

Report title	Adoption Service Interim Report	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds, Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Adoption@Heart	
Accountable employee	Mark Tobin	Head of Service, Adoption@Heart
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Report has been considered by	Children and Young People's Leadership Team	7 January 2021

Recommendation for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Adoption Service Interim Report for Adoption@Heart.

Recommendation for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The progress made by the Regional Adoption Agency.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This interim report fulfils the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report to the “executive side” of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 It is important to note that data and information within this report is accurate as of 30 September 2020.
- 1.3 Section two and three of the report is specific to adoption performance relating to the City of Wolverhampton Council children. Sections four onwards relate to service performance for the partnership as a whole.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Adoption@Heart is a Regional Adoption Agency providing adoption services on behalf of Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils. The service is hosted by Wolverhampton and went live on 1 April 2019. Following a directive from the Department for Education in 2015 all local authorities in England are required to enter into regional arrangements for their adoption services by 2020.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

- 3.1 The report (Appendix 1) provides the detail of performance and the progress the new service has made from 30 September 2019 to 31 March 2020 & 01 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The budget for 2020-2021 is £5,011,257, the agreed contributions from each of the partners are shown below:

Partner Organisation	2020-2021 Budget £
Dudley MBC	1,280,978
City of Wolverhampton Council	1,327,964
Walsall MBC	1,180,299
Sandwell Children’s Trust	1,222,016
Total	5,011,257

- 4.2 Any costs associated with the delivery of the service will be contained within the above allocation. Should additional costs be identified over and above the allocation then discussions will take with partners to agree additional contributions to fund the service.
[JB/08012021/M]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The collaboration agreement which outlines the requirements of all partners was agreed with oversight from the council's legal service, prior to the service becoming operational in April 2019. This remains the underpinning legal agreement. Primary legislation is in place requiring all councils in England to enter into regional arrangements by 2020.
[SB/08012021/V]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications to highlight at this stage.

7.0 Climate Change and Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications in place at this stage.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 Staff in the service are employed by the City of Wolverhampton Council following a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) exercise in April 2019.

9.0 Corporate Landlord implications

- 9.1 The Adoption@Heart service is located at Priory Green Offices, Pendeford. There are no property portfolio implications at this stage as the service will remain at this location for the foreseeable future.

10.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 10.1 The health and wellbeing implications at this stage are coronavirus and staff in the service are currently working from home and continuing to work remotely to stop the spread of the virus. Individual Risk Assessments have been carried out and the service is using the live dedicated coronavirus webpages on City People, to keep up to date with advice and information.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Interim Annual Adoption Report