

**CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL**

**ANALYSIS OF ADOPTION
SCORECARD INFORMATION
2013-2016**

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1. Background

- 1.1. 'Adoption Scorecards' are published by the Department for Education on an annual basis since 2012. They measure Local Authorities performance against two key adoption indicators:
- A1** – Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family for children who have been adopted.
- A2** – Average time between a Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.
- 1.2. There are also a number of contextual indicators including the percentage of children leaving care who are adopted, the percentage of adoptions of children from ethnic minorities and of those children aged 5 or over and the average length of care proceedings.
- 1.3. In 2012-13 a new indicator, A10, was also introduced which is an adjusted indicator of A1. The new indicator looks at the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family where children are adopted by their foster families. The measure is adapted to count from the date of moving in with the adoptive family to the date that fostering placement begins.
- 1.4. The nationally set targets for these indicators is reducing year on year. When the scorecards were introduced in 2012 the target for A1 was set at 639 days (21 months) in 2014 it had reduced to 547 days (18 months) and reduced further to 487 days (16 months) for 2015. This A2 target was originally set at 213 days (7 months), reducing to 182 days (6 months) for 2014 and 141 days (4 months) for 2015. For 2013-16 the target for A1 has once again reduced to 426 days (14 months) for A1 but remains at 141 days (4 months) for A2.
- 1.5. City of Wolverhampton Council was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2017 and received an overall rating of good.

2. Key Headlines from 2013-2016 Adoptions Scorecard

- 2.1. 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 2012-15) against a target of 426 days (246 days over target)
 - **A2 Indicator** – 242 days (decrease of 21 days from 2012-15) against a target of 121 days (121 days over target)
- 2.2. Despite Wolverhampton's results for 2013-16 remaining 'double red' in the two key indicators, performance in other areas remains good and Wolverhampton adoption service continues to make improvements in adoption outcomes for its looked after children.
- 2.3. It should be noted that Wolverhampton courts have a process for the making of adoption orders which is inconsistent with other authorities around the country. In most areas adoption orders are made at the hearing and birth parents are given 21

days to appeal. The celebration hearing does not take place until after the 21 days and at a time convenient to the adopters. In Wolverhampton, the final order is not made until the celebration hearing. This may take place up to two months after the hearing adding two months onto the timescales taken to achieve adoption.

2.4. The following key performance indicators demonstrate this improved performance by the service despite the 'double red' rating.

- Adoptions have increased by almost 20% in 2013-16 to 165 in comparison with 137 in 2012-15. This is also an increase of 56% from 2011-2014 where just 106 adoptions occurred.
- In 2013-16 the timeliness of adopted children who are placed with their adoptive families (Indicator A1) improved substantially from 734 days to 672 days
- In the year 2015-16 62 children were adopted in Wolverhampton, this was an increase of 11 on 2014/15 (51) which itself was a record performance.
- 23% of children who left care in the period 2013-16 were adopted, a slight increase on 2012-15.
- Wolverhampton has continued good performance for A6 Indicator. In 2013-16 16% of black and minority ethnic children leaving care were adopted against the last national average of 9%
- Wolverhampton continues to pursue adoption for what would be regarded as harder to place children including those aged five years or older (Indicator A7). In 2012-15, 8% of children aged over five leaving care were adopted compared the national average of 5% in the same period

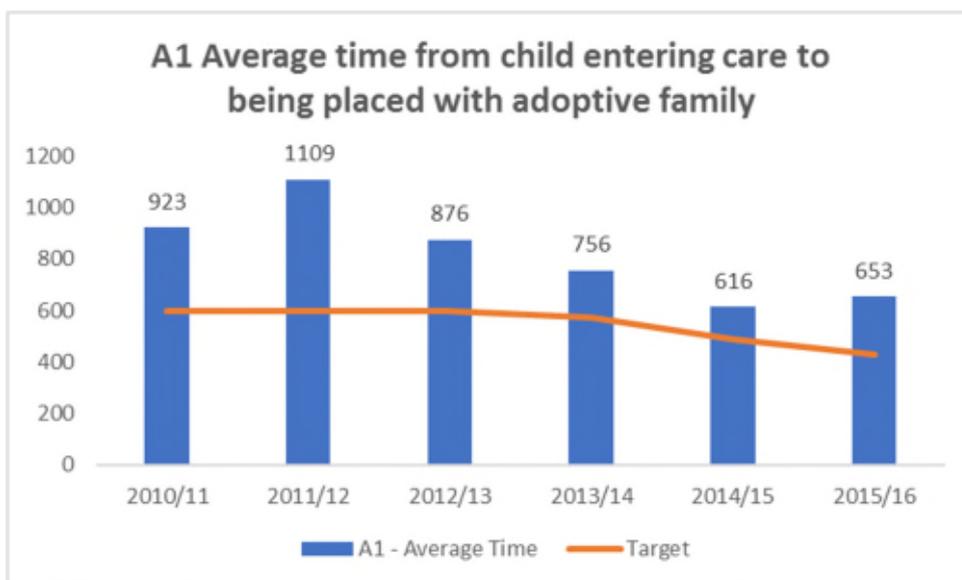
3. Areas for continued development

- 3.1.** To continue to build on improvements in all areas via the monitoring of the adoption improvement plan.
- 3.2.** To continue to improve average times for A1 and A2 indicators
- 3.3.** A small number of cases once children are placed there is a delay in applying for adoption orders. Management will look to improve the legal permanence for children in a timely manner

4. A1 - Average Time from Child Entering Care and Moving in with its Adoptive Family

- 4.1.** The number of children adopted has continued to increase in 2015-16:
 - 62 children were adopted in 2015-16 compared to 51 in 2014-15, 50 in 2013-14, 36 in 2011-12 and 19 in 2010-11.

- 4.2. The national indicator for children to be placed for adoption is within 426 days in the period 2013-16.
- 4.3. The average number of days for the A1 indicator over three years continued to decrease significantly. In 2013-16 the average days decreased to 672 days a decrease of 62 days from 2012-15. Despite this continued improved performance locally, Wolverhampton remains 246 days over the national target for the three-year period 2013-16
- 4.4. However, average timeliness for the single year 2015-16 increased in the year to 652 days from 616 days in 2014-15. This increase is due to several children who had been looked after for some time being placed for adoption. This is a continuation of Wolverhampton’s drive to ensure that most appropriate outcomes are achieved for children regardless of how long they have been in care. Wolverhampton remains committed to supporting foster carers to adopt children who have been in their care for a significant amount of time and where this is in the child’s best interests.
- 4.5. Care plans are consistently reviewed and where appropriate children with plans of long term fostering in stable foster placements have been changed to a plan of adoption.
- 4.6. When the average time between the ‘Best Interest’ date and the date the child was placed with adopted parents is calculated the average time in 2015-16 was just 373 days, demonstrating that when the decision is made to place a child for adoption, they move through the adoption process quickly and within timescales.
- 4.7. This improved performance can be highlighted further when comparing the average time between best interest date and the date the child was placed with their adopted parents in 2015-16 to the previous three years. In 2015-16 the average time was 373 days however in 2013-15 the average time was 570 days.



Children Placed within A1 Indicator Timescale

4.8. In 2015-16 29 out of the 63 adopted children were placed within the target of 426 days (47%)

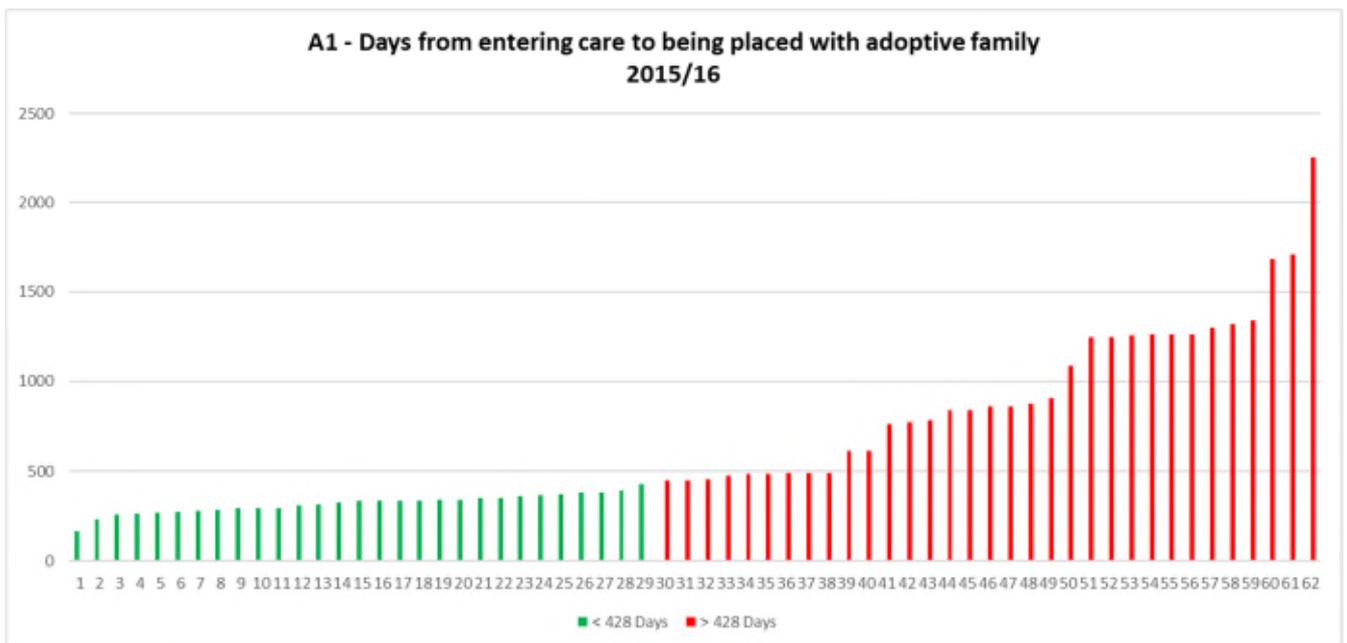
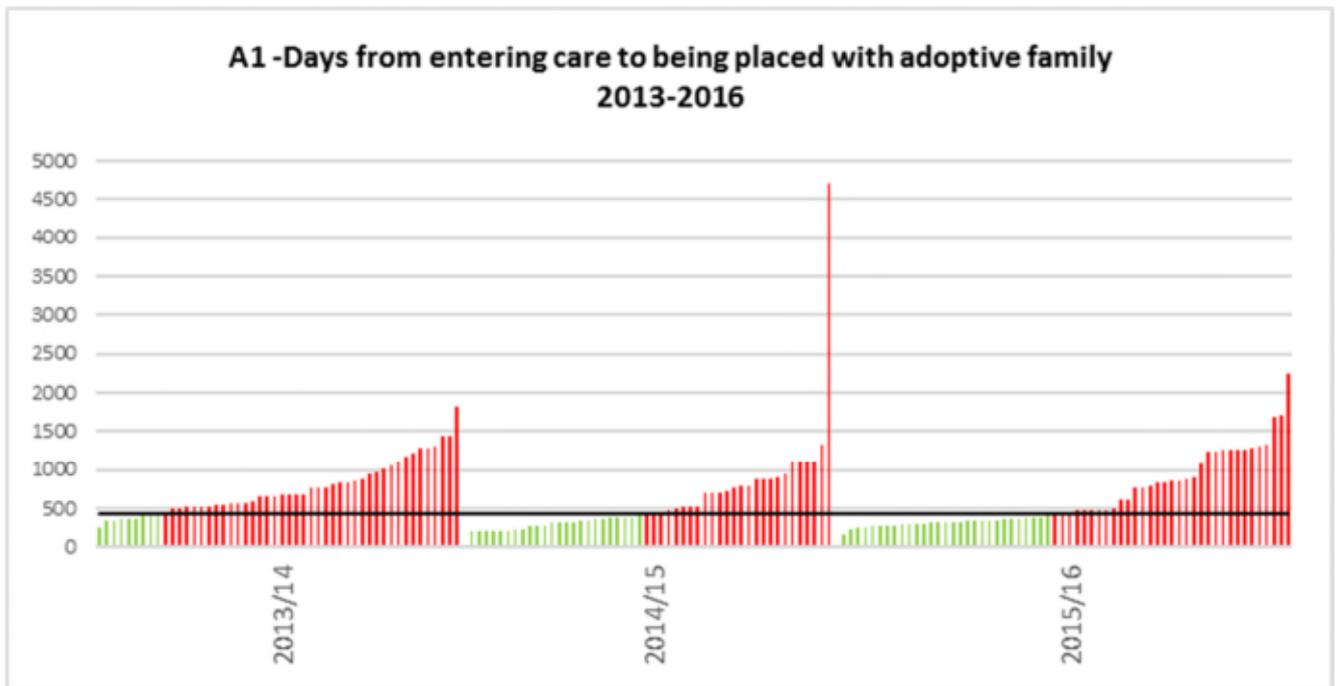
- Out of these 29 children, 21 were aged two years or under (72%)
- Eight were from a BME background (28%).

Children Placed outside A1 Indicator Timescale

4.9. In the same period 33 children were placed outside the target of 426 days 53%. This is slightly lower than in 2014-15 when 44% of adoptions were placed out of timescales.

- Seven of the 33 (21%) were adopted by their foster carers (See Indicator A10).
- 11 of the 33 (33%) children were from a BME background.
- Seven children were aged three to four years when placed (27%), nine children were aged five to nine years (27%) and one over 10 years old (3%) giving a total of 51% of children placed outside of timescale were three years or older.

A1 Outliers



4.10. Out of the 62 children adopted in 2015-16 13 took over 1000 days from date they became LAC to date placed with adopted parents (A1 indicator). This includes:

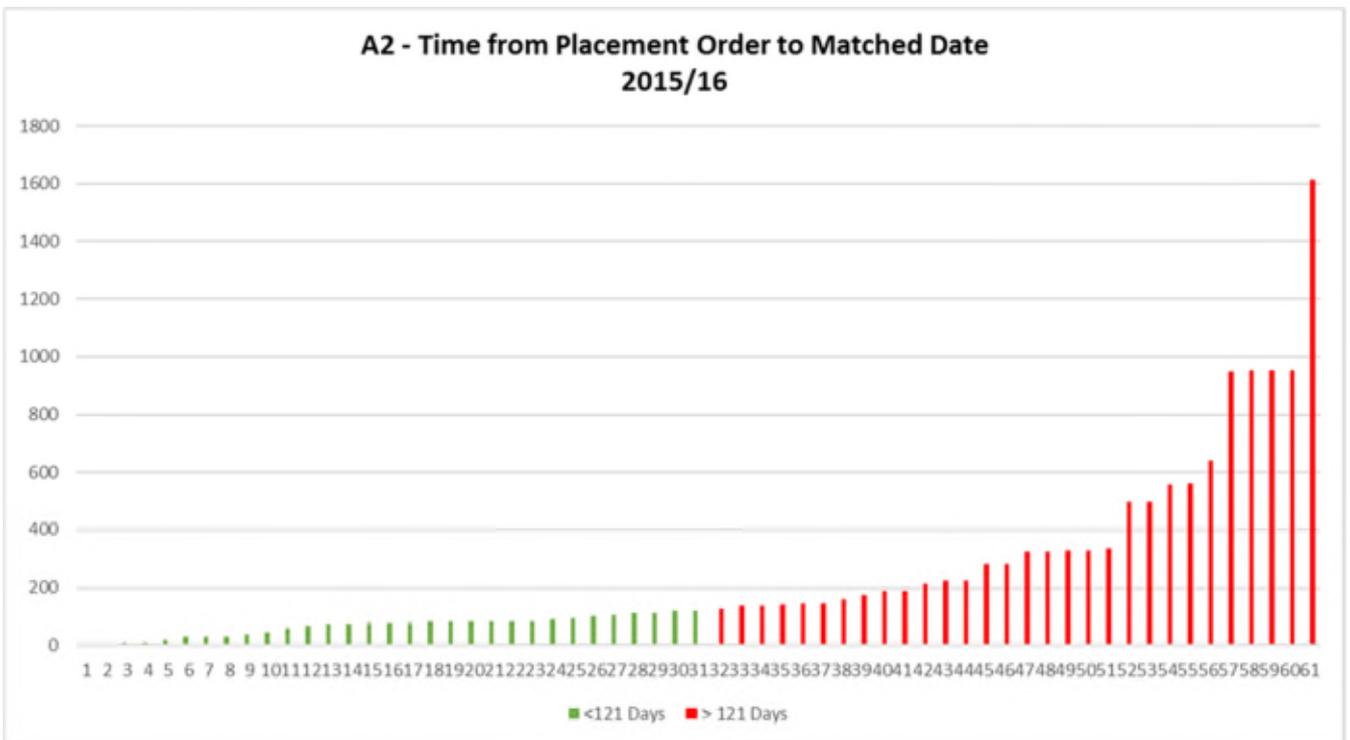
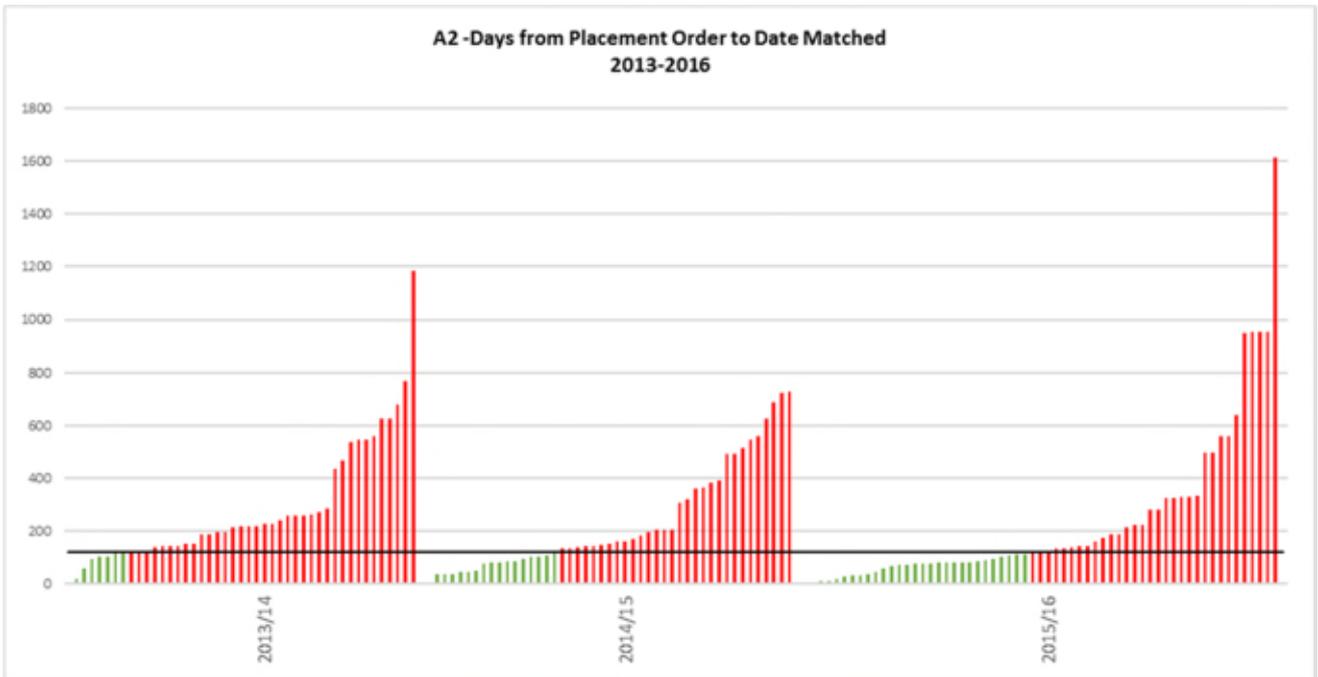
- 10 boys and three girls, 10 White British and three BME children. Of the three BME children one was a girl and two boys
- Five single boys, one was placed at home under Placement with Parents Regulations and subsequently placed in the care of the local authority, one experienced attachment difficulties resulting in CAMHS intervention, and one child went on to be adopted by his foster carer at the age of 10.

- One sibling group of three boys who went on to be adopted by their foster carer after extensive family finding was unsuccessful
- Two sibling groups, one group was rehabilitated to maternal grandmother's care before returning to the care of the local authority five months later
- One was adopted with his sister of WB ethnicity.
- One single boy was due to be linked and adopters withdrew due to personal circumstances.
- Additionally, one sibling group and single BME girl required extensive adoption support.

5. A10 – Average Time Between a Child Entering Care and Moving in with its Adoptive Family – Adjusted for Foster Carer Adoptions

- 5.1.** For the child, foster carer adoptions are positive because they remain within the family environment in which they feel secure and stable thus reducing the need for a placement move or transfer of attachment to new parents and family.
 - 5.2.** Wolverhampton's performance against the A10 indicator has increased slightly in the year from an average of 488 days for the three-year period 2012-15 to 508 days in 2013-16.
 - 5.3.** This increase is against a reduction in the national target from 487 days to 426 meaning Wolverhampton will be graded as Red against this target.
 - 5.4.** The provisional average figure for the year 2015-16 was 518 days an increase of 108 days from 2014-15 which was 410 days.
 - 5.5.** A potential reason for this increase would be a decrease in the number of foster parent adoptions in the year.
 - 5.6.** In 2015-16 11 (17%) children were adopted by their foster parent compared with 14 (27%) in 2014-15
 - 5.7.** Of the 34 children adopted by their foster parents in the three-year period 2013-16 30 were placed within 426 days (88%)
 - 5.8.** For the four children who did take over 426 days to place, two were five years old or above and two were BME.
- ## **6. A2 – Average Time Between Receiving Court Authority to Place and the Local Authority Deciding A Match**
- 6.1.** The A2 indicator for 2014-15 is four months (121 days) this target has remained the same as 2012-15 in the year.

- 6.2. The average number of days for the A2 indicator has decreased from 263 days in 2012-15 to 242 days in 2013-16. Despite this, Wolverhampton's performance is still 121 days over the A2 indicator target
- 6.3. In the year 2015-16 the A2 indicator increased from 196 days in 2014-15 to 238 days.



Children Matched within A2 Indicator Timescale

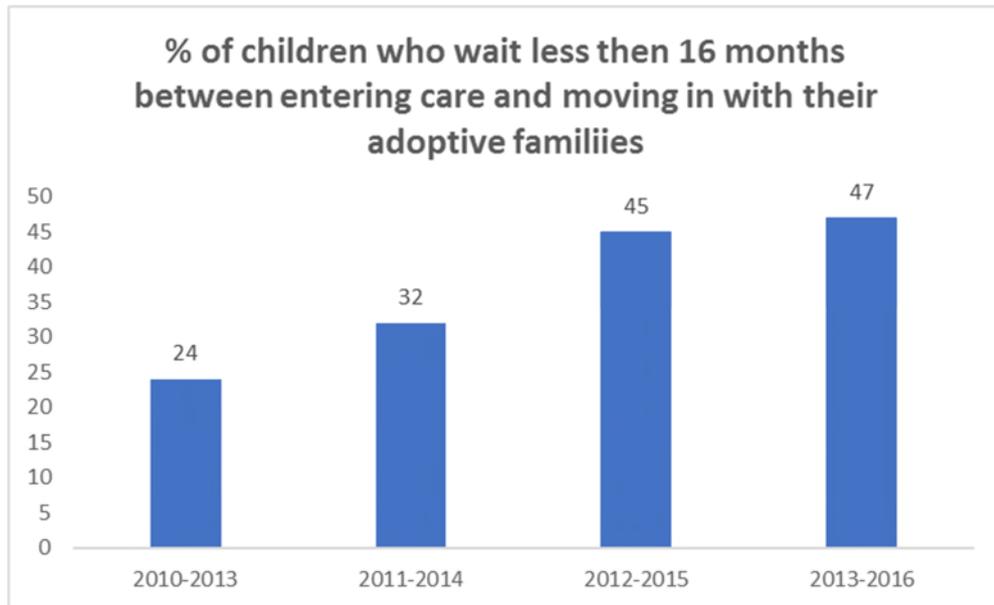
- 6.4.** In 2015-16 32 out of 62 (52%) children were matched within the target of 121 days. This was an increase on 2014-15 where 22 of 51 children in the 2014-15 (43%) were placed within target timescales.
- 6.5.** Of the 32 children placed within A2 indicator timescales in 2014-15:
- Nine children (28%) were over two-years old
 - Eight of the 32 (25%) were BME although a further three require BME data adding to CareFirst
- 6.6.** Nine children were adopted in the year that had a Placement Order granted in 2015. All nine of these were matched within the 121 day target. This is a strong indication that new children awaiting adoption are moving through the system both within targeted timescales and more quickly than children from previous years.
- 6.7. Children Matched outside of Timescale**
- 6.8.** The average time for children to be placed who were not matched against the government timescale of 121 days was 435 days an increase of 135 days on 2014-15
- 6.9.** Out of the 30 children matched outside of timescales 13 were matched more than 300 days after the Placement Order was granted (43%).
- 6.10.** There is one major outlier that has increased average times dramatically. Without this outlier that took 1612 days to be matched average times scales in the year would have dropped to 214 days

A2 Outliers

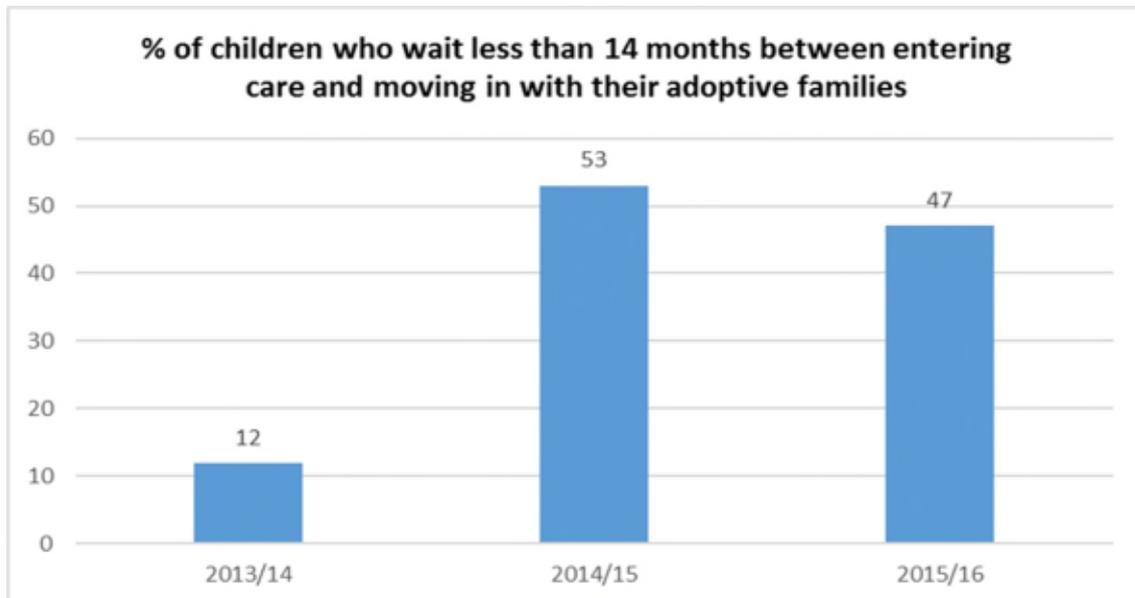
- 6.11.** Out of the 62 children adopted in 2015-16 eight (13%) took over 700 days to be matched.
- 6.12.** This includes:
- Eight boys and five girls
 - Five children over the age of five
 - One sibling group of three boys that went on to be adopted by their foster carer after extensive family finding was unsuccessful
 - One child experienced attachment difficulties resulting in CAMHS intervention
 - One child who has a congenital heart defect
 - One BME child has parental mental ill health in his background
 - One BME boy was due to be linked but adopters withdrew due to personal circumstances, he was age six at the point of being linked for adoption
 - One BME boy experienced uncertainty regarding a possible diagnosis of Foetal alcohol syndrome that was later ruled out
 - Characteristics of age, gender, BME and additional needs contributed to delay in linking the children

7. A3 – The Number and Percentage of Children Who Wait Less Than 16 Months Between Entering Care and Moving in With Their Adoptive Family

- 7.1. The A3 indicator looks at the number and percentage of children who have passed the A1 indicator for the year
- 7.2. The percentage of adoptions to pass the A3 indicator over the three-year period has increased slightly in the year



- 7.3. Despite the increase in A3 performance over the three-year term, performance in year has fallen for the first time since 2010.



- 7.4. The chart shows that performance in the year is comparable to that in 2014-15 however only 12% of adoptions in 2013-14 passed the new indicator which has had a huge impact on this year's performance

8. A4 – Adoptions From Care

- 8.1. In the period 2013-16 there were 165 adoptions which was an increase of 26% on 2012-15 when there was a total of 137 adoptions.
- 8.2. In the same period 725 children left care. This equates to 22% of children who left care in 2013-16 were adopted. This figure is in line with 2012-15 where 22% of children who left care were adopted.
- 8.3. Both figures are higher than the national average for 2013-16 which was 16%.

9. A6 - The Percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic Children Leaving Care Who Are Adopted

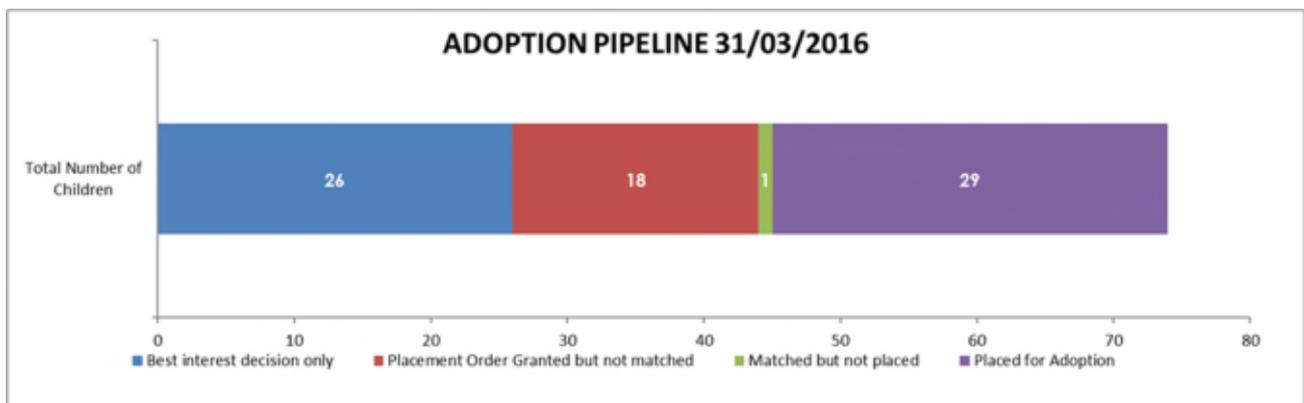
- 9.1. 291 BME children left care between 2013-16 of these 45 (16%) were adopted. This is an increase on 2012-15 where 14% of BME leaving care were adopted.
- 9.2. Of the 62 children adopted in 2015-16 19 (30%) were from BME backgrounds.

10. A7 – The Percentage of Children Aged five or Over Leaving Care Who Are Adopted

- 10.1. 441 children left care in 2013-16 aged five or over of these 35 were adopted (8%). This is higher than the national average which was 5%.
- 10.2. Wolverhampton’s performance in placing children aged over five for adoption continues to be strong. In 2013-16 30 of the 163 children adopted were aged five or over (19%). 8% of over five’s leaving care were adopted higher than the last national average which was 5%.
- 10.3. This continues to show Wolverhampton’s commitment to placing children who may be considered ‘harder to place’. Continuing to secure appropriate adoptive placements may take longer given the ages and circumstances of many of the children.

11. A9 – Number of Children Awaiting Adoption

- 11.1. On 31 March 2016, there were 74 children awaiting adoption which was a decrease of 19 children compared with 31 March 2015 when 93 children awaiting adoption.



- 11.2.** Wolverhampton remains committed to supporting foster carers who have been in their care for a significant amount of time and where this is in the child's best interests.

Appendix Wolverhampton Adoption Scorecard indicators update for year 2012-15 and 2013-16

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2012-15	3 year 2013-16	Target 2016	England 3 yr 2012-15
A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April to 31 March that were placed for adoption immediately prior to their adoption.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between a child starting to be looked after and their placement for adoption, i.e. the date they move with their adoptive family. Only children with valid data are included.</p> <p>3. Figures are rounded to the nearest day.</p>	Average (days)	734 days	672 days	426 days	593 days
A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April to 31 March that were placed for adoption and on a placement order or freeing order immediately prior to their adoption.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between receiving court authority to adopt (granting of placement order/freeing order) and matching with adopters. A time of zero is assigned to children who were matched before court authority was received.</p> <p>3. Figures are rounded to the nearest day.</p>	Average (Days)	263 days	242days	121 days	223 days

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2012-15	3 year 2013-16	Target 2016	England 3 yr 2012-15
<p>A3 The number and percentage of children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family</p>	<p>1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April to 31 March that were placed for adoption immediately prior to their adoption and all children with a current adoption plan at 31 March (excluding those where the decision to adopt has been reversed). When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan.</p> <p>2. Time is calculated between a child starting to be looked after and their placement for adoption, i.e. the date they move in with their adoptive family. Only children with valid data are included. Children are flagged if they waited less than 21 months (measured at 487 days) between starting to be looked after and being placed for adoption or had not yet been looked after for 21 months at 31 March.</p> <p>3. The numerator is therefore all adopted children who were placed for adoption first who were placed less than 21 months after becoming looked after and all children looked after at 31 March with a current adoption decision who were placed less than 21 months after becoming looked after or who had not yet been looked after for 21 months."</p> <p>4. The denominator is therefore all adopted children who were placed for adoption first and all looked after at 31 March with a current adoption decision.</p>	<p>% Children</p>	<p>45%</p>	<p>47%</p>	<p>16 months</p>	<p>47%</p>

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2012-15	3 year 2013-16	Target 2016	England 3 yr 2012-15
A4 Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted)	<p>1. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in each year has been counted. A child who ceased to be in care in more than one year will be counted more than once.</p> <p>2. This indicator compares the number of children who ceased to be looked after in the period 1 April to 31 March with the number of children who were adopted during that period.</p>	<p>Number Adopted</p> <p>% adopted of leaving Care</p>	<p>135 Children</p> <p>22%</p>	<p>165 Children</p> <p>23%</p>	Not set	<p>14,390</p> <p>16%</p>
A6: The percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted	<p>1. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted.</p> <p>2. The numerator includes all children with a known ethnicity of Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed or Other who were adopted in the period 1 April to 31 March. The denominator includes all children within these ethnic groups who ceased to be looked after for any reason in the same time period. Numerators and denominators exclude all children where ethnicity was refused or not obtained.</p> <p>3. Percentages show the proportion of all black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted. Therefore if a local authority has a low proportion of black and minority ethnic children in their care population then the denominator will reflect this low number.</p>	<p>Number</p> <p>%</p>	<p>35 Children</p> <p>15%</p>	<p>45 children</p> <p>16%</p>	Not set	<p>2230</p> <p>5%</p>

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Indicator	Definition (note latest result is in-year not 3 year)	Measure	3 year 2012-15	3 year 2013-16	Target 2016	England 3 yr 2012-15
A7: The percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted. 2. Age on leaving care. 3. The numerator includes all children who were adopted in period 1 April to 31 March who were aged 5 or over. The denominator includes all children who were aged 5 or over when they ceased to be looked after in the same time. 	Number % adopted age 5 or over of all care leavers aged 5 or over	30 Children 8%	35 Children 8%	Not set	3010 8%
A9: Number of children awaiting adoption	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This indicator includes all children with an adoption plan in year ending 31 March that were still looked after at 31 March and who had not been placed for adoption at 31 March. When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan. 	Number	93 Children	74 Children	Not set	6,370
A10 Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted (days)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This indicator includes all children adopted in the period 1 April to 31 March that were placed for adoption immediately prior to their adoption. 2. Time is calculated between a child starting to be looked after and their placement for adoption, i.e. the date they move with their adoptive family. Where children are adopted by their foster carer, the time is measured until the date they moved in with their foster carer. Only children with valid data are included. 3. Figures are rounded to the nearest day. 	Average Days	489 days	509 days	Not set but A1 Target = 487 days	489