



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Services
(Please Select) (Please Select...)

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Children's Services
(Please Select)

DATE: 13 September 2018

**PORTFOLIO/S
AFFECTED:** Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Adoption Service 6 Monthly Report

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Adoption Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes this six monthly report.

3. BACKGROUND

This is the first six monthly report to be produced since the Blackburn with Darwen Adoption Service became part of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adoption NoW. This is a consortium arrangement entered into by 6 local authorities in order to deliver more efficient and effective adoption services in line with the central government agenda for adoption.

Adoption NoW went live in November 2017, whilst the first weeks of this review period were covered by Blackburn with Darwen's in-house adoption service the data covers the whole six month period.

In order to ensure a close working partnership with the RAA some changes have been made to internal processes. This includes care planning meetings being scheduled for a time that enables RAA attendance. These systems are now embedded and working well. Staffing difficulties that were encountered during the first three months of transition have now been resolved.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

1. The main issue of concern during the last 12 months has been the increasing number of children nationally requiring adoptive placements which is now outstripping the national supply of adopters. This is a complete reversal of the position from just over 12 months ago when there were more adopters than children and adopters experienced a long wait for a child /children. The children most affected by this are those who are harder to place, namely, older children, sibling groups and children with additional needs. On 31st March there were 14 children with Placement Orders waiting to be

matched.

2. Since Adoption NoW went live, 45 % of children matched across the RAA six local authorities have been matched with in-house adopters and will not incur the considerable inter –agency fee. The RAA has launched a number of recruitment campaigns across the region to increase the availability of in-house adopters. 21 adopters have been approved since the RAA went live on 20th November 2017 and at the end of March there were 31 adopters available to a variety of children. The RAA has held an Exchange Day and is planning an Activity Day to promote further in-house matches.

3. There has been an increase in the availability of panels which are now run weekly by the RAA, with at least one per month is held in Blackburn. This is working well. Preparation groups run monthly.

4. The adoption support service now covers the 6 local authorities with 311 cases open at the end of the year. Adoption support staff with different therapeutic skills and qualifications have been brought together which has enabled the service to provide a wider variety of therapies to meet the needs of adoptive families.

5. The total income from placements made with Blackburn with Darwen adopters fell in the second half of the year bringing the total for the year to £196,250, against an income target for the year of £360,000. The total spent on placing children with outside agencies also fell in the second half of the year bringing the total to £502,094 for the whole year compared to the annual budget of £602,400.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As per the agreed financial model, there will be a gradual transition of resources from LAs to the RAA over a two and a half year period. Based on the estimated current levels of operational expenditure to be combined initially, with Blackburn with Darwen contributing £103,958.41 towards non-staffing related operational expenditure, Blackburn with Darwen's share of any surplus/deficit generated within the RAA would be in the region of 19% of the RAA total from 18/19 onwards.

Under the current model of Adoption a system of interagency fees exists, which are payable between Local Authorities when placing a child with an adopter from another Local Authority. In the medium term, it is expected that increased efficiency in the recruitment of adopters within Adoption NoW will generate cost savings on interagency fees for participant Local Authorities.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is required to meet statutory requirements as set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Adoption.'

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No resource implications 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)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

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:	1.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson
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DATE:	8 th August 2018
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Adoption 6 Month report
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