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Purpose: For Noting

Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Date	28 NOVEMBER 2019
Title	ISLE OF WIGHT ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT - 1 APRIL 2018 – 31 MARCH 2019
Report of / to	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is compiled under the National Minimum Standards 2013 (Standard 25.6) and the Care Standards Act 2000. Its purpose is to inform policy and scrutiny committee for children's services of the management and outcomes of the Adoption Service from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Adoption Service comprises an adoption team manager, one senior practitioner social worker, three social workers, two part-time social workers, two part-time adoption child practitioners/support workers and two administrators.
3. The Hampshire service manager for adoption continues to have responsibility for the management of the Isle of Wight Adoption Service.
- 4 Appendix A sets out data of the key activities of the service for 2018-19.

Services provided by the Isle of Wight Adoption Service

5. **The Isle of Wight Adoption Team**

The Isle of Wight Adoption Service covers all areas of adoption work, unlike many larger local authorities which have specific teams specialising in different areas. The following areas of work and support are offered by the service:

- A front door service is provided for all enquiries in respect of adoption.
- The preparation, assessment and support of adopters from the point of enquiry through to the granting of an adoption order.
- Child's permanence reports.

- Adoption order applications.
- Family finding for children.
- Post adoption support.
- Special guardianship assessments.
- Step-parent adoption order applications.
- Access to birth records counselling.

6. Over the year, the team has dealt with **32** enquiries of individuals seeking to adopt. This compares to a figure of **35** for the previous year. Although this is slightly lower than last year, enquiries have remained relatively consistent and reflect the low level of marketing activity that has taken place during 2018-19. To address this, a similar marketing strategy to Hampshire's has been implemented and a marketing assistant, a joint post for adoption and fostering, had been recruited to.

There was some delay in this becoming effective as the original post holder left after six months and a further round of recruitment was necessary. The current post holder has been employed since November 2019 and has the specific task of increasing enquiries to ensure we have sufficient adopters to meet the Isle of Wight's needs. Hampshire's marketing officer has supported this post and assisted with marketing and recruitment for the Isle of Wight.

The recruitment strategy includes commissioning a digital agency to target prospective adopters, radio, working with faith groups, schools, health, the police, fire service, alongside a range of recruitment events during 2018-19. All marketing has been targeted to 'pull in' prospective adopters who have the skills and experience to meet the needs of the Isle of Wight's children who need adoptive families. This activity was due to transfer to the regional adoption agency, Adopt South, in April 2019 to ensure a wider recruitment strategy is implemented for the new organisation.

Enquiries for adoption	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
April	3	0	2
May	1	2	3
June	1	2	0
July	3	2	3
August	2	3	2
September	2	1	0
October	3	5	5
November	2	3	4
December	3	5	4
January	4	9	4
February	3	1	3
March	3	2	2
Total enquiries	30	35	32

7. Of the **32** enquiries received over the year, **13** enquiries did not progress to a pre-stage visit. Five closed due to a lack of response from the enquirer following an initial phone call. Other reasons for enquiries not progressing included:

- smoke/wish to adopt a child under five years;
- decided to go to other local authority or voluntary agency;
- not the right time;
- registration of interest form (RIF) left with applicants who weren't yet ready to proceed;
- initial visits arranged but not yet completed.

8. The Adoption Team provides a duty service and ensures that all enquiries are responded to within 24 hours and follow up calls are made prior to any enquiry being closed. If required, applicants can be contacted during evenings and weekends to ensure a telephone discussion is held with them.

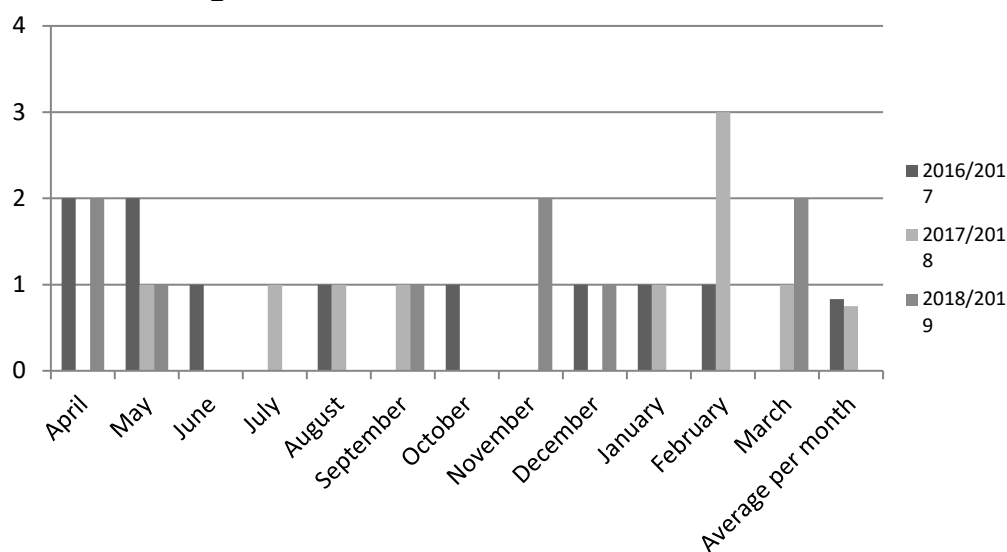
9. Of the **32** prospective adoptive households who made enquiries, **19** progressed to a pre-stage visit. All were visited within the required ten working days. The Adoption Team ensures that applicants are visited without delay and at a time suitable for the applicant.

Nine prospective adopters wished to progress and completed registration of interest forms, the same number as last year.

Of the ten households that did not progress following a pre-stage visit, the reasons are as follows:

- **Five** - had RIFs left with them but after further deliberation felt the time was not right for them as a family.
- **Two** - felt it was not the right time by the end of the visit.
- **One** – was a single parent who wanted a playmate for his daughter therefore this was inappropriate.
- **One** - couple were not living together, had no intention to live together but wanted to adopt jointly. Counsellor out.
- **One** - found they were expecting a baby.

Number of registrations of interest forms returned

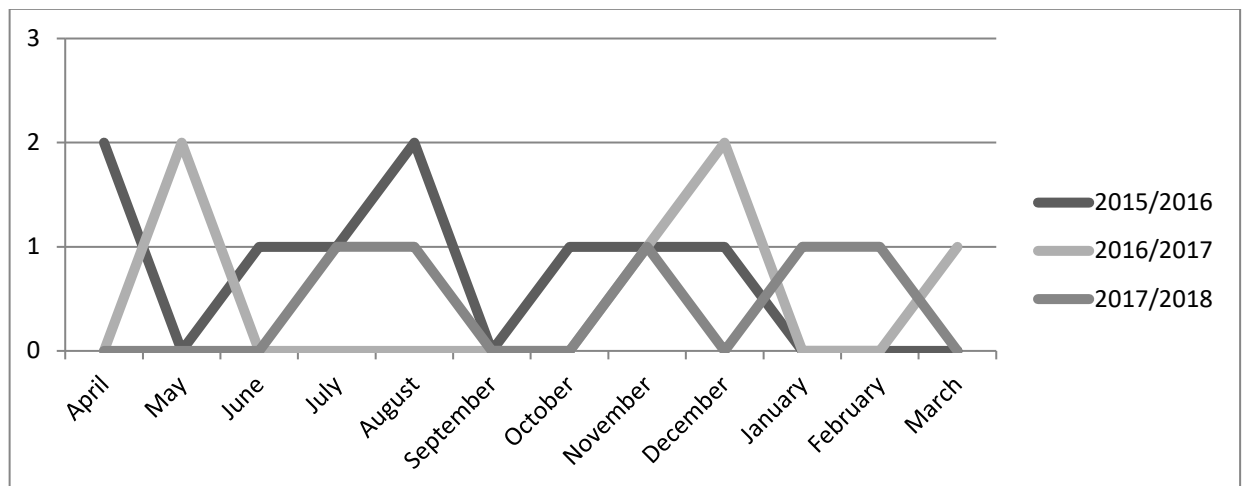


April 2016 - March 2017- Total- 10
April 2017 - March 2018 - Total- 9
April 2018 - March 2019 - Total - 9

Assessment

10. The Isle of Wight approved **three** households during 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. This is two less than the previous year 2017-2018 and five households were approved during 2016–2017.
11. The Isle of Wight 's approval rate across all four quarters was as follows: Q1- two; Q2- none; Q3- none; Q4- one.
12. Although the number of enquiries has remained relatively consistent this has not translated into increased approvals. This is due to a number of prospective adopters, particularly in Stage 1, not being suitable to progress. With the advent of Adopt South it is anticipated that a target of 12 assessments will be completed by the Isle of Wight hub. These will be generated by the dedicated marketing and recruitment team activity in Adopt South.
13. While the national data suggests that the number of adopter approvals has continued to fall over the last four years and there continues to be a gap between available adopters and children needing placements, the new targeted marketing strategy that is being implemented by Adopt South will ensure that we maximise on the number of potential adoptive families within our region. This will ensure that there are sufficient regional adopters for the children that can be placed in families on the Island where this is considered appropriate.

Panel activity



- **Total for 2016-17** - 5
- **Total for 2017-18** - 5
- **Total for 2018-19** - 3

14. All three assessments completed during 2018-19 were recommended for approval by the panel.
15. No cases have been referred to the independent review mechanism (IRM) which provides adoptive applicants in England with the option of applying to an independent body to review the adoption agency's decision.

16. The average adopter journey overall from commencing Stage 1 to approval was **4.6 months** during 2018-19, an improvement on last year when the average was **five months** and on the previous year which was **eight months**. The improved scrutiny and monitoring of the assessment process continues to have a positive impact and adopters are receiving a timely service. This is also within the government's timescale of six months.
17. Stage 1 of the adoption assessment should be completed within two months. The average timescale for completion of Stage 1 assessments this year was 1.9 months, although last year's average was 1.6 months, this continues to be within government timescales. This increase reflects the additional time being spent by social workers to support couples to complete this stage.
18. The actions proposed in last year's report were fully implemented and have had the desired impact to significantly improve the timeliness of Stage 1 applications. This included adding the checks and references to the initial application form so that all of the information required for checks to be actioned is received at the time of the initial application, alongside balanced decisions being made about progression to Stage 2 whilst awaiting some checks.
19. Stage 2 of the adoption assessment should be completed within four months unless there are exceptional circumstances that led to the agency not being able to make a decision within that time, or the prospective adopter requests that the decision is delayed.
20. Of the assessments completed, **100 per cent** were completed within this timescale. This has been maintained from last year's performance and improvement on two years ago when **80 per cent** were completed within timescales. The average time for completion of Stage 2 was **3.6 months**, again, well within government timescales.
21. Again, the proposed actions from last year's report have been fully implemented and performance has reached the required standards. The actions included the delays in the timeliness of Stage 2 being addressed through setting clear expectations for staff around assessment visits and the writing up of assessments. Close scrutiny has been maintained by the team manager during the last year.
22. Fast track assessments relate to those applicants who are second time adopters or are foster carers applying to adopt. The statutory guidance allows these applicants to bypass Stage 1 of the process and enter straight into Stage 2. Timescales for fast track assessments should be no longer than four months from acceptance of the application to the end of Stage 2. The Isle of Wight completed two fast track assessments during 2018-19. These were completed in, **3.25 months** and **1.05 months**. These were both within the government timescales. One fast track assessment was undertaken during 2016-17, which was completed in **five months** and none were completed in 2017-2018.
23. At the end of March 2019 there were:
 - **two** sets of applicants in Stage 1;

- **three** set of prospective adopters in Stage 2;
 - **four** sets of prospective adopters being supported post-approval by the team.
24. As at 31 March 2019, there were **two** households approved and waiting to be matched. There continues to be a focus on matching Island adopters with Island children where this has been risk assessed. This will need to be discussed within the matching considerations going forward within the new regional agency.
 25. Over the last year, **three** adoptive households were linked with children placed from other local authorities. This has generated an income of **£98,000** for the local authority, this compares to **£135,000** last year when **four** sets of adopters assessed and then linked to children from other authorities.
 26. **Two** applicants withdrew or were counselled out (assessed as not suitable) during Stage 1.
 27. **One** household withdrew as it was not the right time and **one** household was counselled out due to concerns about their parenting style. No households withdrew in Stage 2.
 28. The average time for prospective adopters to be matched following approval was **14.2** months, which compares to **seven months** during 2017-2018 and **4.5 months** during 2016-17.
 29. The significant increase in time from approval to matching from last year is due to one couple not being matched for three years and five months due to having very specific criteria of children they wished to adopt. The couple wanted two mixed race girls under the age of two. They were already adopters of two older mixed-race boys hence the specific requirements for a follow on adoption. We were at the point of reviewing their criteria when a potential link was identified in November 2017. This then took the child's local authority 11 months to complete due to protracted care proceedings. If this couple are excluded, then the average for the four remaining couples is **seven months** which evidences that performance has been maintained overall.
 30. The Adoption Team is also involved in joint recruitment events with the Fostering Service as well as delivering the training and preparation course for prospective adopters.
 31. The Adoption Team also undertakes step parent adoption work. The team received **14** enquiries during 2018 -19 which is the same as received in 2017-18.
 32. One new assessment has been undertaken this year as this was instructed by a solicitor's notification. There were none the previous year and prior to that there was a steady decline in this activity as a direct result of implementing a more rigorous approach. This followed a meeting with the courts where it was identified that step-parent applications in the region are significantly higher than other areas. The team are continuing to actively support families to

explore all other potential options for permanence prior to considering step-parent adoption, which is in line with the advice and guidance issued through the court.

33. The Isle of Wight Adoption Service undertakes all special guardianship order assessments. A special guardianship order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement.
34. The team received **31** referrals during 2018-19, compared to **29** in 2017-2018 and **36** in 2016-17. The team have co-worked on **17** of these cases with the Fostering Service where dual special guardianship assessments and connected carer reports have been directed in court proceedings.
35. The level of work has remained consistent in this area as courts are continuing to direct a range of assessments and are requesting that special guardianship assessments are routinely considered in the majority of care cases.

Children's adoption work

36. A social worker is allocated to all cases to begin parallel planning, where adoption may be an option and is being considered as part of childcare planning. On the making of a placement order, the adoption social worker becomes the child's case holding social worker and takes over the responsibility for all of the statutory work for those looked after children. The work includes statutory visits, family finding, supervised contact between the children and birth family, court work involved in the adoption proceedings, writing later life letters for the children and ensuring that each child has a life story book.
37. The adoption child practitioners assist with the following;
 - direct contact between children and their birth families;
 - individual support to children as part of adoption preparation;
 - support to foster carers to prepare carers' reports for social workers;
 - support the preparation of life story books;
 - direct post adoption support work with children and families as directed by the post adoption social worker;
 - joint facilitation of life story work training for the wider service;
 - co-leading the 'Adopting Changes' training for adopters;
 - support to the team manager to ensure all adoption allowances and SGO allowances are reviewed regularly in line with requirements to ensure appropriate financial oversight and management.
38. The Adoption Team is represented at all local authority legal planning meetings. The team undertakes all child permanence reports for children within parallel planning. There were **42** requests for child permanence reports received during 2018-2019. This compares to **34** requests received during 2017-2018 and **35** requests in 2016-17. There has not, however, been a

correlated rise in the number of placement orders being granted which has decreased slightly to **nine** from **13** in the previous year. While the conversion rate remains low, the work involved in commencing the child permanence reports requires a high level of resource from the team to meet the requirements of parallel planning.

Post adoption support

39. The team has continued to provide a range of support services for adoptive families and children, in addition to support to birth parents and their families. There are currently **51** adoptive families on the team's data base who receive a newsletter and regular updates. This represents a significant decrease from the previous year of **98** families. This significant reduction is due to changes in GDPR law. All 98 families were approached for consent. This has been sent out again to encourage a higher take up.
40. Services provided during 2018-19 include the following:
- A counselling service to adopted adults who were seeking access to records about their adoption and family of origin. A service was provided to **ten** adults during the year, compared to **11** last year.
 - **Zero** support/counselling to birth relatives seeking to make contact with a relative who had been adopted. **Two** referrals for birth relatives who requested support/counselling in relation to losing a relative to adoption.
 - Requests for adoption support services and an adoption support needs assessment. **Twenty-nine** families were open to a social worker with an active adoption support plan during 2018-19, which is one more than last year. **Thirty** adoption support needs assessments were completed, **one** less last year.
 - Supporting children and families post adoption in common assessment framework (CAF) meetings.
 - Adoption Information Exchange, overseeing contact arrangements between adopted children and their birth families. It facilitated **100** exchanges during 2018-19, an identical number to last year.
 - Regular support groups for adopters run independently by a local adopter and supported by the team.
 - Full-time duty service for information/advice and support.
 - Consultation sessions were available for adopters.
 - Links with the Education Psychology department, from whom the team purchased a set number of consultations and training courses.
 - 'Moving on' training was delivered jointly with the Fostering Service to prepare foster carers to move children into adoptive placements.
 - Direct therapeutic life story work was provided.
 - Support Groups were provided for approved adopters who have not yet been matched with a child.
 - An LGBT support group was set up last year and the adopters are now sustaining this informally.
 - The 'Adopting Changes' programme has been successfully delivered to a mixed audience of adoptive parents and special guardians.

41. **Thirty-six** applications to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) have been made since April 2018. **One** application was withdrawn by us (due to child's changing needs), all other applications were successful. This achieved an income of **£49,903**, which includes **£3,600** for the 'Adopting Changes' course, which was delivered by the Adoption Team for the first time. A sum of **£8,097** was for specialist assessments while the remaining **£41,805** was for therapy and therapeutic parenting courses. This compares to **32** applications during previous financial year, achieving an income of **£58,834**, of which **£7,832** was for specialist assessments and **£51,001** for therapy and therapeutic parenting courses.
42. The Adoption Support Fund is a national, government fund, available for children up to and including the age of 21 (or 25 with an SEN statement/education health and care plan) who have been adopted from local authority care in England or adopted from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland but living in England. From 1 April 2016. The fund became available for Inter-country adoptions (once the placement has been made and the child is in England) and for special guardians who care for children who were looked after immediately prior to the special guardianship order.
43. The services included therapeutic parenting courses, play therapy, psychotherapy sessions; trauma based sensory processing assessments and sensory integration and attachment sessions.

Inter country adoptions

44. There have not been any requests for new intercountry adoption assessments this year. As requests are very low, given the level of knowledge that is required to undertake an Inter-country adoption assessment, the team would explore commissioning assessments with a specialised agency, should this be required. The team did however support a couple who had previously adopted a child from Guatemala while living in the Virgin Islands. On their return to England they wished to formalise the adoption order under the UK legal system. This was to ensure that the child had recognised rights as a UK national. This was an involved and difficult legal process however this was successfully achieved this year.
45. **Children with plans for adoption; placed for adoption and prospective adopters approved from 1 April to 31 March 2015-16 to 2018-2019.**

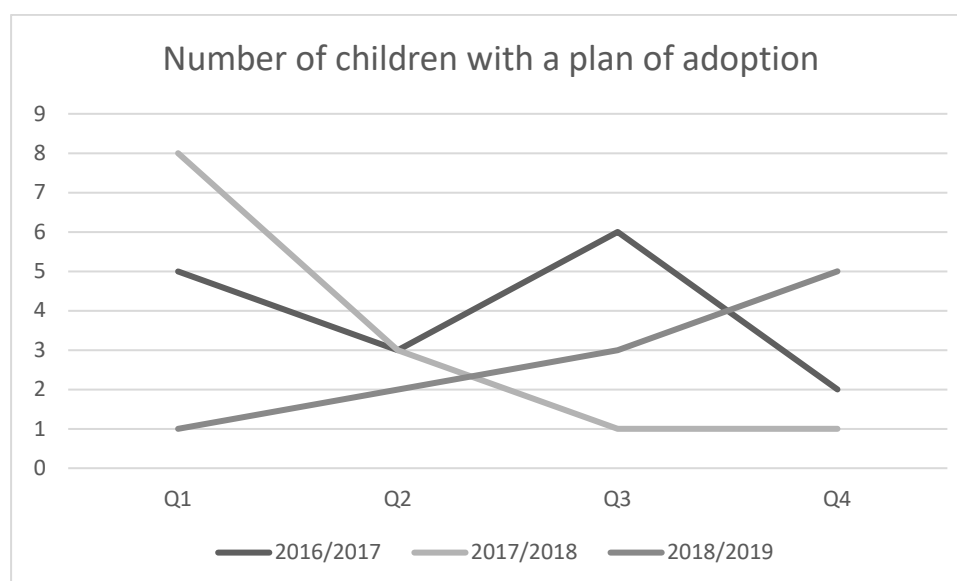
1 April to 31 March				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-2019
Children's plans for adoption	14	14	17	14
Plans for adoption rescinded	4	1	2	3
Children linked/placed	15	13	8	10
Adoption orders made	9	16	13	11

Disruptions (pre-adoption order)	0	0	0	0
Approved adopters	9	5	5	3

46. There were **14** children's plans referred to the agency decision maker (ADM) or adoption panel (where the child is relinquished) during 2018-19. This is **three** less than last year, 2017- 2018.

The breakdown of these is as follows: Q1- four; Q2- two; Q3- four; Q4- four.

Children's plans for adoption



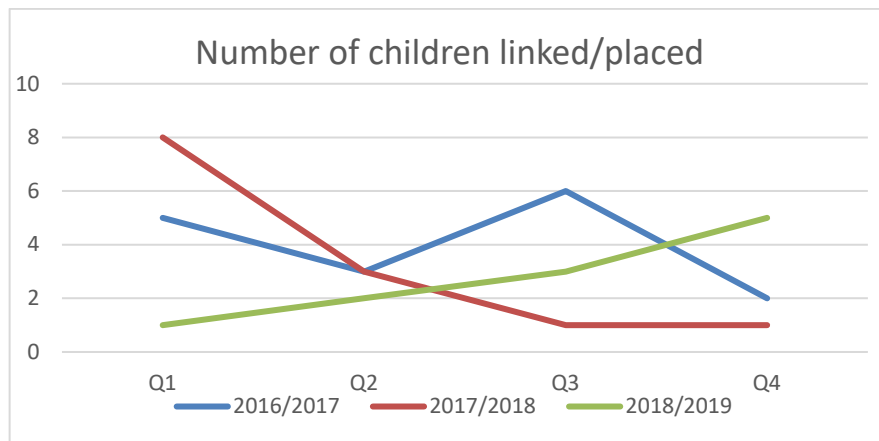
2018-19 **Total 14**
2017-18 **Total 17**
2016-17 **Total 14**

47. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, there were **three** children who had their plans for adoption rescinded, compared to **two** children in 2017-18.
48. The plans were rescinded due to the Placement Orders not being made. A sibling group of two children were made subject to a full care order and placed with grandparents. The other child was made subject to a special guardianship order to a grandparent.
49. The Adoption Team continues to have close, positive working relationships with the child care teams from the point of legal planning to ensure ADM decisions are requested at the latest possible point to enable all other options to have been ruled out. Even with this measure in place, there are still occasions, however, when last minute approaches are made to the court by other relatives which require decisions to be delayed.
50. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, **nine** Placement Orders were made on the Isle of Wight. This compares to **13** last year.
51. At the end of March 2018, there were **three** single children awaiting adoption with placement orders, compared to three, one single child and one sibling

group of two, in 2017–2018. All three children have additional needs due to complex medical conditions.

- 52. A total of **ten** children were placed with **eight** adoptive families during 2018-19. This compares to **eight** children being placed with **eight** adoptive families in 2017-18.
- 53. **Three** children were able to be placed with Island adopters this year, compared to **one** in 2017-18. This is assessed in all cases to ensure that Island children maintain their links to the Island when it is safe to do so.
- 54. **Two** children are linked and have planned introductions due to commence. They will be placed in April and May 2019.

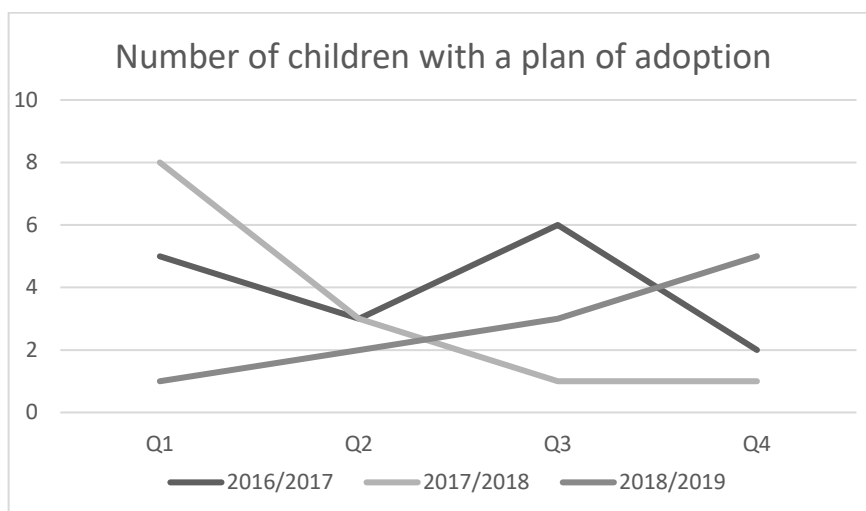
Number of children linked/placed



2018 – 2019 Total 10
2017- 2018 Total - 8
2016- 2017 Total - 13

- 55. Appendix B lists the children linked and placed in other agency adoptive placements during 2018-19.
- 56. There have been no disruptions during 2018-19.
- 57. **Eleven** children were adopted between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. This compares to **13** children in 2017-18 and **16** in 2016-17.

58. **Adoption orders**



April 2016 - March 2017 - Total - 16

April 2017 - March 2018 - Total - 13

April 2018 - March 2019 – Total 11

59. During 2018-19, the total spend on inter-agency payments was **£169,000**, compared to **£173,700** in 2017-18, and **£226,000** in 2016-17. These figures include final payments carried over for children placed in the previous year.

60. During 2018-2019, three sets of Island adopters have been matched with four children from other local authorities, providing an income of **£98,000**. During 2017-18, four sets of Island adopters were matched to four siblings from other local authorities, providing an income of **£108,000**. The team has actively sought to sell adopters to offset the interagency fees required for those children that cannot safely remain on the Island.

61. **Breakdown of profile of children with new plans for adoption**

Breakdown of profile of children with new plans for adoption	April 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – March 2017	April 2017- March 2018	April 2018- March 2019
Single male children:	6	4	10	5
Single female children:	1	9	7	5
Sibling pairs:	2 (4 children)	0	3 (6 children)	2 (4 children)
Sibling group of 3:	1 (3 children)	0	0	0

62. **Ethnicity of children with new plans for adoption**

The ethnicity of all of the children placed for adoption in the last three years has been white British.

63. **Ages of children with new plans for adoption at time of agency decision**

April 2016 - March 2017

0-6mths	7-12 months	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5+ yrs	TOTAL
6	0	2	3	1	2	14

April 2017- March 2018

0-6mths	7-12 months	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5+ yrs	TOTAL
0	1	6	4	3	3	17

April 2018- March 2019

0-6mths	7-12 months	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5+ yrs	TOTAL
2	5	3	3	1	0	14

Adoption scorecards

64. Adoption scorecards were introduced by the government as part of an approach to tackle delays in the adoption system. The scorecard allows local authorities and other agencies to monitor their performance and compare it with others.

65. **Scorecard 1 – Average time between the child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family.**

For the 11 children adopted between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, the average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was **337 days** compared to the 13 children adopted between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2017. The average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was **333** days. Therefore, this indicates an improvement in performance despite the low numbers and fluctuations within the cohort, which evidences that staff are both aware of and working to the timescales where achievable.

66. Clear expectations and timescales around matching processes have been set during the past year and have been closely monitored by the team manager and service manager. This has had a significant impact on adoptive families being identified and children moving in, in a timely manner. The regional adoption agency will need to continue this work to achieve timely matches.

67. **Scorecard 2 – Average time between the local authority receiving court authority and the local authority identifying a match.**

For the **11** children adopted between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, the average time between placement order and the local authority identifying a match was **100** days which is within the government's threshold of 121 days.

68. This compares to **96** days for the same period last year. This is a slight decrease but still within time scales. The primary reason is due to one set of siblings and one single child experiencing delays in court proceedings.

69. For the 13 children adopted between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, the average time between placement order and the local authority identifying a match was **98** days which was within the government's threshold of 121 days. This compared to **259** days the previous year and was, again, a significant improvement.
70. Similarly, timescales have been addressed through setting expectations and timescales around matching processes, which has had the desired impact on ensuring there has been minimal delays with matches being identified.
71. **Scorecard 3 – Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family.**
For the children adopted between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, **91 per cent** (ten out of 11 children) waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family, which compares to **46 per cent** last year.
72. For the children adopted between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, **46 per cent** (six out of 13 children) waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family, which compared to **43.75%** the previous year).
73. Timescales will continue to be addressed during the coming year through improved targeted recruitment and continuing to monitor closely timescales around matching processes.

Adoption panel and advisory service

74. The Isle of Wight Adoption Service provides an advisory service which currently oversees the recruitment, training, management and administration of the central list of adoption panel members for the Isle of Wight's Adoption Panel. A team administrator oversees this aspect of the service. This will change going forwards as this activity will be undertaken within the Adopt South, regional adoption agency (RAA).
75. The Isle of Wight has one panel which usually meets for half a day once a month with an agenda containing up to **four** cases. The panels are flexible and extra panels can be convened when needed to meet the needs of the children requiring decisions.
76. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, the panel met on **ten** occasions. **Fourteen** cases were presented to panel during the year; **three** approvals; **nine** linkings and **one** children's plan for a relinquished baby.
77. The Isle of Wight currently has **11** persons on its central list of adoption panel members.
78. Adoption panel members attended two joint training sessions during the year, one with Hampshire panel members in September 2018 and one with the panel members of the four local authorities in March 2019 in preparation for the regional adoption agency 'going live' in April 2019. The panel members are being interviewed to join the RAA panels of which four will be held on the

Island. The Isle of Wight Adoption Team will have access to all the regional panels going forwards to ensure there is no delay in approvals and matching.

79. Adoption panels are required to provide feedback to the agency on the quality of the reports presented to the panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met (that children's and adopter's reports are only completed by registered and experienced social workers or student social workers who are supervised by registered and experienced social workers) and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement.
80. All panel members have up to date appraisals.

CONCLUSION

Adopt South regional adoption agency

81. The Isle of Wight's partners in the regional adoption agency (Adopt South) are Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton local authorities and three voluntary adoption agencies, Barnardo's, Adoption UK and Parents and Children Together (PACT). The aim is to improve adopter recruitment and adoption support, speed up matching and reduce costs.
82. The Isle of Wight Adoption Team has been fully involved in the various workstreams to develop the new processes and procedures for the new agency and to ensure that the needs of Island adopters and children are considered within these arrangements. The Adoption Panel has been kept informed at every stage to ensure it is able to contribute to the new agency. Panel members have been invited to express an interest and to be interviewed to become Adopt South panel members. This is progressing well, and all our current panel members have chosen to go with the new agency. Adopt South was due to launch in April 2019.

Summary and work plan for 2019-20

83. **Strengths during 2018-19 include:**
- matching Island children to Island adopters when it is appropriate and safe;
 - adoption social workers linked to children for parallel planning at an early stage;
 - improved timeliness of Stage 1 assessments;
 - continued timeliness of Stage 2 assessments;
 - numbers of children linked with prospective adopters;
 - improved timeliness of Scorecards 1, 2 and 3;
 - numbers of children adopted;
 - number of successful applications to the Adoption Support Fund;
 - One hundred per cent of life story work and later life letters being completed within government timescales. (to be complete within five days of adoption order);

- a joint adoption and fostering marketing assistant was appointed.

84. **Work plan for 2019-20**

- To integrate fully and work collaboratively with colleagues within the new Adopt South RAA to deliver a high-quality service across the region.
- To establish clear work patterns for Isle of Wight adoption staff that supports both the RAA and the local authority work streams.
- To embed the new policies and procedures in respect of the regional work with prospective adopters, family finding and post adoption
- To support the Adopt South marketing and recruitment strategy, where the drive is to attract adopters who have the child care skills and experience to meet the needs of the children waiting.
- A target of 12 new adoptive family assessments to approvals has been set for the Isle of Wight hub.
- To continue to address, maintain and monitor the timeliness of scorecards 1, 2 and 3.
- To continue to maintain the timeliness of assessments.
- To staff on a rota basis the new advice and support line service for post adoption.
- To continue to make full use of the Adoption Support Fund.
- The Isle of Wight hub has a target of 50 adoption support needs assessments to include reviews.
- To continue to support families to consider alternative orders to a step parent adoption order, in line with the court's view.
- To continue to ensure that parallel planning is undertaken to prevent delay for children requiring adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

85. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

[Appendix A](#) - sets out data of the key activities of the service for 2018-19.

[Appendix B](#) - lists the children linked and placed in other agency adoptive placements during 2018-19.

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