

Corporate Parenting Panel

9 June 2023

Annual Report on the Adoption Service 2022/2023



Report of Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 Annual review of the Adoption Service for 2022/23 including the identification of service priorities for 2023/24.

Executive summary

- 2 In 2022/23, the Adoption Service received 267 enquiries, completed 80 initial visits to 111 prospective adopters, and 41 prospective adopting households were approved.
- 3 58 children have been matched at Panel. 7 adoptive households from our partners in Coast to Coast have been used and 17 children were placed externally to Coast to Coast this included 7 brothers and sisters together groups of 2 children and 5 individual children which were older children or young children with complex health needs.
- 4 54 Children have been granted a Placement Order, compared to 59 in the previous year.
- 5 In this period, 65 children were matched at Panel. This is the same number as in the previous year.
- 6 46 of these children being matched within the RAA; of which 39 matches were with DCC approved adopters, 7 matches were with prospective adopters from our partner spokes.
- 7 19 matches were with other Local Authorities, RAA's or Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

- 8 This is a significant decrease from the previous year, where 31 children were placed with external providers.
- 9 43 Adoption Orders have been granted for DCC children within this period.
- 10 28 children are placed with prospective adopters but not yet adopted.
- 11 No disruptions have happened within this period.

Recommendation

- 12 Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:
 - (a) Note the contents and agree the proposed priorities.

Background

- 13 This annual report sets out the previous performance and the direction of travel for the Adoption Service as a spoke in the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Coast to Coast.
- 14 The activity of the Adoption Service detailed in this report

Main Implications

- 15 Key priority areas for 2023/24:
 - To work collaboratively with our partners in Adopt Coast to Coast to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a timely manner.
 - To ensure children's plans of permanence via adoption are progressed without delay.
 - Early Permanence families are to be identified at the earliest possible stage in children's planning to prevent delay and ensure minimal moves for children.
 - To continue to recruit new Panel members to the Central List. This will ensure quoracy and prevent the possible situation of having to stand a panel down due to lack of available Panel members.
 - To continue to embed Signs of Safety into practice and Panel processes in line with the Durham model of social work practice.
 - To increase relationship-based practice with trauma informed service developments, particularly in the development and support of post adoption contact.
 - To identify potential plans of adoption for children as early as possible. This will allow for targeted adopter recruitment at the earliest possible point. Where there is a need for an adopter able to take sibling groups, older children or children with more complex health or disability needs, thus preventing delay or the need to purchase adopters at a high cost from external providers.

Conclusion

- 16 Please note the contents of the Adoption Service's Annual Report which highlights practice achieved in 2022/23 and sets the direction of travel for the remainder of this financial year.

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 3 Adoption and Children Act 2002 places a duty on each local authority to maintain within their area an adoption service designed to meet the needs of:

- (a) children who may be adopted, their parents and guardians,
- (b) persons wishing to adopt a child, and
- (c) adopted persons, their adoptive parents and natural parents

By making arrangements for the adoption of children and for the provision of adoption support services.

The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 contain detailed requirements which local authorities must comply with in order to comply with this duty.

Finance

The Adoption service operates within the budget set.

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None