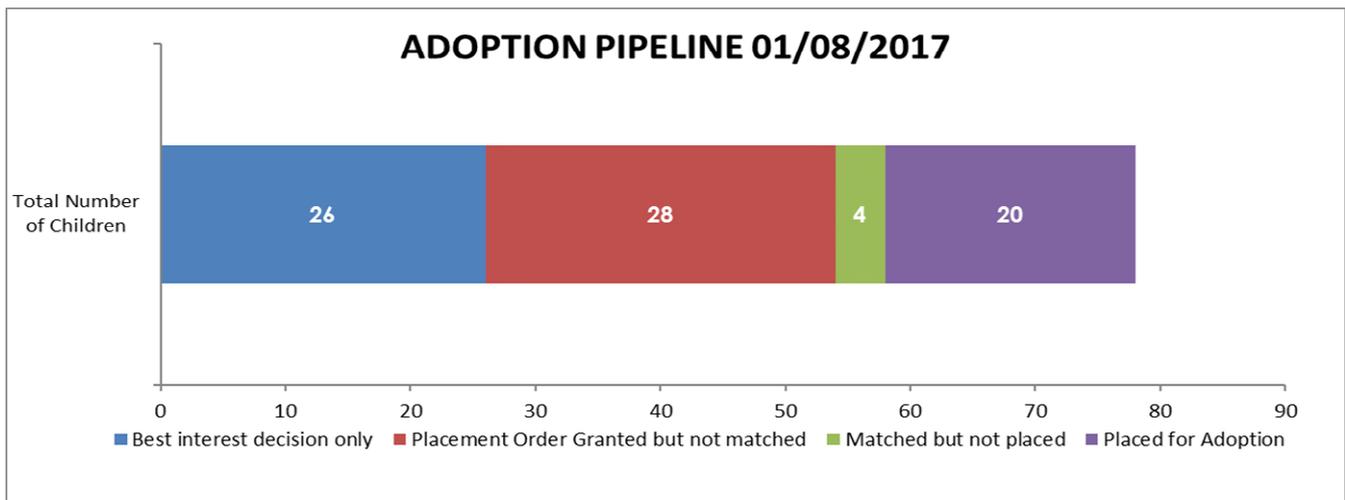
There has again been a increase in
performance since year out turn in
dental checks and results in this area
remain strong as a result of improved
working with the CCG and RWT

Leaving Care



Adoptions

Children Adopted	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	July 2017
	51	61	47	13



Adoption Scorecard Results

The adoption scorecard is calculated using results and performance over a three year period

A1 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family

627 Days

3 Year avg 2014-2017

(734 days 2012-2015)

Target - 428 days

A2 - Average time between receiving court authority to place and finding a match

221 Days

3 year avg 2014-2017

Target - 121 days

A10 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (stopped at point of fostering for foster carers adoptions)

511 Days

3 year avg 2014-2017

(488 days 2012-2015)

Target - 428 days

Single year performance

A1 - 651 days with 64% of children adopted within timescales

A2 - 238 days

A10 - 518 days

Single year performance (2017-18 as at 31 May)

A1 - 561 days with 62% of children adopted within timescales

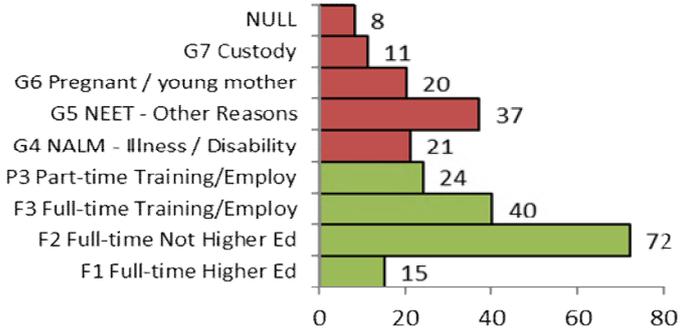
A2 - 160 days

A10 - 440 days

The adoption scorecards for 2013-16 were published in March 2017. Wolverhampton were once again rated 'double red' in the two key indicators, however, performance around adopting hard to place children including those over the age of 5 and from BME backgrounds continues to be better than performance nationally.

Care Leavers

5.4 Context: Number EET Statuses



Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training 2016-17

Wolverhampton - 60%
West Mids (14/15) - 41%
Statistical Neighbours (14/15) - 46%
England (14/15)- 48%

May 2017:
62%

% of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

91%

% of Care Leavers available to work

81% Available
19% NALM

(34 Care Leavers are NALM (not available for the labour market) due to illness / disability, pregnancy or young mothers or being in custody)

The percentage of children and care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) has remained static at 60% compared with year out turn 2015-16

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