

Adopt Coast to Coast 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022

Marketing Activity

The marketing activity for 2021-2022 for Adopt Coast to Coast was all about brand recognition and getting the name out as far and wide as possible. Whilst events and some more traditional tools couldn't be employed due to the pandemic activity focused on the following actions:

- Public relations – stories about our launch, appeals, events, campaigns and more
- Internal communications – amongst three partners
- Radio campaign – activity during the launch and another campaign in October
- TV advert – to celebrate the launch of Adopt Coast to Coast
- Google advertising – making sure Adopt Coast to Coast appears highly when searched for
- Facebook and Instagram advertising – to raise awareness and promote events
- Display advertising on key websites to raise awareness of Adopt Coast to Coast
- Third party campaigns – joining in with activity such as for National Adoption Week or New Family Social's

LGBT+ Adoption and Fostering Week

- Organic social media activity
- Newsletters to adopters and those interested in adoption
- Spoke support from three partner local authorities including emails, internal publications, external publications, intranet
- Regular website updates

Adopt Coast to Coast and spokes' performance

	Adopt Coast to Coast	Cumbria	Durham	Together for Children
Enquiries (2021/22)	558	186 (*33%)	216 (*39%)	156 (*28%)
Approvals	78	11 (*14%)	40 (*51%)	27 (*35%)
Matches	122	28 (*23%)	65 (*53%)	29 (*24%)
Conversion from enquiry to approval	14%	6%	19%	17%

*percentage of RAA performance

Durham County Council's Adoption Performance

It is very positive to note that the transition to Adopt Coast to Coast has not had a detrimental impact on the children who have moved to adoptive families or recruitment of Adopt Coast to Coast prospective adopters assessed by Durham's adoption team.

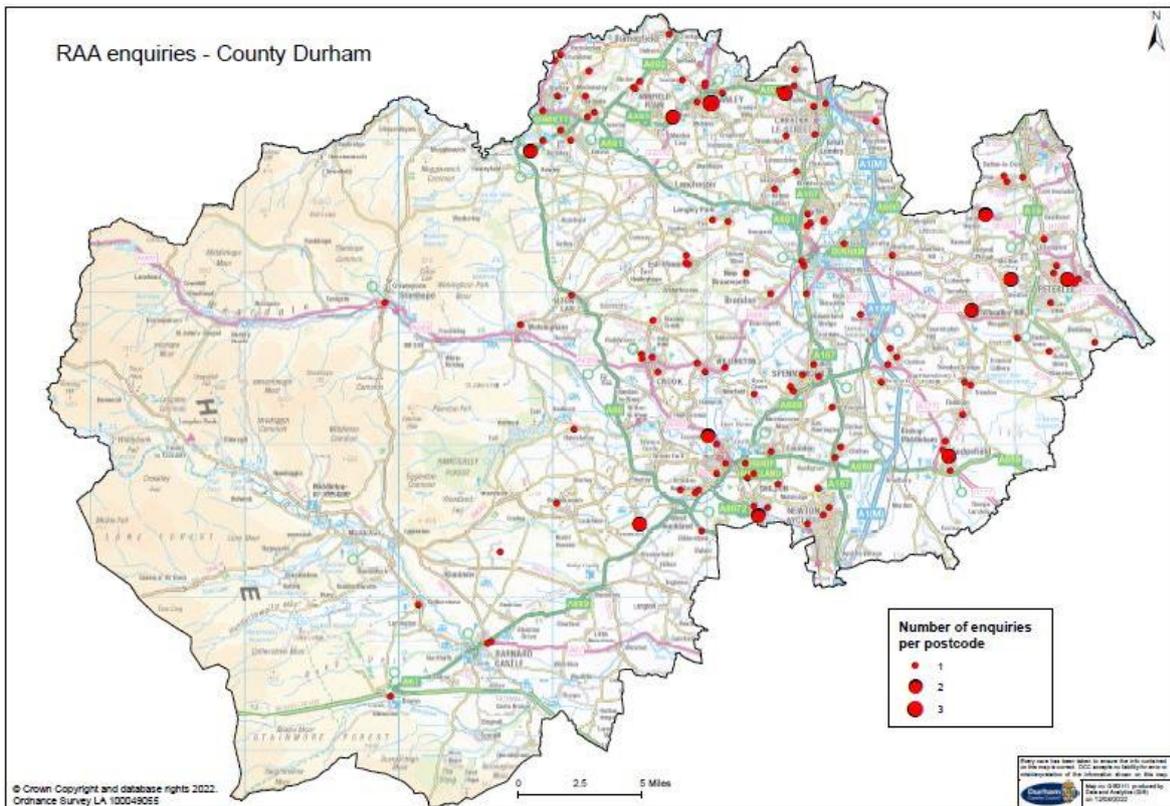
Children's Journey

	2020/21	2021/22	Analysis
Waiting with PO	14	10	The slight upward trend of children waiting more than 6 months for a match with their adoptive family reflects the national position. Children with additional needs and groups of brothers and sisters are waiting longer. The national campaigns continue to seek to address these challenges. In respect of interagency usage, the responsible Strategic Manager continues to monitor spend and is reassured that interagency spend is only requested after RAA resources have been explored and it is in the child's best interests for an external match to be progressed.
Waited over 6 months	1	4	
Matched	60	65	
Interagency use	18 (30%)	34 (52%)	

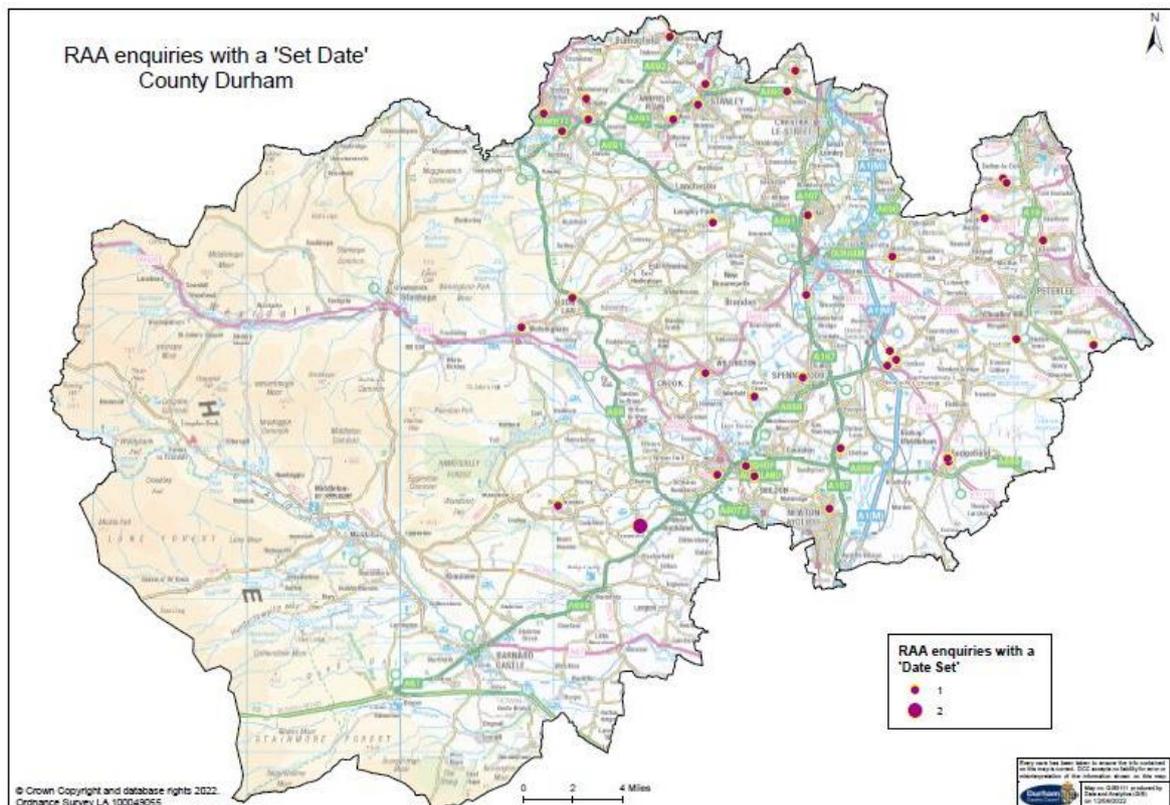
Prospective Adopter's Journey

Durham's adoption team are responding to enquiries promptly. The team cover Durham and all local authority areas south of Durham. The attached maps show the enquiries and stage 1 applications received from within Durham County.

Enquiries received



Commenced Stage 1



	2020/21	2021/22	Analysis
Enquiries	100	217	The increased number of enquiries being converted to applications (stage 1) and approvals has enabled Durham to retain the high number of matches achieved in 2020/21. There are already 25 prospective adoptive families in stage 1 and 2 and with a further 11 in stage 2 pending. Therefore Durham would expect to approve these 36 families in 2021/22, without the new enquiries received since the 1 st April 2022. We therefore anticipate the 2 nd year of Adopt Coast to Coast will build on the excellent performance that the Durham adoption team have achieved in 2021/22.
Stage 1	13* (0 in stage 2 pending)	17* (further 11 in stage 2 pending)	
Stage 2	9*	*8	
Approvals	41	40	
Number of matches for Durham approved adopters			

*at 31st March

Prospective adopter journey

Katie and James were one of 6 couples to have started their journey with Adopt Coast to Coast and had a child placed before our 1st anniversary.

Katie and James have been a couple since they were teenagers and having married and enjoyed lots of quality time together as a couple, they felt the time was right to start their adoption application in April 2021.

Katie said: "I've known since the age of 15 that I wouldn't be able to conceive naturally so adoption was always on the cards for us. We live in the same local authority as I work as a teacher and because I teach a few looked after children I know a lot of the social workers. I didn't want to apply with the local authority where we live because I thought it felt too close to home, but I heard about Adopt Coast to Coast and knew they would cover our area."

"The first part of the process felt long and we were checking our emails all of the time as there's so many little steps to do that are out of your control. We really enjoyed the training and felt like something was really happening which we were more involved in. The second stage was around 6 weeks and was timed to fit in with the school holidays for me which really helped us.

"Our social worker was brilliant, when you're first assigned a social worker, you're worried about whether you'll get on and how it'll feel talking to them about such personal things, but our social worker was so down to earth and easy to talk to. What was clear from the start was that you don't have to be a certain way to adopt, you don't need lots of money just time and love. I think more

people should do it and more young people too – I’m 27 now and I was one of the youngest on our training and although it’s hard and emotionally draining at times it’s worth it.”

Meeting our son for the first time was magical. He sat on my knee immediately and he was so relaxed and I felt an instant connection– it was definitely meant to be.

14th April 2021 – enquired with Adopt Coast to Coast

12th May 2021 – commenced stage 1 and completed 3-day preparation sessions

15th July 2021 – moved into stage 2

5th October 2021 – approved as suitable to adopt

Following approval they were considered for children within their matching considerations and waited patiently as their preference was for a baby under 1 year of age who was not presenting with any additional needs.

9th February 2022 – match agreed with a 9 month old baby boy.

Speaking just four weeks after their little boy moved in with them Katie said: “We’d had so many years to prepare for adoption and we always knew it would be our route to parenthood so we accepted it and knowing him has been the best four weeks of our lives – he’s just amazing. I was worried before we started all of this that we wouldn’t have a connection but he’s our whole world - he 100% feels like our son already.

Marketing activity priorities for 2022/23

- Marketing activity will include a focus on potential enquirers for groups of brothers and sisters, children with additional health needs and/or developmental uncertainty.
- Alongside the Adopt Coast to Coast activity, there is a pan regional initiative to increase opportunities for children to be adopted by families living in the North East and Cumbria through strategic partnership working across the 3 RAAs and 4 VAAs in our region.
- Continue to review and develop marketing activity and the recruitment practice across the spokes being cognizant of the lived experience of children and their adoptive families and the findings from the national mystery shopper activity.

Paula Gibbons

Head of Service

Adopt Coast to Coast

