



**CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE**  
**7 September 2021**

**ITEM 10**

Report sponsor: Andy Smith, Strategic Director  
People Services  
Report author: Suanne Lim, Director Early Help  
and Children's Social Care

## **Adoption Agency Report 2020-21**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 The Children Act 1989, the Adoption Agency Regulations (2011), the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Education and Adoption Act 2016 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 placed duties and responsibilities on Local Authorities to provide, or arrange to provide, an Adoption Service.
- 1.2 Adoption East Midlands (AEM) has provided adoption services as a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) on behalf of Derby City, Derbyshire, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils. Annual AEM Activity Report 2020-21 is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 This report provides adoption performance information for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31 March 2021.
- 1.4 Young Person Summary

Last year, 31 children were adopted and it was agreed that adoption was the right thing for a further 46 children.

In total there were 52 matches made during 2020-21, 27 boys and 25 girls and this included three sibling groups placed together. 42 of the children matched were placed with adopters approved by Adoption East Midlands (AEM) whilst the remaining ten children were matched with other adoption agencies.

On 31 March 2021 there were 32 children who were living with their new families but the court had not yet made the adoption order.

The responsibility for children with adoption plans remains with Derby City Council and is undertaken by the Children's Permanence Team. This team was formed as part of a pilot in July 2017 but became permanent in April 2020. This team consists of a half time team manager, 4 adoption social workers and a part time Independent worker for birth families.

### **Recommendation**

- 2.1 To approve the Adoption Agency Report

## Reason

- 3.1 To comply with guidance, regulations and National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services.

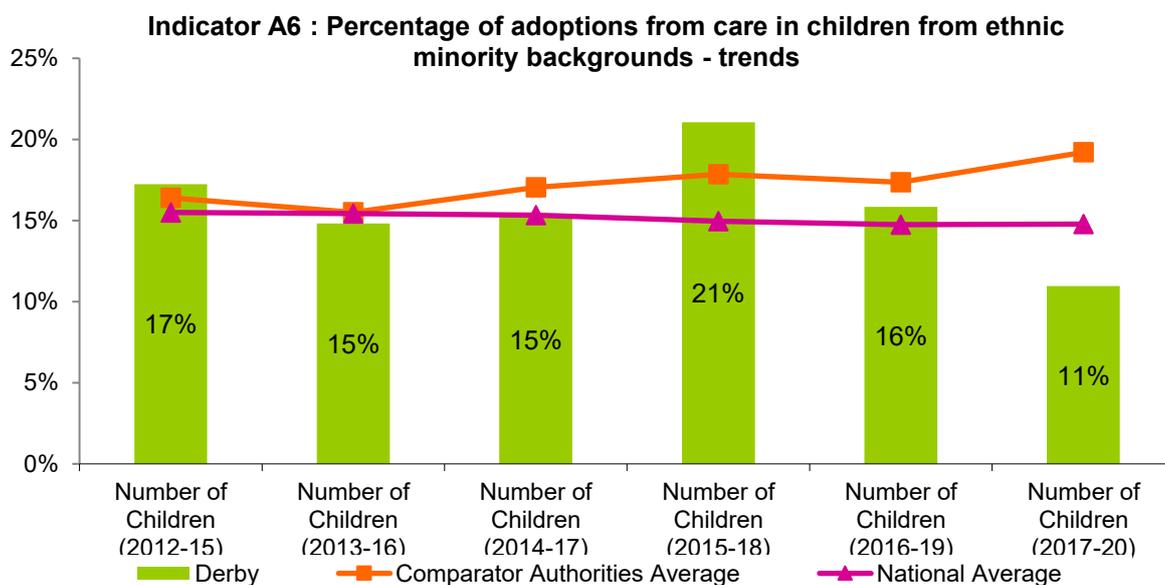
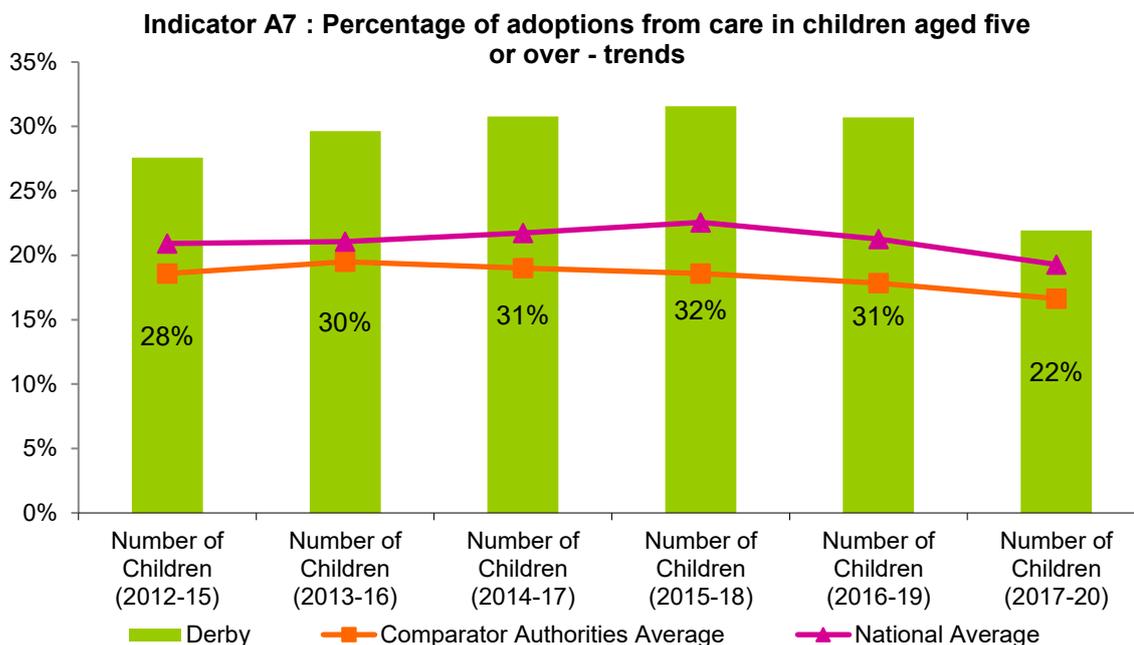
## Supporting information

- 4.1 Derby City Children's Permanence team has continued to develop services to meet the needs of children who are placed for adoption. The role of the Adoption Agency provides services to meet the needs of adults, including adoptive parents, birth family members and adopted adults. Nottinghamshire County Council is the host authority, and delivers all adopter recruitment and approval activity, all adoption panel functions, home-finding services and adoption support as Adoption East Midlands.
- 4.2 There were 31 adoptions of children from care in during the year.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Children adopted in 2020-21</b>
Male	15
Female	16
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

<b>Age at adoption (years)</b>	<b>Children adopted in 2020-21</b>
Under 1	2
1	12
2	7
3	1
4	1
5	0
6	1
7	1
8	2
9	1
10	1
13	1
14	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Total aged 5 and over</b>	<b>8 (25.8%)</b>

Derby consistently performs well in **Indicator A7** with a higher proportion of adoptions from care for children aged five and over. 25.8% of the adoptions in 2020-21 were for children aged five and over. This remains well above the national and comparator authority averages.



<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Children adopted in 2020-21</b>
WBRI - White British	16
Dual Heritage - Other	2
Dual Heritage - White and Asian	2
Gypsy/Roma	5
White - Other European	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Total BAME adoptions</b>	<b>15 (48.4%)</b>

Derby has previously performed well in **Indicator A6** with a similar proportion of adoptions from care for children from ethnic minority backgrounds as the national average. Almost half of all the adoptions in 2020-21 were for children from an ethnic minority background. The national average is around 15% whilst our comparator authority average is slightly higher with nearly 20%.

#### 4.4 Adoption Scorecard Measures A2 and A10

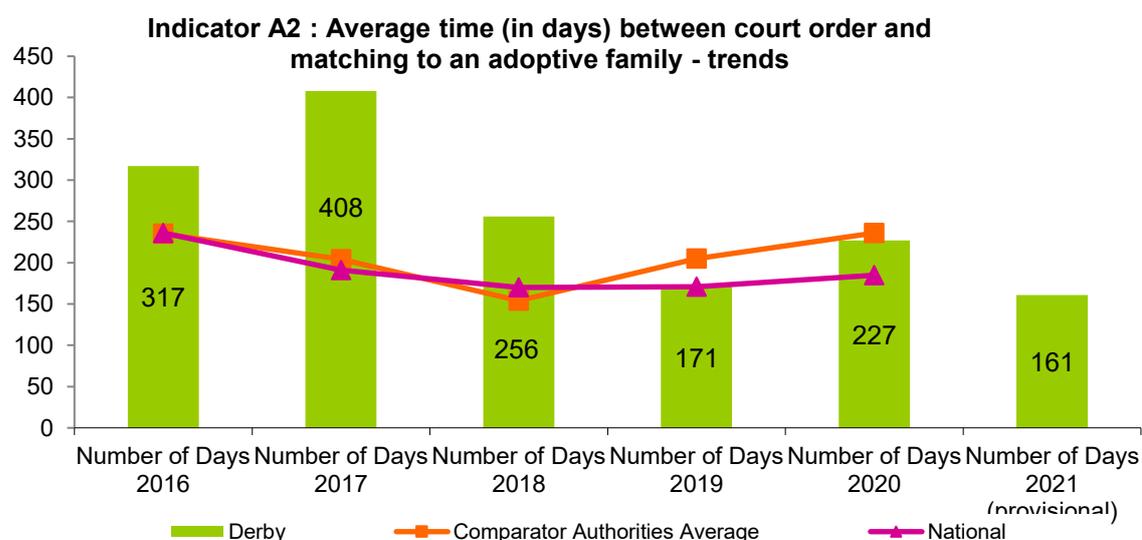
The latest values, for 2020-21, as calculated by Derby City Council, and based on 2020-21 adoptions are :

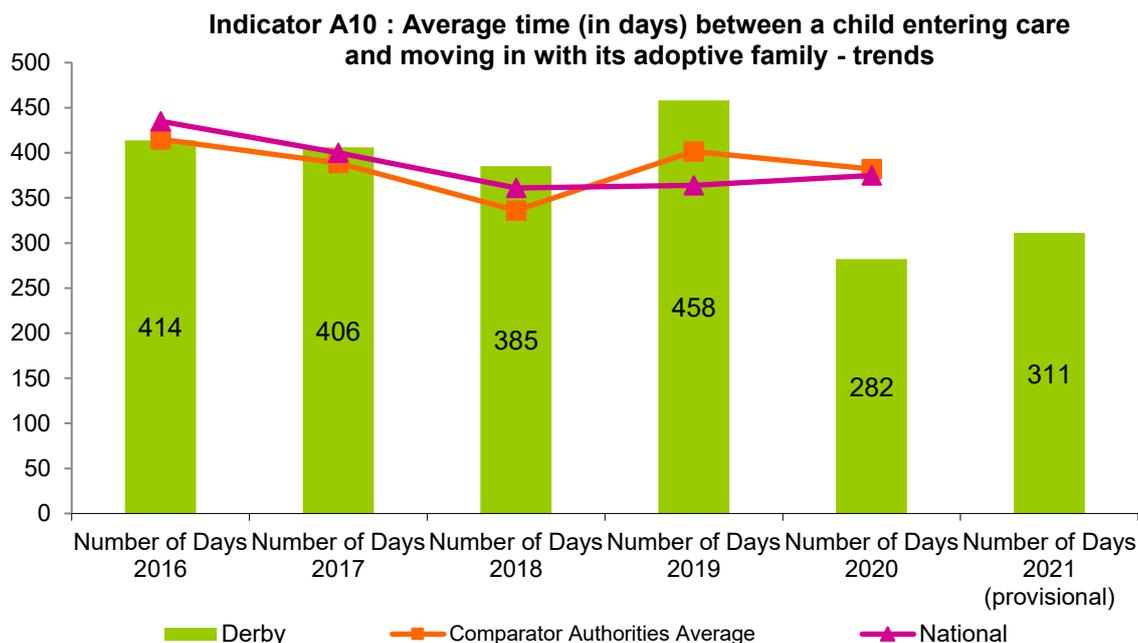
- **Measure A2:** Average time between receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family = 161 days.
- **Measure A10:** Average number of days, adjusted for foster carer adoptions, between child entering care and moving in with adoptive family = 311 days.

The table at the end of this section provides more detail about these measures. The values above should be viewed as provisional. Final 2020-21 values for A10 and A2 will be published in approximately one years' time by the Department for Education. They may differ to the values above based upon any subsequent revisions to the data.

Comparison of the 2020-21 provisional data with the latest data released by DfE, in late-August 2021, and covering years up to 2019-20, shows that both measures have good performance outcomes and remain below the national average.

- **For Measure A2:** Year-on-year (annual) figures for Derby have improved on 3 occasions out of the 5 total occasions, between 2015-16 and 2020-21. The 2020-21 provisional data is the best performance Derby has seen with 161 days. This is a reduction of 66 days compared to 2019-20 value and is below the most recent national average of 185 days.
- **For Measure A10:** Year-on-year (annual) figures for Derby have improved on 3 occasions out of the 5 total occasions between 2015-16 and 2020-21. Derby increased slightly between 2019-20 and 2020-21 rising from 282 days to 311 days. Although we have seen an increase in the number of days in this indicator, Derby would remain below the most recent national average of 375 days.





This indicates that the recently implemented Child Adoption and Permanence Team (CAPT), initially set-up in July 2017, is contributing towards improving outcomes for children, in terms of helping to improve some key adoption timescales.

Scorecard Indicator	Number of Days 2018	Number of Days 2019	Number of Days 2020	Number of Days 2021 (P)	Number of Days (2015-18)	Number of Days (2016-19)	Number of Days (2017-20)
<b>Scorecard Indicator A10</b> - 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)	385	458	282	311	403	416	390
<b>Scorecard Indicator A2</b> - 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, for children who have been adopted (days)	256	171	227	161	346	300	213

- 4.5 The role of the Agency Decision Maker remains the responsibility of Derby City Council for all matches of Derby City children.
- 4.6 There were 46 new plans for adoption made in the year. The annual variation in new plans made is illustrated below.

Year	New plans
2013-14	26
2014-15	42
2015-16	35
2016-17	26
2017-18	40
2018-19	43
2019-20	37
2020-21	46

- 4.7 There were seven children where the plan of adoption was reversed in the year.
- 4.8 There were 52 matches made during 2020-21, 27 boys and 25 girls. This included three sibling groups placed together. The ages of the children matched was as follows:

Age at match	Number
Under 1	8
1	13
2	9
3	2
4	4
5	4
6	3
7	2
8	1
9	2
10	1
11	1
12	1
13	1
Total	<b>52</b>
<b>Total aged 5 and over</b>	<b>16 (30.8%)</b>

- 4.9 42 of the children matched were placed with adopters approved by Adoption East Midlands (AEM) whilst the remaining ten children were matched with other adoption agencies. Of the children who could not be placed within Adoption East Midlands, four were BAME children. There were also four children aged four and over who were not matched by AEM.
- 4.10 At the end of March 2021 there were 32 children placed with adoptive families awaiting an adoption order. There is a minimum of ten weeks from placement before an adoption application can be lodged with the courts but in some cases adoptive families wait longer. There are also some cases delayed in the legal process when the adoption application is contested. Impact of COVID 19 has meant during 2020-21, children in their adoptive placements were waiting longer for adoption orders to be made.

## Public/stakeholder engagement

5.1 N/A

## Other options

6.1 None

## Financial and value for money issues

7.1 The cost of providing the Adoption Service is contained within fixed cost-centre budgets.

## Legal implications

8.1 The adoption function of the Council is regulated by the 1989 Children Act and the Associated Adoption Regulations, guidance and the minimum standards published in 2014. The development of a Regional Adoption Agency is a requirement of the Education and Adoption Act (2016).

## Climate implications

9.1 N/A

## Other significant implications

10.1 N/A

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal	19 August 2021
Finance	Janice Hadfield, Head of Finance, Peoples Services	18 August 2021
Service Director(s)		
Report sponsor	Andy Smith, Strategic Director Peoples Services	18 August 2021
Other(s)		