



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Children's & Education (DCS)
DATE:	Thursday, 13 October 2022

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children, Young People and Education
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
KEY DECISION:	N

SUBJECT: Adoption Annual Report 2021 - 2022

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Head of Service for the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) has written this report which provides a review of adoption activity for 2021/22.

It includes Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) children specific information.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board is asked to note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

Adoption Now is a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) that provides Adoption Services on behalf of a consortium of six Local Authorities. These include Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside.

Blackburn with Darwen staff are seconded to the RAA.

Tracking of cases takes place bi-monthly. Seconded RAA staff and their Manager attend this meeting (now held by Teams) to consider the children's adoption journey.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

- During the year 24 children were subject to a decision that they Should Be Placed For Adoption (SHOBPA). Of the 24 children 9 were in the 0-2 age range 8 in the 3-4 age range, with 7 being over the age of 5.

- On 31/03/2022 there were 11 children with a plan for adoption, subject to placement order. This means that Court agree with the Local Authority care plan of adoption. 9 were linked to prospective Adopters and awaiting match. 1 child awaiting being placed with their brothers and sisters and 1 child's Foster Carers being assessed as Adopters.
- Children are matched by sharing their profile at Exchange Days. This is an event where Adopters can meet and hear directly from Social Workers and Foster Carers about children needing adoptive families. In the past year the RAA are using Link Maker which is a safe and secure online platform that supports Family Finding for children. Activity Day has taken place in February 2022 with another one planned for later in the year.
- In terms of approved Adopters there have been 76 which is a 13% reduction from last year at 87 but this is still less than the national trend seeing 16% reduction. Of note, there has been an increase in approving Adopters who can meet the needs of siblings, older children and those needing early permanence.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The operational budgets supporting adoption are transferred to Adoption Now at the beginning of each financial year and combined with the budgets from the other five local authorities. The costs of placing children with Adopters outside of Adoption Now in 2021/22 was £131,087 against a budget of £330,000, an underspend of £198,913. The Adoption Service as a whole returned a reduced underspend of £78,332, predominantly due to the additional staffing pressures outlined in Appendix 1.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None identified

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

9. CONSULTATIONS

None required

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Amy Brooks, Judith Fennell, Helen Kane
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DATE:	16/09/2022
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Adoption Annual Report 2021-2022 (Regional Adoption Agency)
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