



Derby City Council

**Corporate Parenting Committee
1 December 2015**

ITEM 6

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and
Young People

Adoption Agency Report

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Children Act 1989, the Adoption Agency Regulations (2011), the Adoption and Children Act 2002 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 This report provides adoption performance information for the period 1st April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and at appendix 2 the adoption statement of purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the Adoption Agency report and statement of purpose.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Derby City Adoption Agency has continued to develop services to meet the needs of children who should be placed for adoption. The Agency also continues to provide services to meet the needs of adults including adoptive parents, birth family members and adopted adults.

- 4.2 During 2014 to 2015, 55 children were adopted including 11 pairs of siblings; this was made up of 29 girls and 26 boys.

The age profile of the children was as follows:

Age at adoption	Number
Under 1	5
1	11
2	8
3	9
4	3
5	4
6	3
7	4
8	6
9	1
10	0
11	1

The length of time that the children waited for adoption was as follows:

Less than 1 year	5
1-2 years	15
2-3 years	20
3-4 years	9
4-5 years	3
5 years and over	3
Total	55

- 4.3 The children with an adoption plan on 31 March 2015 are as follows:

	31 March 2015
Adoption Plan but Placement Order not yet Granted	19
Plan and Placement Order but not yet matched	31
Matched but not yet placed	0
Placed but Adoption Order not yet granted	16
Total	66

- 4.4 Thirty two adoptive families were approved in 2014 to 2015 compared to twenty eight in the previous year. On 31 March 2015 there 17 families with children in placement awaiting an adoption order. There were 18 approved families waiting, and 2 of these had waited over 12 months since approval.
- 4.5 There are two adoption panels which each meet monthly. Each has an independent chair and a vice chair. Adoption panel met 21 times in the year 2014-2015. Panel one 11 times and panel two 10 times.

4.6 During 2014 to 2015 43 children had plans for adoption agreed by the agency decision maker. The characteristics of the children were:

- There were 22 girls and 21 boys with adoption plans
- 31 of the children were White British, 2 as Dual heritage White/Black Caribbean, 5 Dual Heritage – other, 4 as other European and 1 as – other.
- There were 12 sibling groups with plans for adoption. Ten of these had plans for adoption together.

The ages of the children at the point of agency decision was:

Under 1	18
1	8
2	4
3	3
4	5
5	1
6	3
7	1
total	43

The table below compares the number of children with an agency decision that they should be placed for adoption over a three year period. The drop in 2013-4 was caused by changes in case law with the court applying a stricter test before granting a placement order.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Children with agency decision that adoption is in their best interests	50	26	42

4.7 During 2014 to 2015, 28 children were matched with an adoptive family including 2 sibling pairs.

4.8 There are new family finding services available to the service. "It's All About Me" (IAAM) is a specialist service which recruits, assesses and prepares family and includes additional assessment of the child's needs and a comprehensive support service. Adoption Link is a new on-line family finding service which enables more adopter led matching. One child was matched through the IAAM scheme in 2014-15.

4.9	Inter-agency placements 2014-15	Number of families	Number of children
	Placements made with voluntary adoption agencies	4	5
	Placements made with families approved by other local authorities	3	3
	Children from other local authorities placed with Derby City approved adopters	3	6

- 4.10 The table shows the number of children placed with via inter agency placements. Two children were placed with potential adopters on a fostering basis under changes to the care planning regulations. This is an area of work which is being developed so that those children who are likely to have a plan for adoption and where there are no suitable family members identified can be placed directly with potential adopters on a fostering basis.
- 4.11 One child's adoption placement disrupted prior to the granting of an adoption order. A disruption meeting has since been held to identify lessons which can be learned and to inform the planning for that child's future.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Not applicable

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Hazel Lymbery; Director of Specialist Services, 01332 642669 hazel.lymbery@derby.gov.uk
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Lyn Bugarski Professional Adviser to the Adoption Panel, 01332 643816, lyn.bugarski@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Adoption Statement of Purpose

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The cost of providing the Adoption Service is contained within fixed cost-centre budgets.
In the event of an appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) the cost falls on the adoption service provider. The fee is around £2500 for each case. There have been no cases referred to the IRM.

Legal

- 2.1 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.

Personnel

- 3.1 In July 2015 as a result of a management restructure a new post of Head of Service for Fostering and Adoption was created and Sally Penrose recruited. The adoption service is made up 1.5 whole time equivalent team managers and 10.4 whole time equivalent social workers who carry out the full range of adoption activities.

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- 4.1 None

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The service continues to give due consideration to race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion, and disability in relation to children being placed and for adults who apply to become adopters.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 This is considered at all stages of the recruitment, assessment, training and support of adopters. All the managers in the service have completed mandatory Health and Safety training.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

8.1 The adoption service relocated to the Council House on 16 December 2014.

Risk Management

9.1 Risk is managed at all stages of the adoption process.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The adoption service supports the Councils priorities of
- inspiring start in life
 - inspiring start in life by improving educational attainment
 - inspiring working life by improving skills and creating jobs