

# Adoption Annual Report

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# Understanding the adoption team

- There are 12 social workers, 2 consultant social workers, a family worker and a team manager
- The team complete assessments and training of adopters, family finding for children with plans of adoption and provide Post Adoption Support.
- The family worker has reunited separated children and supports adoptive families.
- The adoption team works closely with the permanence team who are the allocated social workers for the children.
- Adoption Panels are held every two weeks and there are two panel chairs.

# Performance 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

- Enquiries have significantly reduced from 267 in the previous year to 115.
- 15 adoptive families have been approved down from 41 in the previous year.
- 41 matches for children were approved. 29 within the RAA.
- 83 children had a plan of adoption up from 60 in the previous year.
- 7 children were Early Permanence.
- 713 Keeping in Touch Arrangements are in place.
- 152 children have been supported via Post Adoption Support.

# Future Priorities

- Focus on the importance of relationship-based practice where an adoption social worker who takes an initial enquiry from a potential adopter maintains the allocation throughout the assessment process where possible. This is to allow consistent trusting relationships to be built and try and prevent a drop off after the initial enquiry.
- To work collaboratively with our partners in Adopt Coast to Coast to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a timely manner. Identifying any challenges to ensuring that timescales are met within stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment process and working with partners such as the police and health to overcome those barriers.
- Continue with the review of the matching process to ensure the process in Durham and TFC are in line with each other, that this progresses as quickly as possible and that there is robust information gathered, shared and recorded about the match of possible adopters to children.
- To ensure children's plans of permanence via adoption are progressed at an early a stage as possible and to develop a new process to assist with the identification and tracking of these children. Work alongside TFC to share information at Children Waiting Meetings about unborn children who could be placed in Early Permanence from birth and match them with adopters going through the assessment process who could be approved before the child is born.

# Future Priorities

- 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 provide high quality post adoption support to adopted children and young adults, supporting them to access therapy via the Adoption Support Fund. Consideration to be given to the structure of the adoption team and whether Post Adoption Support should be managed differently.
- To enhance and develop keeping in touch for adopted children and their birth families, ensuring that where possible relationships with birth families are built with adopters to facilitate different forms of keeping in touch such as more children adopted spending some direct time with birth family members.
- Increase participation informing team development, a recent session has taken place with a young person in care who has children in her family adopted.

# Compliments and Feedback

- *Second time adopter: first time did not consider EP, this time we decided to do the training, the psychologist information was really useful. The training elevated all our worries. If we had had the training the first time, we would have probably had considered early permanence.*
- *I'm emailing to let you know about the quality of the work undertaken with the above children, particularly by the social workers involved in the Keeping in Touch agreement. Great thought has been put into how best to maintain and develop their relationship through keeping in touch and this has resulted in a range of methods being used including physically meeting up but also using cards, videos and letters in between directly seeing each other. On behalf of panel, please pass on to all those concerned our thanks for the hard work being done for these children and their prospective adopters.*