



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS</b>
Date and Time	<b>THURSDAY 9 JUNE 2022 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM</b>
Venue	<b>COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs R Quigley (Chairman), J Lever (Vice-Chairman), D Adams, R Downer, S Ellis, S Hendry, T Outlaw and D Andre
Also Present	Kim Goode, Diane Hiscock, Brian Pope, Paul Thistlewood and Sarah Philipsborn
Apologies	Stuart Ashley, Steve Crocker and Rob Sanders

---

1. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022 be approved.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Hendry declared that he was a School Governor for Holy Cross and Queensgate Primary Schools.

Councillor Quigley stated he had been a foster carer in the past.

3. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

No Public questions were received.

4. **Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings**

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

THAT all Councillors be offered the opportunity to visit the Multi Agency Service Hub (MASH).

## **5. School Governor Recruitment and Retention**

The Governor Support Officer presented a report regarding school governor recruitment and retention on the Island.

It was explained that being a school governor was a voluntary role that was both rewarding and time consuming. Regarding maintained schools, it was stated that there were currently 91 school governor vacancies which was a 21% vacancy rate, though this had come down from 25%. It was hoped that this downward trend would continue with the increase in virtual training and the ability to carry out responsibilities and duties remotely.

It was pointed out that the Local Authority did not hold data for Academy Schools and although there was communication between the two, the Council took no part in their recruitment of school governors. The Local Authority did not appoint school governors, as that fell under the remit of the individual schools, but the Local Authority did monitor the situation.

It was deemed highly important to encourage and promote the opportunities of school governorship as school governance was not widely known in the community. Induction training, workshops and annual development were said to be measures to help the retention of school governors.

Given the number of school governor posts to fill, it was felt it was important to adopt and adapt to the situation by making links with national organisations, as well as encouraging elected members to support the recruitment drive. It was stated that all school governors had access to the school governor hub and the database, as well as access to the school governor website.

Questions were asked about whether the vacancies were evenly spread across all schools, and whether a single space existed where all vacancies could be seen. It was explained that the vacancies tended to fluctuate across all the Island schools, and that no single space existed at present where all school governor vacancies were displayed.

The Cabinet Member indicated that it was proposed to undertake a recruitment drive in the local media. Details were still being finalised and these would be circulated to the Committee in due course.

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT** the contents of the report on School Governor Recruitment be noted.

## **6. UK Settlement Scheme for Refugees**

The Area Director for Children's Services presented a report on the UK Resettlement Scheme for Refugees with regards to the Isle of Wight Council.

It was stated that the UK's Homes for Ukraine Scheme was launched on 14 March 2022 and that there were 93 Ukrainian refugees on the Island to date.

It was explained that Children's Services were part of a cross-Council co-ordinated partnership with Community Action Isle of Wight and other organisations to deliver and support this scheme and these families.

After initial teething problems, it was claimed that the work across the Council concerning the Ukrainian refugees was going well and that Adult and Social Care had undertaken the host and household checks of those offering homes. ID checks and DBS checks, including all those who were 16+ residing at the property, had also been carried out by the relevant authorities. Second visits to the Ukrainian families took place after schools, GPs and other support services had been arranged. There had only been 1 family rematch so far.

The Area Director for Children's Services added a brief report on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children with regards to the Isle of Wight

It was stated that the Isle of Wight Council was part of the mandated National Transfer Scheme and that a local authority did not need to accept unaccompanied asylum-seeking children where the cohort already makes up 0.07% of the general child population (which equates to 17 children for the Isle of Wight.)

The Isle of Wight Council had previously made the decision that the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, allocated to the Isle of Wight, would be placed on the mainland so that their cultural needs could be met and that they could live with carers who share a similar ethnic and cultural background.

The 17 children that were looked after by the Isle of Wight Council had an allocated social worker. They all received the same statutory services and support as other looked after children including health assessments, dental and optician checks. The Children were placed mainly in Croydon, but the Isle of Wight Council retained full statutory responsibility for them and met up regularly with the children

A comment was made about the sustainability of such a policy given that the child refugee situation was becoming increasingly difficult.

RESOLVED:

THAT the contents of the reports be noted.

## **7. Fostering Annual Report**

The Service Manager, Children in Care, presented the Fostering Annual Report 2021/2022.

The report provided an update on the Isle of Wight Council's fostering service in line with the fostering services statutory regulations and guidance.

It was stated that there were 98 registered and approved foster carer households on the Island as of end of March 2022 and that there was a target of recruiting a further 10 fostering households in 2022/23, as the number of foster carers needed to increase considerably. It was hoped that by increasing the allowances that foster carers received, it would help the recruitment of more foster carers along with the delivery of the Modernising Placements Programme.

It was explained that recruitment statistics were lower than in the previous year and this mirrored the national trend. The reasons for this were put down to the higher cost of living and life post lockdown.

It was hoped that continued marketing, local media, virtual drop-ins and face-to face events within the community would bring an upturn in foster carer numbers.

Foster carers were supported by the fostering support hub as well as numerous support groups, training and activities which had been welcomed by foster carers.

It was stated that the Council had a Complaints and Allegations against Foster Carers procedure as required by the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, and that there had been 7 allegations. A review of the policy was to be undertaken with staff and foster carers and this would make use of case studies.

It was concluded that the fostering team had continued to work well and had been able to demonstrate a greater level of compliance across all areas of work, the only exception being, unannounced visits, which would be made a priority for the next year.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Fostering report be noted.

## **8. Adoption Annual Report**

The Service Manager, Children in Care, presented the Isle of Wight Annual Adoption report which set out the progress of the IW adoption team 2021-2022.

The report tracked recruitment activity, interagency activity, complaints and allegations statistics, regarding number of children placed and Adoption Orders.

The Service Manager highlighted the topic of score cards and explained that this was the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. The scorecard figures were deemed as good with 449 days compared to the government threshold of 426 days, and although there were some children who took longer to find an adopted family, there had been no disruptions for a long period of time. The slightly longer timeframe for the assessments was counterbalanced by the fact that there was a much better permanency outcome rate.

The Head of Adopt South contributed to the presentation with a Summary Report from Adopt South with Isle of Wight highlights.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Adoption report be noted.

## **9. Performance and Budget Update**

The Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion and the Area Director, Children's Services presented a report on Children's Services Performance Quarter Four 2021/2022.

It was stated that demand across social care and early help remained high and that the social care services sustained a good performance. This was highlighted by the fact that a written letter following an Ofsted focused visit in July 2021 stated that the senior leadership team had continued at a pace with their transformation project since the previous inspection in November 2018, when they were judged as good.

The challenge remained the recruitment of social workers which was not only hampered by the trend of a national shortage of social workers, but also by the 'Island factor' and the difficulties to recruit new staff due to poor transport links with the mainland and a shortage of housing.

It was explained that the Council relied on agency staff, but it needed to also recruit more social workers. A new marketing and recruitment strategy was being introduced and pay scales were being reviewed to make jobs in social care more attractive. This was being done with adult social care where similar problems were being experienced. It was hoped that a further campaign to cite the Island as an attractive place to live and work would reap benefits of more people wanting to seek employment with the Council.

The impact of Covid, successive lockdowns, rising fuel and energy prices, as well as an increase in food prices, had led to a spike in referrals and the trend was continuing. There was a greater reliance on food banks and community pantries as the cost-of-living crisis continued to effect families.

The Council had been consistently strong in its assessment of children but there were many more new families coming into the system.

It was deemed essential that the integral work with the schools continue.

When looking at education and inclusion, it was pointed out that the Isle of Wight had a higher proportion of 16 and 17year olds given an offer of education, employment and training (98.2% compared with the national average of 94.3%.)

It was stated that 29% of Education, Health and Care Plans were produced within 20 weeks for the last quarter, though the national average was around 55%. It was felt that recent new appointments and staff changes were now resulting in a much higher number of plans being produced within 20 weeks and April 2022 had seen 75% of plans being produced within the recommended time frame.

The number of children being electively home educated was 531 which was higher than the same point last year (508 children), of which the local authority had contact with 80% of the families.

Permanent exclusions in 2021/22 were 5, after 2 terms, compared to 17 in total for 20/2021. It was hoped that this trend would continue and that there would be a much lower number of exclusions in total for 2021/22.

The number of fixed period exclusions in 2021/22 was 869 after two terms (1092 in total in 2020/21). It was surmised that one of the reasons for this high figure was likely to be the fact that children who might have previously been permanently excluded were now in this bracket.

Attendance statistics which had been recently produced for the 2020/21 academic year showed that the attendance rate on the Isle of Wight was 95.3% which mirrored the national average of 95.4%.

RESOLVED:

THAT the contents of the report be noted

#### 10. **Workplan 2022-25**

The current workplan was noted and it was highlighted that a date had yet to be set for consideration of the Carers Strategy.

#### 11. **Members' Question Time**

Questions were asked about the trend of fixed period exclusions and it was stated in response that some fixed period exclusions were the same students. It was added that maturity levels in some children had dropped during Covid and the lockdown, and that some children didn't know the boundaries as previously.

Questions were asked about the definition of a 'suitable education' regarding home educated children, as it was brought to the committee's attention that all local authorities would soon have to register home educated children and assess the suitability of the education provided. It was suggested that the easier way of dealing with this point was to reverse the question as to what was unsuitable.

The decision to keep Rookley and Chillerton Primary school open was highlighted with respect to there having been no uplift in the pupil numbers for September 2022, and the intake remained at 15. An update was asked for regarding the policy used for place planning in the decision-making process. In response it was stated that this would be discussed in the autumn as there was currently a government White Paper on the issue.

Questions were asked about the distribution and duration of food vouchers and how could the distress to families be avoided in terms of the duration of the scheme and accessibility of the vouchers.

It was explained that the funding came from the government and the Council was told that this was only for the short term. The Local Authority had received a set amount with a set criteria. The Council had not known if more funding would become available. It was stated that further funding did subsequently become available, but that the criteria had changed. It was pointed out that there then was another review of criteria, and that pensioners needed to receive a 1/3. In order to deal with situation, the Council had other schemes in place for the summer and in particular the summer holidays.

It was reiterated that Poverty was a top priority for the Administration.

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank



# **POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS – PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES 2021/22**

Date	Item	Actions	Comments
<b>17 June 2021</b>			
	Performance and Budget Update	THAT arrangements be made for members of the Committee to visit to the Multi Agency Service Hub (Mash).	To be arranged when circumstances permit.
	Young Carers Support	THAT the draft Isle of Wight Carers Strategy following a review be submitted to the Committee for comment before formal approval is given by the Cabinet.	Still to be actioned.
<b>9 December 2021</b>			
	Committee's Work Plan	<p>Reports on school exclusions, school governor recruitment and retention, social worker recruitment and retention, and elective home education, would be added to the workplan with the dates and timings to be confirmed after the meeting.</p> <p>In addition items relating to autism and the Youth Trust should be considered for inclusion but required some further scoping. The work of the Youth Justice Team was recommended for inclusion in the workplan</p>	<p>School exclusions and home education were considered at the March 2022 meeting,</p> <p>School governor recruitment to be considered at the June 2022 meeting.</p> <p>A date to be finalised for social worker recruitment and retention</p> <p>The scope and outcomes relating to items on autism and the Youth Trust to be finalised by the Committee.</p>
<b>3 March 2022</b>			
	School exclusions	THAT an item be placed in the workplan to review the position in a year's time.	Included in the workplan for March 2023

		<p>THAT this matter be discussed in more detail at the next meeting of the Schools and Education Attainment Support Panel</p>	<p>The Panel next meets on 20 June 2022.</p>
	<p>Committee's workplan</p>	<p>The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills stated that an Annual Survey by the Youth Trust was due to be published shortly and it was suggested that this could be included on the June agenda as it would be useful to feed into the Green Paper.</p> <p>It was suggested not to delay the item of School Governors on the work plan as this was to tie in with the future recruitment drive for School Governors, but the Youth Offending item could be discussed in September 2022.</p>	<p>Further details are being obtained in relation to the survey. An item dealing with the Green Paper has been included in the workplan for the September 2022 meeting.</p> <p>Following further discussion between the chairman and officers the item looking at Youth Offending has been slipped to a later meeting due to other issues requiring attention at the September 2022 meeting.</p>



# Committee report

Committee

## **POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

Date

**23 MAY 2022**

Title

**ISLE OF WIGHT, SCHOOL GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT**

Report of

**STEVE CROCKER, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

---

### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is designed to provide an over-view on the governance roles and responsibilities in the range of different types of schools which serve the Isle of Wight community, and to provide information on the level of vacancies on the Island and the processes in place to support schools to recruit volunteers into the role.
- 1.2 School governance is a voluntary role. Governing boards (GBs) and trust boards are statutory corporate bodies, responsible for providing strategic direction and a vision for the future of their school. There are 3 main areas of responsibility<sup>1</sup>
  - Ensuring clarity of vision and strategic direction
  - Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
  - Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- 1.3 Boards must be ambitious for all children and committed to continuous improvement of the school or academy to deliver the best possible educational experience. Once appointed, all governors must act with integrity, honesty, objectivity and in the best interests of the pupils of the school irrespective of the constituency which appointed or elected them.

### 2. RECRUITMENT

- 2.1 The Isle of Wight has a high level of governor vacancies, currently at 91 posts, which is approximately 21% and has reduced from 25% over recent months.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Governance Handbook 2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- 2.2 In comparison, vacancies in Hampshire are around 18% and that figure is likely to be broadly indicative of the national figure.
- 2.3 In 2014, the move from a stakeholder model to a requirement for governing board membership to be skills/experienced based gave boards more autonomy in identifying and appointing governors. Schools are expected to be pro-active in seeking prospective applicants with an interest in education and supporting the community, a willingness to develop their own skills, and capacity to give time to the role.
- 2.4 The LA does not appoint governors but works to promote governance as a significant voluntary role and provides support, information and guidance to schools on governor recruitment. This includes monitoring vacancies, training on recruitment strategies and signposting to national governor recruitment organisations, where vacancies can be advertised. The aim is to empower governing boards to be effective in recruiting and retaining governors.
- 2.5 **IW Governor Services**, in partnership with **Hampshire Governor Services** have undertaken recruitment campaigns in recent years. The wider community tends to have limited, or no, awareness of the opportunity to serve as a governor when considering a voluntary role and the LA seeks to promote greater awareness.
- 2.6 Activities have included social media campaigns, radio, and bus shelter advertising, approaching local businesses and organisations, information flyers and leaflets for schools. Community information sessions have also been held to encourage people to volunteer.
- 2.7 More recently an 'Effective Governor Recruitment Workshop' took place on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and was followed up at the Chairs' Network meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 with feedback suggestions and advice. Advice is also provided to clerks to support GB activity.
- 2.8 It is the responsibility of the governing board to identify the skills, abilities and knowledge required for effective governance to support continuing improvement in their school, academy or federation. They should actively seek prospective candidates for appointment and specify criteria for informing the election of Parent and Staff Governors.
- 2.9 Elected members have an important role in maintained schools through nominating individuals for the LA post on the GB in maintained schools. They support schools with this in several ways. Firstly, by responding positively to an approach by a governing board, asking for a nomination for a suitable volunteer they have identified for the LA governor post, in accordance with the IW LA Governor Appointment Procedure. This is called a 'school's nomination'.
- 2.10 Secondly, Councillors are proactive, community-minded and well-connected people, and some are also governors. Councillors can, therefore, promote the governor role within their own networks and personal contacts, in order to encourage suitable people to volunteer. Word of mouth and a personal approach can be very powerful.
- 2.11 The main skills governors require are
- An interest in the performance of the school
  - A desire to contribute to the community

- The ability to look at issues objectively, ask questions and make informed judgements
- A willingness to listen and learn and make the most of development opportunities
- The ability to work as part of a team
- Most governance knowledge can be gained from our training programmes, so a background in education is not a pre-requisite.

### 3. TYPES OF SCHOOLS

3.1 The Isle of Wight community is served by a range of education providers.

3.2 **Maintained Schools** are accountable to and receive funding through the Local Authority. They include -

- COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (Including COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOLS)
- VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS (Faith schools, also accountable to the Diocese)
- VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS (Faith schools, where foundation governors appointed by the Diocese are in the majority and the GB is the employer)
- FOUNDATION SCHOOLS (Schools with/or without a trust, where the trust or GB is the employer)
- MAINTAINED NURSERY SCHOOLS (Early Years provision at a school and must have a headteacher and governing board) – the IOW has only one.
- SPECIAL SCHOOLS: maintained (Education provision for children with specific Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND))
- PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (Education provision for children who are unable to attend mainstream school)

3.3 Maintained schools may function as an individual school under one GB, but they can establish or join a federation of two or more schools. Groups of schools that are federated operate under one GB. They retain individual identities and budgets, although they may pool resources for the benefit of the federation. The governing board must focus on the strategic objectives for all schools in the federation.

3.4 **Academies** are charitable companies, founded by members who enter into a funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE), based on their Memorandum of Understanding and Articles of Association which cover the responsibilities and powers, structure and membership arrangements for the

- Board of Members
- Board of Trustees
- Committees

3.5 Academies may operate individually, as a Single Academy Trust (SAT), or within a group under a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). In either case, the Trust remains the accountable board and is directly accountable to the DfE. The trust for a MAT may set up a Local Governing Board (LGB) to manage some delegated responsibilities to oversee individual academies within the group.

3.6 **Non-Maintained Special School** (Education provision for children with specific SEND)

4. CATEGORIES OF GOVERNOR<sup>2</sup>

4.1 **Maintained Schools** are constituted under an Instrument of Government, in accordance with the [School Governance Constitution Regulations](#), or the [Schools Governance Federation Regulations](#).

4.2 Categories of governors are -

- **Headteacher** - responsible for day-to-day management of the school (ex-officio by virtue of their appointment)
- **Parent Governors** – at least two in individual schools, but **no more than** two in federations (elected by parents or may be appointed by GB, if not enough parents are nominated for election)
- **Staff Governor** – **no more than** one (elected by staff)
- **LA Governor** – **no more than** one (nominated by Councillor/s for the ward/s in which the school/s stand/s, appointed by the governing board)
- **Co-opted Governors** – as many as the GB decide and specify in the Instrument of Government (appointed by the GB). Members of staff may be co-opted governors, as long as the number of staff (including the headteacher) does not exceed 1/3 of the total GB.
- **Foundation Governors**
  - VC schools, at least two, but **no more than** 25% (appointed by Diocese)
  - VA schools, must outnumber all other governors by two (appointed by Diocese)
  - Foundation schools, must outnumber all other governors by two (appointed by Trust)

The Federation Regulations include further requirements for the number of foundation governors, depending on the types of schools that are federated.
- **Partnership Governors** (foundation school without a trust) – at least two, but **no more than** 25% (nominated by parents, community and Diocese (where appropriate) – appointed by GB)
- **Associate Members** – may be appointed by the GB and assigned to a committee. They are not governors.

4.3 All governors are appointed or elected for a four-year term of office, unless otherwise specified in the Instrument of Government. Associate Members may be appointed for one to four years. They may resign at any time by notifying the clerk to governors.

4.4 Regulations require the total membership of the GB to be no fewer than 7. Most GBs have a constitution of between 10 and 15. There is no upper number, but GBs should be no bigger than is necessary for the effective governance of the school/s. The minimum for a VA school would be 12.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Maintained school governance - structures and role descriptors \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## 5. MAINTAINED SCHOOL GB STRUCTURE

5.1 Maintained Schools may choose to make all decisions as a corporate board, but often delegate some governance responsibilities to committees or individuals if they choose to do so. Responsibilities that are delegated to committees or individuals should be clearly defined in a Scheme of Delegation. The board remains the overall accountable body.

- **Committees** can monitor areas, such as Finance and Resources or Curriculum and Standards. Committees must include at least 3 governors, have Terms of Reference and voting rights, must appoint a chair and have a designated clerk
- **Individual governors** may be assigned to carry out monitoring roles or to oversee an ongoing project or focus as link governors to specific areas of work.

## 6. ACADEMY ROLES AND STRUCTURES<sup>3</sup>

6.1 Academy Trusts are constituted in accordance with their Articles of Association

- **Members** – there must be at least three, although the DfE recommends at least five (agrees Articles, appoints Trustees and Auditors, ensures charitable objectives are met)
- **Trustees** – (appointed by Members or Trust). Must have at least two Parent Trustees (unless there are parents serving at LGB level), who are elected by parents or may be appointed by the Trust, if not enough parents are nominated for election. This is the strategic accountable board for ensuring compliance with regulations and statutory requirements; also appoints Chief Executive or Principal.

- If a Church Trust, trustees are also accountable for upholding any religious character and requirements of the Diocese.

- **Committees** – must have at least three trustees on each committee. There must be a risk and audit committee and a finance committee. The Trust may also choose to delegate other responsibilities to committees (or LGBs).
- **Local Governing (advisory) Boards** – MATs may delegate some governance responsibilities in relation to particular areas or individual academies within the Trust to LGBs. Most have parent representation at school level (elected by parents or may be appointed by Trust, if not enough parents are nominated for election). Accountability remains with the trust board.
- **Executive Leaders** – In a MAT this is the Chief Executive with overall responsibility for management of schools in the Trust. In a Stand Alone Academy (SAT), the Principal may be the main school leader and fulfil the functions of a CEO.

## 7. SPECIFIC ROLES

7.1 The following roles are required to support effective governance

- **Chair and Vice-Chair** – GBs and Trustees must elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst their number. Elections usually takes place at the first meeting

---

<sup>3</sup> [Academy trust governance - structures and role descriptors \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614442/academy-trust-governance-structures-and-role-descriptors.pdf)

of the academic year. Maintained School GBs may elect a Chair to serve for up to four years.

- **Link Governors/Trustees** Both GBs and Trusts are able to appoint link governors/trustees for specific areas of responsibility. It is up to the GB or Trust to decide where link governors/trustees are needed, to gain strategic oversight and deepen the board's knowledge of that area. Governors are required for Safeguarding, SEND and Careers, but may cover areas such as Finance, Pupil and Staff Welfare, English, Maths and ICT.
- **Clerk to Governors** – The GB or Trust must appoint a clerk to ensure the efficient functioning of the board. The clerk is a governance professional (may be the Company Secretary in an academy trust), who provides an administrative and advisory role. Regulations require the board to have regard to advice given by the clerk.

7.2 Committees must also be served by a clerk with the necessary skills but does not have to be the clerk to the board also.

7.3 The clerk is required to convene and attend meetings, take minutes, maintain board membership records, support governor recruitment, retention and training, facilitate strategic discussion and decision-making and provide advice and guidance to help boards understand their roles and responsibilities.

7.4 Guidance on the expectations of the role can be found in The Clerking Competency Framework<sup>4</sup>

## 8. MEETINGS

8.1 Effective governance requires boards to have a regular cycle of meetings.

8.2 GBs and Academy Trusts are required to meet at least three times a year. The same requirement applies to committees. In practice boards tend to hold more meetings, in order fulfil their statutory duties.

8.3 Where monitoring responsibilities are delegated to individuals, who report to the GB, the full GB may meet as often as once a month.

8.4 Academy Members are required to meet at least once a year (usually an AGM).

8.5 Effective meetings should last no longer than 1½ hours; they are generally held late afternoon or early evening, but timing is agreed by the board to encourage good attendance and take account of work/life balance for school staff and governors.

8.6 Regulations allow GBs and Trusts to make arrangements for holding virtual meetings and for governors to attend meetings remotely. Throughout the pandemic all meetings have continued to be held virtually and many boards are considering a gradual return to some face-to-face meetings, through a blended approach, dependent on latest government advice and guidance.

## 9. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Although a voluntary role, governors and trustees are encouraged to take part in personal and professional development, which can benefit other areas in their

---

<sup>4</sup> [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



work or lives. In the same way, skills and knowledge acquired through experience in other roles can contribute to effective governance.

- 9.2 Boards should plan for development of the board as a whole and to support individual governors in carrying out their delegated responsibilities. **IOW Governor Services** provides an information, advice, guidance and training service, in partnership with **Hampshire Governor Services**.
- 9.3 Schools and Academies can subscribe to a service level agreement, which includes
- Provision of a core training and development programme for all governors and clerks at no additional cost
  - Bespoke support and occasional attendance at governing body meetings to develop the effectiveness of the board – i.e., Self-Evaluation, Collaboration, Federation, Reconstitution
  - Provision of statutory information to governing boards in respect of school governance
  - Provision of information, advice, guidance and bespoke support to clerks and governors on procedural and constitutional issues
  - Access to the Hampshire Governor Services website, including - comprehensive information, guidance and support; e-learning modules on safeguarding, staffing matters, exclusions, complaints, pay appeals and governor roles; topic areas; model policies and example documents; termly newsletters for clerks and chairs; presentations from recent development events.
  - Access for clerks and governors to the GovernorHub system for managing governing board membership, training records and making course bookings
  - Access to specific information for the development of governors
  - Support and assistance to governing boards in relation to recruitment and succession planning
  - Induction training for clerks
  - Termly briefings for clerks and development governors
- 9.4 Being a governor is interesting and sometimes very challenging. It is a genuine opportunity to make a difference for children. It can also contribute to personal and professional development, gaining experience, skills and confidence that can be used in other roles or to support other job applications.
10. NEXT STEPS
- 10.1 IW Guidance for GBs on recruitment will be updated annually for inclusion in their planning meeting at the beginning of the academic year.
- 10.2 Chairs of Governors will be offered places to attend Hampshire Chairs' Development Workshops, elements of which cover governance structures, developing the team and coaching, to support governor recruitment and retention.
- 10.3 Chairs will be asked to share 'good news' stories and positive outcomes in relation to recruitment activities at the termly Chairs' Network Meetings.

- 10.4 Governor Services in IOW and Hampshire will work collaboratively in an upcoming social media campaign to raise awareness of governance and support recruitment.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

That Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills note the information contained in this report.

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Governance handbook and competency framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Contact Point: Diane Hiscock – Governor Services Officer [Diane.hiscock@iow.gov.uk](mailto:Diane.hiscock@iow.gov.uk)

# Children's Services UK Resettlement Scheme for Refugees

Steve Crocker, Director Children's Services

Page 19

# Ukraine Family Scheme

- The Ukraine Family Scheme allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals, people settled in the UK, and certain others resident here, to come to the country. Those granted under the scheme will be granted a visa that lasts three years, giving them certainty and ensuring their future in the country.
- Page 20 Launched on 14 March, the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme allows members of the public to voluntarily host those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Following government checks, they agree to accommodate refugees for a minimum of six months in exchange for a "thank you" payment of £350.
- Locally, children's services are part of a cross-Council co-ordinated partnership with Community Action Isle of Wight and others to organise, deliver and support this scheme and these families.

# Ukraine Family Scheme

- Council receive notification of host applications and informs CRT /MASH.
- Good communication/meetings with SPOC in CRT/MASH who informs children's social care.
- Children's social care undertake host and household checks at the home.
- ID checks undertaken of host family members.
- DBS checks submitted on all those aged 16+ living in the host home.
- Second visits undertaken once Ukraine family is in place – we sign post to early help and Family Centres.
- No safeguarding issues identified.

# Ukraine Family Scheme

---

Number of sponsors = 56

As of 17/05/22 = 72 guests have arrived and with host families.

Page 22  
0-4 yrs. = 3

5-16 yrs. = 26

17-18 yrs. = 2



# Children's Services

## Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Steve Crocker, Director Children's Services

Page 24



# Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

- The Isle of Wight is part of the mandated National Transfer Scheme.
- Local Authorities will not need to accept unaccompanied asylum-seeking children where the cohort already makes up 0.07% of the general child population.
- For the Isle of Wight this equates to 17 children (under the age of 18).
- Of the 17 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, seven are supported by the care leavers service. All the unaccompanied children open to the Isle of Wight are male, are looked after children by the IOW council, accommodated under s20 Children Act 1989 and have an allocated social worker.
- The unaccompanied children originate from a variety of countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Kuwait, and Syria. Most of our UASC have travelled to the UK by small boats from Calais, having experienced significant trauma in their countries of origin and often including witnessing the death of a parent.

# Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

- All unaccompanied children receive the same statutory services and support as other looked after children including health assessments, dental and optician checks to ensure any unmet health needs are addressed ensuring they remain fit and healthy. Dietary needs are also carefully considered.
- Most of the children are Muslim, and the social work teams ensure that they receive a copy of the Quran, a prayer mat and have access to the local mosque and are supported to celebrate the festivals that are important to them.
- All unaccompanied children are supported to access appropriate legal advice in order to make a claim for Asylum with the Home Office and are at varying stages in this process, with a number of our children being granted 5 years leave to remain in the UK pending final decisions.

# Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

- The Isle of Wight made the decision that the unaccompanied asylum seeking children allocated to the Isle of Wight would be placed on the mainland.
- This is to meet their cultural needs and to live with carers who share a similar ethnic and cultural background, and where possible are able to communicate with the young people in their language.
- All the children who are under the age of 18 are in the London area, with a high number placed in Croydon.
- Whilst these children and young people are in the London area, the Isle of Wight retains full statutory responsibility for them and we meet with them regularly.





# Committee report

Committee	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS</b>
Date	<b>9 JUNE 2022</b>
Title	<b>FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022</b>
Report of	<b>DEBBIE PRICE, SERVICE MANAGER CHILDREN IN CARE</b>

---

## SUMMARY

Annual Fostering Report.

The Fostering service needs to expand to meet the needs of Island children to remain on the Isle of Wight. This work will be progressed within the Modernising placements programme. The fostering service was restructured in 2020 to prepare for this and the improvement that has made to the delivery of service is evidenced in the report.

## BACKGROUND

The annual fostering report sets out the progress of the IW fostering team 2021 -22.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1- Fostering Annual Report 2021/2022

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Point: Debbie Price, Service Manager Children in care ☎ 821000 e-mail [Deborah.price@iow.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.price@iow.gov.uk)

**STEVE CROCKER**  
*Director of Children's Services*

**CLLR DEBBIE ANDRE**  
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills*

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Fostering Annual Report 2021/2022**

**Date 06.05.2022**

**Author: Berni Farmer**

**Service Manager: Debbie Price**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on The Isle of Wight Council's fostering service in line with fostering services statutory regulations and guidance.

Fostering Services work within the Fostering Regulations and the National Minimum Standards for Foster carers as well as the Children Act and Care Standards Act.

Foster carers can be approved by independent fostering agencies or the Local Authority. When the local authority do not have enough foster carers or the right foster carers to meet a child's needs they purchase placements from Independent fostering agencies.

Local Authority fostering services are inspected by Ofsted as part of the overall inspection of Children's Services.

During 2021/2022 the service successfully recruited and approved 6 new General fostering households.

At the end of March 2022 there were 98 registered and approved foster carer households in the isle of Wight.

There is a target to recruit 10 fostering households in 2022/23.

The number of foster carers needs to considerably increase and this is planned to be delivered by an improved offer to foster carers and targeting of prospective foster carers through the delivery of a Modernising Placements Programme.

### **1. Marketing**

- 1.1 Marketing activities have continued holding Virtual drop-in which has enabled the service to interact with wider audiences. Virtual drop-ins have a higher level of convenience for attendees as they can engage from their home or on the move. Timings are also more convenient as events can be played back at a later date, the team are undertaking more face -to -face events to re-establish a physical presence in the local community.

- 1.2 Participation activities have been celebrated in the local media, via press release. Good news stories that we have promoted have gained positive attention. Foster carers have given praise to the service for their work in this area. It is intended that the programme will continue to influence positive word of mouth referrals. Carers are positive about the regular activities and competitions and have also expressed that they appreciate the birth children being included in these activities as it promotes the entire household involvement. This will continue and we are asking carers for ideas for future activities.
- 1.3 Digital was the highest platform enquiry lead, with 24 individuals stating that they had come across the service online, either via social media or organically through search engines. More must still be done to improve the Service's digital activity, but to ensure a return on investment, the service is reliant on the new website going live
- 1.4 The service has also taken part in the southeast regional fostering forums 'mystery shopper' exercise. This is now in its 6<sup>th</sup> cohort and the IOW have undertaken the mystery shopper role. This was interesting as it gave us the opportunity to experience other agencies responses to enquirers and to use the learning to improve our own. Out of 24 LA's and IFA's we had the third highest average score of 7.38. The issue noted for us was the accessibility of the website and the lack of a contact phone number on the current fostering webpage. The website, as stated below, is being refreshed and we have asked for the phone number to be more prominent.
- 1.5 Due to previous reallocation of corporate resources the launch of the new website was delayed until 2022. Work continues with the Comms team to ensure this enables the fostering service to be on a more competitive level with other recruiting agencies.

## **2. The Fostering Service**

- 2.1 The Permanence Team is formed of three hubs who each focus on one area of activity. Recruitment and Assessment of Foster carers, support to foster carers and all aspects of Adoption.
- 2.2 The two Isle of Wight Fostering hubs are comprised of the following:
- 1 Team Manager,
  - 2 Assistant Team Managers,
  - 6.59 FTE Social Workers
  - 1 ASYE
  - 2 Fostering Practitioners



- 1 Marketing Officer
  - 1 FTE Social Work Personal Assistant
  - 1 FTE Team Administrator.
- 2.3 The recruitment and assessment hub includes the marketing officer who has a focus on all aspects of marketing to ensure we are attracting applicants who can meet the needs of our children. The social workers undertake joint viabilities with the childcare teams and assess and support all general and connected applicants through to Panel and approval.
- 2.4 The Assistant team manager of the support hub attends the placement meetings held three times a week with the commissioning team to ensure appropriate matching and placement stability. The support hub provides a focussed team of social workers to promote stability and development of our approved carers.
- 2.5 This has enabled each hub to focus on their specialisms of work and has enabled a more focused approach and improvement to timescales, compliance, and quality assurance.

### **3. Recruitment of Foster Carers**

- 3.1 Recruitment stats are lower than the previous year. It is understood that other local authorities are experiencing the same trends. Influencing factors in foster carer recruitment are believed to be higher costs of living, and adjustments to life post lockdown.
- 3.2 Since lockdown restrictions have been relaxed, all initial visits and recruitment activity has been in person.
- 3.3 In the year 2021 – 22, community events began to re-open, yet many large events such as the County Show continued to postpone for safety measures. The fostering service found that town centre recruitment stands were successful in gaining attention and generating enquiries. These were booked throughout the summer from May to August.
- 3.4 5 new General Fostering households were approved in this period. With an initial enquiry count of 53, the end of year conversion score was 9.4% - which is an improvement on the year before.
- 3.5 There are two parts to the general fostering assessment – part one where we gather initial checks and references and part two which is the assessment itself. The service continues to complete these concurrently to reduce the time applicants are in assessment.
- 3.6 Recruitment Data for 2021/22
- Number of enquiries 53
  - Number of Initial Home Visits 27

- Number of assessments initiated 7
- Number of approvals 6
- Conversion rate from enquiry to approval 9.4%

#### **4. Fostering support**

- 4.1 It continues to be the aim of the service to ensure that we have foster carers available to meet the needs of Isle of Wight children.
- 4.2 The Fostering support hub continue to provide support and supervision to all approved foster carers and carers who remain caring for children under staying put (continue to care for children after they turn 18). We continue to provide numerous support groups including monthly lunch and learn/ lite bite sessions, connected carers group, men's group and deliver training which includes Skills to Foster, Fostering Changes, Attachment, Safeguarding/ Safer Caring and Supervised Contact etc.
- 4.3 As the government restrictions were reduced and then ended, more of the fostering groups have begun to take place face to face. However we are continuing to provide virtual groups to promote and enable a wider attendance from carers who live on the mainland or have issues that had previously prevented them attending in person. We will continue to work with our carers to review this and ensure that we adapt our practise to meet their needs. We will be returning to face to face 'lite bites' sessions on a quarterly basis with a hybrid presence for those on the mainland. We are still working on the technical issues of providing this. The support hub continue to offer a duty telephone line and are able to arrange virtual teams meetings promptly for carers to ensure they receive the support etc that they require.
- 4.4 The support hub has worked hard to move training and support online to increase the opportunity for carers to feel supported and part of the fostering community. This has been especially welcomed by carers who do not reside on the island as they have been able to feel more included and able to access all aspects of Fostering virtually. The support hub has worked with our work force development colleagues to enable carers have access to the e learning courses available to the wider workforce. The team have ensured that bespoke training has been recorded and uploaded to the Learning hub so that this is available to carers.

#### **5. Annual Fostering Survey**

- 5.1 In 2021 / 22 the Annual Fostering Survey was sent electronically with expectation that it would increase participation on grounds of convenience.

After one month of the survey being live, the number of responses were reviewed.

- 5.2 Individuals from the Council's volunteer programme stepped forward to support the service in collecting feedback from carers. Telephone surveys were offered to Foster Carers, yet engagement in sharing feedback was still very low.
- 5.3 In total there were 29 participants. Again due to a low number of responses the findings were hard to generalise as the sample size was not representative of the population.
- 5.4 The findings from those who participated in the survey (17 General / 12 Connected), revealed the following key stats:
- 5.5 15 (88.2%) of the General Foster Carer respondents felt that they had **not**, in the past year, taken a placement that they did not feel equipped to care for.
- 5.6 62% of **all** respondents feel that they benefit from attending the support groups that are provided by the service.
- 5.7 When asked what they benefit from most about these sessions, one person wrote: *'Live events are an important opportunity to meet and network with staff and other carers. Being a Foster Carer can be isolating, maintaining a support network is important'*.
- 5.8 93% of **all** respondents feel that the Fostering Service keep them well informed.
- 5.9 When asked how fostering has impacted their family, one respondent stated that they 'don't get to see their own family as much', while another has shared that fostering 'can be incredibly stressful and lonely'.
- 5.10 41% of **all** respondents claim to be very happy with the fostering allowances that they receive, although three people have said that they do not feel the recent increase is in keeping with the raise in all living costs and expenses.
- 5.11 One person said that they are very dissatisfied with the allowances as it feels that they match the needs of the carer rather than the child – giving the specific example of a child with autism. Others also say that they disagree in the difference between Impact rate and general rate.
- 5.12 When commenting on support one respondent wrote that they *'have found the service to be easily accessible, nothing is too much trouble all questions have been answered and I feel very supported'*. Another shared that *'it is easy to get in contact as and when you need it. However, lots of changes in people.'*

- 5.13 In the Permanence Team there have been a number of staff changes that carers have commented on. One person has said that the *'a careful look needs to happen with the permanence team as there is a lot of movement and is making people feel uneasy'*.

## **6. Placements**

- 6.1 Based on findings from the survey, 76.4% of General Foster Carer respondents, felt that they had **not** had children placed with them outside of their approval. In addition, 88.2% of the respondents felt that they had **not** had a child in placement who they were un-equipped to care for.
- 6.2 The Assistant Team Manager or Team Manager attends placement meetings three times per week to discuss and plan potential placements with the commissioning team and the childcare teams. This has continued to support careful matching and has maintained placement stability for our children and young people in care.
- 6.3 The supervising social worker ensures that placement planning meetings are held within 72 hours of placement and that the Personal Development Plan provides carers with training to support caring for the child. This is overseen by the Assistant team Manager.
- 6.4 The limited evidence from the Foster carer's survey would suggest that the strategies in place to support placements is having a positive impact and will be continued.

## **7. Placement Endings**

- 7.1 47% of General Foster Carer respondents said that they have experienced a child leave their care in the past year. 87.5% of whom, felt that they were able to support the child during this time but not all in this position felt supported by the Team.
- 7.2 Respondents who did not feel supported during their end of placement said that on one occasion they felt as if they were doing something they shouldn't as the member of fostering team was busy. Another said that 'It was all very last minute and impacted on the young person because they didn't know what and when things were going to happen'.
- 7.3 End of placement reports and disruption meetings are called when a placement ends. The Child's Social Worker, the child and the foster carer are requested to write an end of placement report which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the placement. This information is used to inform and

improve practice and to support carers who have experienced an unexpected ending to a placement.

## **8. Training:**

- 8.1 IOW Fostering will continue to offer a variety of training in a range of mediums as we maximise on the opportunities offered by the new ways of working developed over the previous two years. This will include guest speakers, peer led discussions, group programmes and online training platforms via the Learning hub.
- 8.2 Supervising Social Workers identify new training opportunities that will support the Carer's Personal development record. Any specific requirements can be discussed and commissioned with approval from the Team Manager and Service manager. This may include 121 training from home. Training will be provided weekdays, weekends and evenings to facilitate attendance.
- 8.3 The Foster carers training pathway has been revised and includes wider training courses available to carers and we will continue to work with Work Force Development to enhance and refine this over the next year. Personal development records are now maintained within the learning hub so that these are routinely updated each time a course is completed. This has enabled carers to be able to access training on specific needs for their children as and when they need it. The Support hub are also exploring how 'lite Bites', our Lunch and Learn sessions, can be recorded and available on the learning hub to enable carers to have a wider access to these at a time that suits them and also to be able to revisit the topics.

## **9. Improving the Service: the main themes**

- Foster Carers want to be more involved in supporting recruitment and the service with different activities.
  - Foster carers to have access to support and training to maximise the use of IT to engage with learning and the virtual world.
  - Foster Carers want to see improvements to allowances.
  - To return to more face-to-face training and social events
  - Continue to focus on compliance and quality of reporting by the social workers.
  - Focussing on recording systems and refining how current data is to be more aligned and ready to transition to the new IT system Mosaic
- 9.1 The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Approach is being embedded within the service. All supervision notes and household reviews are written in the

strengths-based way. We are applying this approach across the service. There is still work to be done to review the current forms used to promote this across the service. One example of this is the change from respite request to sleepover requests thereby making this a more 'normal', less stigmatising and understandable terminology for children and young people.

- 9.2 The Fostering hubs are exploring with carers which activities they would be happy to support. We intend to develop this into a spreadsheet so that we can approach identified carers for each area e.g., training. We are also planning to establish a focus group to engage foster carers in future developments of the service to ensure we are continuing to meet their needs.
- 9.3 The Support hub are working with the inhouse volunteers to provide individual IT training and support for carers who are less confident with using computers as this is a potential barrier for them going forwards. We need our carers to be able to monitor and safeguard our young people online. Some carers have also expressed issues in accessing laptops etc that are able to support this activity and we are working with the transformation team to be able to provide equipment to carers in the same way we do to staff. This would also enhance the security of data and recording for carers as it would be protected via the Isle of Wight security processes.
- 9.4 Mainland carers and carers in France have been able to access the IOW fostering training and community and are pleased with the support they have been able to access in this new way of working that was not previously achievable. This will be maintained and continued.
- 9.5 Some foster carers have requested that allowances and payment structures are reviewed. The IOW service is currently engaging in the Modernising Placements programme with Hampshire to not only review allowances but to review the whole service delivery to ensure we are prepared for the future.
- 9.6 The service is returning to face-to-face visits and events as we all missed that personal and social interaction. However, we also want to maintain the positive gains experienced over the last year. We envisage having a more agile approach that can be more responsive to individual needs to promote stability and foster carers feeling supported. We will need to work with our carers to achieve this as it is unlikely that we will return fully to the previous ways of working and some may struggle with this.
- 9.7 The service will maintain the focus on performance and quality of reporting to ensure that prospective applicants and carers receive a high-quality service. This will assist in promoting a positive image of IOW fostering to the wider community.

## **10. Fostering Panel**

- 10.1 The service has 12 fostering panels per year which are held monthly. Each panel will hear a maximum of 6 cases. The Panel Chair and all panel members receive an appraisal annually.
- 10.2 Panel feedback from applicants is routinely sought, however limited feedback is received despite creating an online survey designed to encourage greater participation. We are asking assessing social workers to promote this given that panels are now virtual.
- 10.3 The Service Manager and the Team Manager meet with the panel chair on a quarterly basis to discuss any themes in panel, policy or process issues, and training & development needs.
- 10.4 Now restrictions have been lifted a training day is being arranged for panel members, to include in part meeting with the Fostering Service Hubs, to update knowledge of policy, thresholds, good practice and to encourage a more coherent way of working.
- 10.5 The team manager has recruited two new panel members this year and one member retired after long service. The Team Manager is still actively recruiting to expand the diversity and to increase the skills, knowledge and experience available to the panel.

## **11. Statistics**

### **In House Fostering**

- 11.1 There are different types of foster placement as below. This includes registered carers, Staying Put placements, Supported Lodgings providers and the addition of Connected assessments with children in placement.
- 11.2 This is a decrease from the previous year. These households can be broken down into their different registrations as follows:

<b>Registration and numbers of households</b>	<b>March 2021</b>	<b>March 2022</b>
<b>General Foster Carer</b> (a person assessed to be a foster carer for any child needing care)	49	42

<b>Connected Foster Carer</b> (a person known to the child who is assessed as a foster carer and specifically approved for this child only)	51	40
<b>Supported Lodgings</b> (carers for children 16+ only)	3	1
<b>Family Link</b> (families providing short breaks to children with disabilities)	1	0
<b>Connected Assessments with Child in Placement</b> (a person who is known to the child who has had a short assessment to ensure that they are safe and has had the child placed with them whilst a fuller assessment is completed to enable a child to continue to be cared for by someone they know).	6	4
<b>Staying Put</b> (An arrangement to allow a young person to remain living with their foster carer after they have turned 18)	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>92</b>

i) *Data Source: Data Provided by Isle of Wight Fostering Service.*

ii) *Date Period: Snapshot as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.*

- 11.3 A previous challenge for the team was the timely return of application forms impacting on the timeliness of checks and references being requested. To address this application packs are now sent out with a 2 week deadline for completion and return. The Fostering Practitioner attached to the Assessment hub will also contact the applicant if the form has not been returned within this time frame to offer support.
- 11.4 This is a particular focus for connected carers with children placed as these are usually within the court arena. The team are ensuring regular contact with the children's social worker to provide a supportive approach to these households.
- 11.5 A further challenge for the team remains obtaining sections 4 and 5 of the connected assessment from the Child/ren's Social Worker in a timely manner. To address this when a connected application pack is posted out, the admin worker will also email the section 4 & 5 templates to CSW involved with a request these are completed and returned within 10 working days and the Fostering Practitioner will continue to chase and monitor to ensure this is completed.
- 11.6 This has encouraged some improvement in the time taken to receive the documents back but requires ongoing monitoring and oversight to ensure it continues to improve.

#### Foster carers on hold

- 11.7 The average number of general foster carer households on hold at the end of the year is 2.6 households. This is 6.04% of the available households. These



have been for a variety of reasons, including foster carers choosing to take a break, and other family or work commitments.

#### Timeliness of household reviews

Reviews completed on time %											
APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
100	97	100	100	100	100	96	100	100	100	96	94

- 11.8 This was identified as a focus for the hub to address last year and we have seen sustained good practice in this area during the whole of this year. This has been an increase of 86% in 2019/20 to 99% in 2021/22

#### Timeliness of supervision visits

Supervision completed on time %											
APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	93	100	92	98

- 11.9 This is a good area of performance and evidences that the supervision of foster carers has remained a high priority this year and we have even seen an improvement on last years high performance (95%). This is an area that has benefitted from a dedicated support hub; prior to this the average percentage for 2019/20 was 90% and in 2021/22 it was 99%

#### Timeliness of unannounced visits

Carers who have had an Unannounced visit within last year and have been approved for one year + %											
APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
56	55	52	65	60	45	50	88	81	85	83	84

- 11.10 Face to Face unannounced visits have proved a challenge during the lockdown periods of Covid. However, as restrictions were lifted this was a target for the hub. The hub also explored creative ways to achieve this and to focus on visiting all households. This continues to be an area for development and improvement, and we can see that improved performance has been achieved since November 2021. The average this year has been 67% and the average (pre-lockdowns) in 2019/20 was 84.4%

#### Medicals

Percentage of Foster carers with health assessments within 3 years											
APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR

91	91	93	83	83	80	80	85	84	85	82	96
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

11.11 In line with policy Hampshire and the isle of Wight complete review health medicals every 3 years. Progress was been made with health assessments utilising the covid self-reporting format and since then we have seen numbers rise again since more face-to-face medicals were possible. The average this year has risen to 86% which compares to 77.4% in 2019/20 pre-pandemic.

11.12 Carers were informed of the need to book face to face health assessments once the surgeries were facilitating these. The supervising social workers continued to promote this. The carers received a communication to try and start booking their medicals again and to alert the service if this was refused so that we could escalate this as a priority. Health issues are discussed in supervisions with a particular focus on ensuring carers were not neglecting their health during the pandemic.

#### DBS checks

DBS checks completed with 3 years %											
APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
100	100	97	97	99	99	98	97	99	99	93	99

11.13 This is now an area of sustained area of good performance following sustained targeting since the team was restructured. During this time, they have improved the average in 2019/20 of 78% to 98% in 2021/22. However, it is a requirement that all carers have a valid and in date DBS check. This is continued to be monitored closely and the target remains 100% every month.

#### Deregistration

	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22
General carers	2	3	4	5
Connected Carers	3	6	4	0
Total	5	10	8	5

Over 21/22 there have been 27 fostering household that have been de-registered: 14 general households and 13 connected households.

11.14 Of the Connected carers deregistered, the reasons were:

Reasons for deregistration	
SGO Granted	4
Returned to parents	3

Staying put/ independent living arrangements	3
Move to adoption	1
Child moved to residential.	1
Marriage breakdown	1

11.15 Of the General Foster carers deregistered, the reasons were:

<b>Reasons for deregistration</b>	
Deregistered on conclusion of investigation	2
Resigned prior to conclusion of investigation	3
Change of circumstances	5
SGO granted	1
Heath grounds	1
Death in service	1
Staying put arrangement	1

11.16 Of those where a change of circumstances was provided as a reason for deregistration, the most common theme noted is a change in work commitments or family situation.

## **12. Complaints and allegations against foster carers**

12.1 The Council has a Complaints and Allegations against Foster Carers procedure as required by the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

12.2 In total there have been 7 complaints & allegations initiated within the 2021-22 period.

12.3 These were concluded as the following

Complaint	Allegation
0	7

12.4 Of these complaints and allegations, the outcomes were.

Ongoing case, not concluded	1
De Registered	1
Resigned prior to conclusion of investigation.	3
Continuing to foster	2

### **13. Modernising Placements Programme.**

- 13.1 The fostering team have continued to make significant progress over the last year. The service has become more efficient, and the timeliness and quality of work has improved. They have provided more timely assessments, supervision, reviews and safeguarding checks.
- 13.2 Whilst this work has provided a better service to foster carers; there is a need to increase the recruitment of foster carers significantly. This will require a planned approach to both marketing and an improved offer to foster carers to be more competitive.
- 13.3 We have began to work on a Modernising Placements Programme to update our fostering service and provide the number and type of placements to meet the needs of children on the island.
- 13.4 The programme will need to attract more foster carers with an improved offer to support foster carers to provide high quality stable care to children. This will need to see them through to adulthood by supporting them to understand what has happened to them and to cope with the emotion that this evokes. In order to do this carers will need high quality training and support and we will need to consider the pay difference between our foster carers pay and that of IFA's.

### **14. Conclusion**

- 14.1 The team have continued to work well and have been able to demonstrate a greater level of compliance across all areas of work with the exception of the unannounced visits. This is an outstanding area for the next year which will be addressed.
- 14.2 Placement stability has been good with proactive support being offered and close links via the placement meetings to ensure better matching with foster carers skills sets. This has also enabled a closer working relationship with the child in care team to provide a holistic approach to supporting children and placements.
- 14.3 Assessment timeliness has improved over the year. Dropout rates concern to be a concern and impact on the number of approvals. This is being monitored and a new marketing strategy will enable us to target more effectively applicants that are able to meet the needs of our children.
- 14.4 The use of IT is being embedded for both staff and carers and this continues to be promoted and supported. The team have developed strategies to move activities to the virtual world to ensure increased accessibility to the service. The foster carers now have access to the wider workforce learning hub and training pathways agreed to support them to achieve training in a more flexible way. Face to face training is returning however we envisage this continuing to be a hybrid approach to meet the needs of carers who find

attending training more of a challenge due to work etc. Fostering recruitment and assessment continues to be a major focus of activity and Fostering Panels are now held virtually to ensure there is no delay to applicants.

- 14.5 The staff team had been stable for the majority of the year however in quarter 3 we experienced some turnover with 4 staff leaving and 1 achieving a promotional secondment. The staff that left the service, moved for positive career moves rather than dissatisfaction with the service. The management team have been actively recruiting and have put interim support plans in place to minimise the impact to our fostering households. We now have an established admin hub which has supported the team and enabled the workflow to be effectively monitored, reviewed and streamlined in preparation for a new IT system due to come on line in October 2022. This has also supported the improvements in performance and compliance.
- 14.6 A Modernising Placements programme is required to move the service to the next stage by increasing numbers, improving support and supporting carers to have the confidence to take and successfully care for our most complex children.
- 14.7 This has been an embedding year for the service following the restructure in 2019. The impact and outcome of this can continue to be seen as performance has continued to steadily improve. Continuity of service has been maintained and stability for foster carers has been at the heart of our practice. This will continue as we develop the service further over the next year. On reflection, the team have shown dedication and commitment to the service and the needs of our children, and I commend them for their resilience. This has been a successful year despite some of the challenges that we have encountered.

This page is intentionally left blank



# Committee report

Committee	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS</b>
Date	<b>9 JUNE 2022</b>
Title	<b>ISLE OF WIGHT ANNUAL ADOPTION REPORT</b>
Report of	<b>DEBBIE PRICE, SERVICE MANAGER CHILDREN IN CARE</b>

---

## SUMMARY

Annual Adoption Report

## BACKGROUND

The annual adoption report sets out the progress of the IW adoption team 2021 -22. Good Progress continues to be made alongside the work of Adopt South.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1- Isle of Wight Annual Adoption Report

Appendix 2 – Adopt South Summary Report

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

This report should be read alongside the report from Adopt South who undertake the recruitment and assessment of adoptive families.

Contact Point: Debbie Price, Service Manager Children in care ☎ 821000 e-mail [Deborah.price@iow.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.price@iow.gov.uk)

STEVE CROCKER  
*Director of Children's Services*

CLLR DEBBIE ANDRE  
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills*

This page is intentionally left blank



## **Isle of Wight Annual Adoption Report April 2021 - March 2022**

### **1. Recruitment Activity**

All Marketing Activity, enquiries, pre-stage visits, RIFs and Adopter assessment activity is reported in the Adopt South report. This includes Panel Activity and Available Adopters.

Any interagency placements are considered by Adopt South.

Children's Post Adoption support and the Adoption Information Exchange is also within the remit of Adopt South.

### **2. Interagency**

During this year all adopters have been from within the RAA, Adopt South. Since we have been part of the RAA (April 2019) we have needed to fund just one interagency placement for a hard to place child with specific needs. All other hard to place children have been adopted by Adopt South adopters.

### **3. Complaints and Allegations**

One complaint was received during quarter 1. This was in respect of a birth mother seeking direct contact with her child who was adopted. The complaint was not upheld due to the complainant having no legal context to request further assessment. A response was sent to the complainant within the required timeframe. During quarter 2 we received one complaint from the same birth mother who complained during quarter 1. The complaint was not upheld, and a response was sent to the complainant within the required timeframe.

No complaints were received during quarters 3 or 4.

### **4. Stepparent Adoption**

The team received a total of 14 stepparent adoption enquiries during the year; 3 during quarter one, 4 in quarter two, 3 in quarter three and 4 during quarter 4. This is higher than the previous year when the team received 8 enquiries.

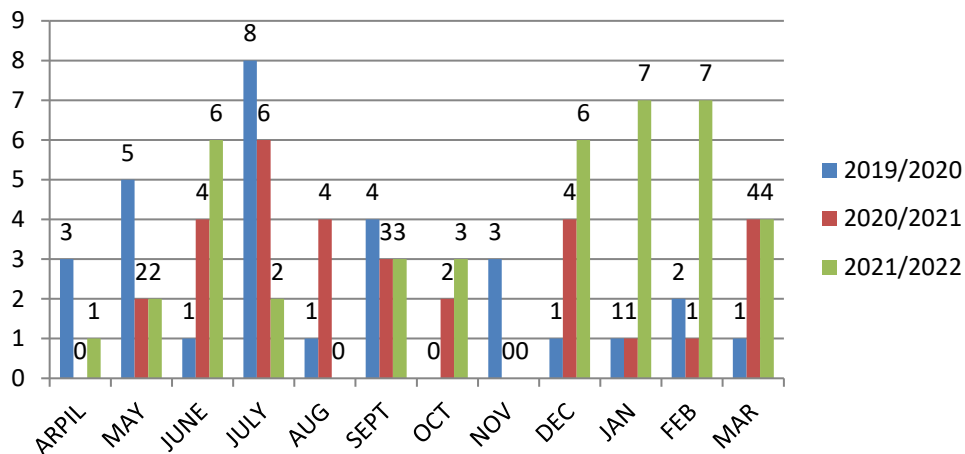
The team continues to actively support families at point of contact to positively explore alternative, lesser orders. This is in line with the advice and guidance being issued through the courts. Of the 14 enquiries received during the year, only 1 progressed to assessment. This evidences that the team continue to take a robust approach to this area of work. This area will continue to be monitored.

### **5. Special Guardianship.**

During the year the team received 7 stand alone and 31 joint referrals with Fostering. This represents an increase in work compared the previous year when the team received 10 stand alone and 25 joint referrals. The courts appear to be asking as a matter of routine for special guardianship to be considered alongside the majority of family and friends assessments.

## 6. CPRs / Parallel Planning

### Child Permanence Reports Requested



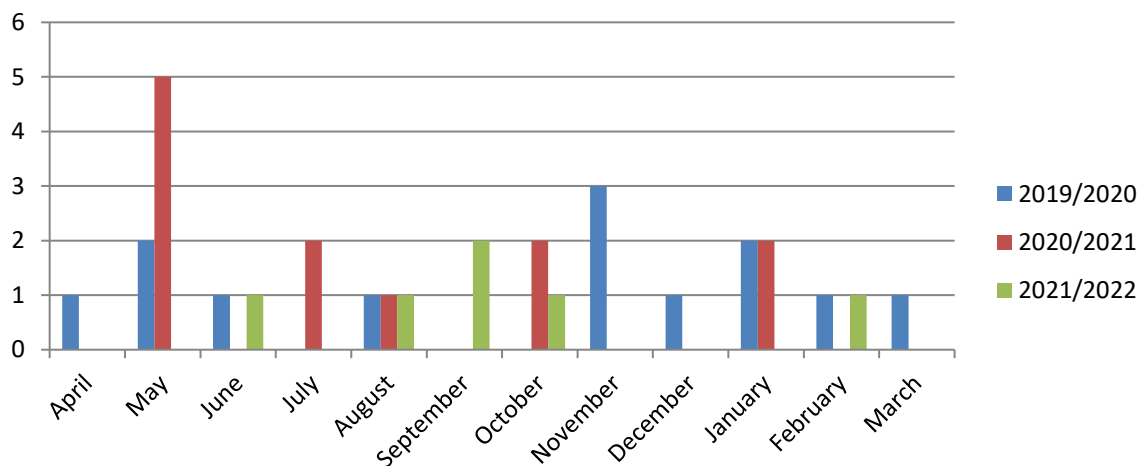
**APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021 Total: 32**

**APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022 Total: 41**

The work in this area has seen a significant increase in referrals when compared to the same period last year. However, this will have been impacted by having a higher number of sibling group referrals than during the previous year.

All referrals require an element of work and there are very few where limited work is required. This is not fully reflected in the number of agency decisions completed.

## 7. Number of New Children's Plans for Adoption



**April 2020 – March 2021 Total: 12**

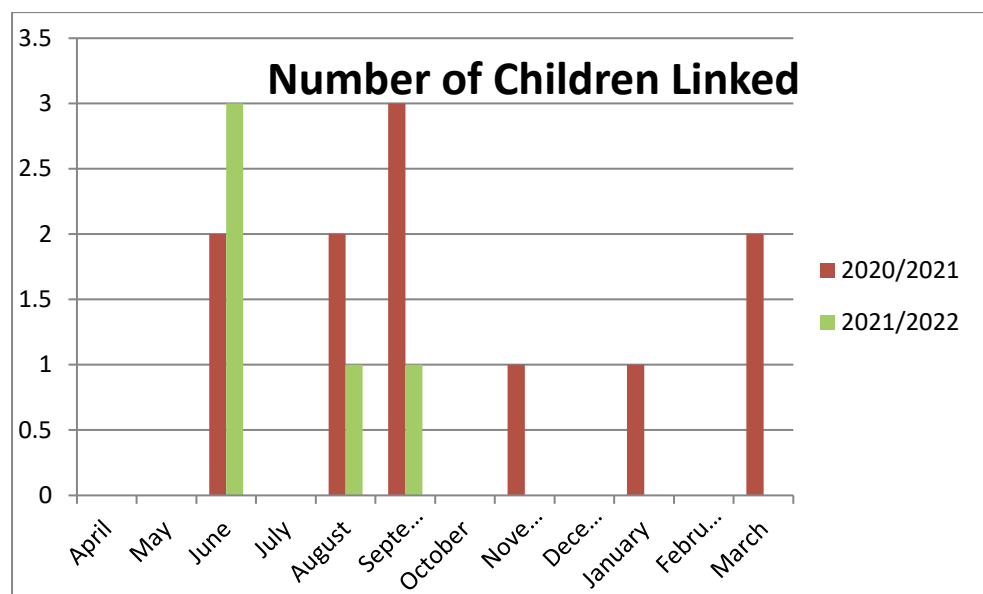
**April 2021 – March 2022 Total: 6**

**Summary:**

The team have progressed 8 children's plans to the agency decision maker during the year, including a sibling group of 2 whose plans were not approved for adoption. The plans for these 2 children are being reviewed and may be referred to the team again during the next quarter. This leaves a total of 6 plans for adoption made during the year.

This reflects a decrease from 12 decisions made during the previous year. As noted previously, the number of agency decisions is not a reflection of the level of work within the team as the referrals for child permanence reports increased this year.

## 8. Number of Children Linked/Placed.



**April 2020 – March 2021 Total: 11**

**April 2021 – March 2022 Total: 5**

### Summary:

Adopt South undertake all family finding for Isle of Wight children with a placement order in conjunction with the Isle of Wight children's adoption social workers. Fostering for Adoption (FfA) placements are also sought via Adopt South.

This is working well, and we are collectively working on early family finding to prevent drift and ensure early permanence for all the children within our region.

During this period we have linked and placed 5 children with Adopt South adopters. Of the three LAC children currently held by the team; two will move to FFA placements in April 2022 and family finding is underway for the remaining child, with prospective adopters already identified.

## 9. Number of Disruptions (Pre-Order)

**April 2016 – March 2020: 0**

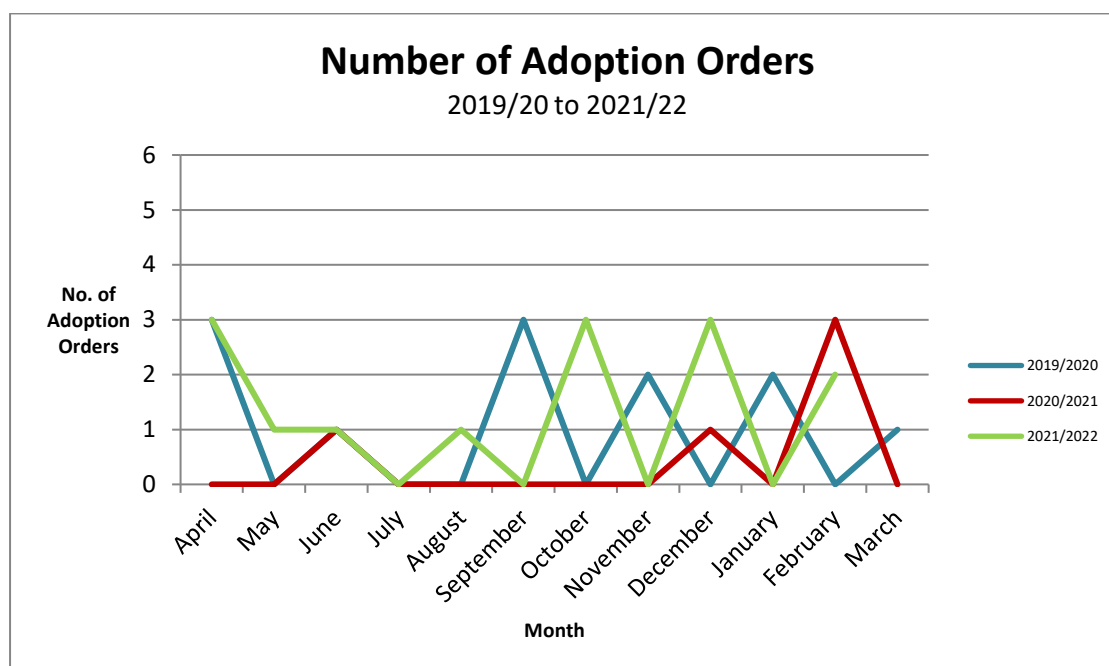
**April 2020 – March 2021: 0**

**April 2021 – March 2022: 0**

### Summary:

There have been no disruptions again this year.

## 10. Number of Adoption Orders



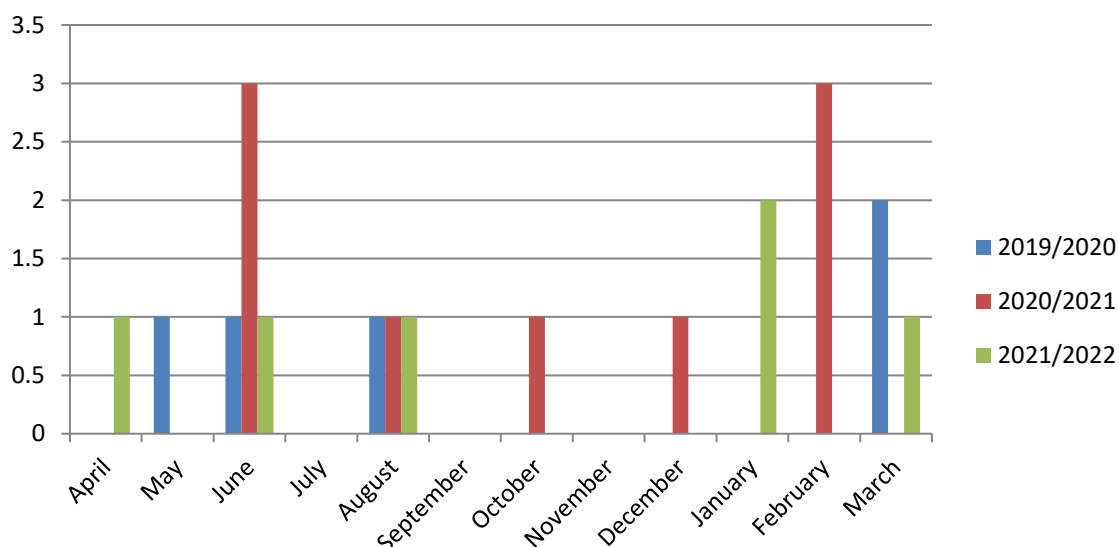
### Summary:

The team have achieved 14 Adoption Orders during this period. This is a significant increase from the 5 orders granted during the previous year.

The team achieved five adoption orders during the first quarter, compared to one during the same quarter last year. During quarter two, one adoption order was granted compared to 0 during the same quarter last year. Six adoption orders were granted during quarter three, bringing the total orders granted during the first three quarters to 12. During quarter four, 2 further adoption orders were granted. Adoption order hearings are now scheduled quarterly within the Courts.

The team are monitored to ensure that applications are filed at the appropriate time to ensure timeliness.

## 11. Number of Placement Orders



### Summary:

The total number of placement orders granted during the year was 6 which represents a decrease when compared to the 9 orders granted during the previous year.

## 12. Adoption Scorecards.

### Scorecard A10

**Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted**

For the 14 children adopted between April 2021 and March 2022 the average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 449 days which is higher than the government's threshold of 426 days. This compares to 319 days during the previous year.

For eight of the children, the average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 316 days which is significantly within the government threshold of 426 days. This year the Isle of Wight has successfully adopted a number of children that took longer due to more complex situations and we are very pleased that we were able to successfully place these children.

One child was identified as 'harder to place' due to additional needs. For this particular child there were 1016 days between them entering care and being placed with their adoptive family. This child has a disability, and it was unclear whether it would be possible to find adopters able to meet his needs. It did take longer to find the right family but they were found by Adopt South and they have now adopted him. This is a really good outcome for this child and it is right that we continued to look for the right family for him and pursued a plan of adoption for a child with such complex needs.

Three of the children placed were subject to delays through extended proceedings to complete further assessments which increased the time before the placement order was made but once this had been achieved the adopters were identified and there were no additional delays.

Two of the children were placed with foster carers who applied to adopt them, so whilst it took a little longer for them to be adopted (646 days each) they have been settled with their family throughout this time and this was a really good outcome for the children.

### **Scorecard 2 – Average time between the Local Authority receiving Court Authority and the Local Authority identifying a match**

For the 14 children adopted between April 2021 and March 2022 the average time between Placement Order and the Local Authority identifying a match was 153 days which is higher than the government's threshold of 121 days. This compares to 84 days in the same period last year.

This figure is impacted by the children mentioned above – in particular the child who had waited longer for a match due to his complex needs and the two children whose foster carers applied to be assessed as adopters for them. Without this impact the average for the remaining 11 children is 64 days.

### **Scorecard A20**

#### **Average time (in days) between a child entering care and a local authority receiving court authority to place a child, for children who have been adopted**

For the 14 children adopted between April 2021 and March 2022 the average time between entering care and receiving court authority to place was 329 days.

Two of the children were subject to Full Care Orders and placed with their mother prior to the making of a Placement Order. This impacts on the average for this Scorecard.

### **13. Life story books and later life letters**

For the 14 children adopted between April 2021 and March 2022, the Life story books were completed and with adopters prior to the order being granted.

For the 14 children adopted between April 2021 and March 2022, the later life letters were finalised and with adopters prior to the three-month deadline.

This activity is monitored by the team manager, the Assistant Team Manager and within the adoption LAC spreadsheet which is reviewed at every team meeting. This is also reviewed within the lac review process by the independent reviewing officers.

### **14. Adoption Support**

#### **Summary:**

Post Adoption Support is managed by Adopt South with work being allocated to the Post Adoption Support Social Worker based on the Isle of Wight. This includes all aspects of post adoption work as well as Adoption Information Exchange referrals for children, adoption support needs assessments and post adoption training.

During quarter one, adult access to records work was moved to Adopt South as part of the RAA agreement.

Each Local Authority maintains the responsibility for applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children within their area.

- 2 requests for birth parent counselling were received during the year, one request during quarter two and one request during quarter three.
- During the year the team made 3 applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children living with Special Guardians on the Isle of Wight. This achieved a total income of £6,892.88. During quarter three, one of the applications (for the value of £5,000) was subsequently withdrawn due to the guardian declining the assessment.
- The team received 1 referral for support to Access Birth Records during quarter one, prior to the transfer of this service to Adopt South. All future reporting on work in this area will be made by Adopt South.

## **15. Family Finding**

The team are currently actively family finding for one child, having successfully matched and placed the other children it holds. The team continues to work with family finding to ensure they make timely referrals once it is appropriate to do.

During the previous year the team secured a placement for the child who was considered hard to place and, during quarter one of this year, the adoption order was made.

## **16. Overall Summary and Actions**

The activity within the team has remained high. During the previous 2 years the service underwent a significant restructure followed by the COVID pandemic. This has impacted the way we deliver all aspects of our work and has required significant flexibility as well as learning new skills to manage new ways of working. Aspects of the new skills have been successfully incorporated into this next phase of working now that Covid related restrictions have begun to lift.

The team have worked hard to ensure continuity of service whilst working within national and local guidelines.

During the year the Isle of Wight team received 14 stepparent adoption enquiries, 7 special guardianship referrals, 31 special guardianship joint referrals with fostering, 41 child permanence referrals, 2 birth counselling referrals and 1 request for access to birth records support.

During the year 14 adoption orders were granted and 5 children were linked. Of the three LAC children currently held by the team at the end of the year, two are due to be placed into their FFA placements during April and family finding is underway for the remaining child, with prospective adopters already identified. There have been no disruptions either pre or post order during the year.

## **ACTIONS:**

- To continue to contribute to, promote and participate in, the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt South.
- To ensure continued compliance with Regulations relating to ADM decisions with respect to their medicals and the Somerset Judgement.
- To continue to monitor and maintain performance across all areas of the team, both Adopt South and Isle of Wight work, to ensure standards are fully met.
- Continue to improve the consistency and performance management of recording in Adoption using Isle of Wight and Adopt South Proformas.
- To support and participate in Adopt South Regional panels
- Continue to monitor and address the timeliness of Scorecard's A10, 2 and A20.
- Continue to promote the Regional Adoption Agency with the Isle of Wight childcare teams to ensure they understand the changes to working practices.
- To maintain the reduction of the number of stepparent adoption assessments in line with the Courts' view and offer families alternatives to achieve permanence.
- To develop and refine the service within the new permanence team to integrate and maximise on skills, resources and delivery across both services.
- To ensure that all team members are up to date with any changes to regulations and/or policy and process changes within the IOW and the RAA.



# **Adopt South**

## **Summary Report**

***With Isle of Wight Council Highlights***

### **Data and Comparisons to projected targets Year 3 2021-2022**

Presented by

Rachel Reynolds  
Head of Adopt South  
June 2022



## Since we started in April 2019:

- 518 children have had families identified
- 223 of these children have been Hard to Place
- 319 children formally linked\*
- 339 families approved
- 7,296 enquiries to the Adoption Support Team
- Stage 1 timescales 1.7 months
- Stage 2 timescales 3.7 months

\* Impacted by Covid and Somerset Judgement

## How does Adopt South compare to 31 RAAs?

- Lowest number of children waiting
- Approved the 2nd highest number of adopters
- Our adopters spent less time than any other RAA from enquiry to Stage 1
- Only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales
- We placed more children with in-house adopters than any other RAA
- We spent less on interagency placements



## Executive Summary - Year 3 2021-2022 – Annual Results

Adopt South's Year 3 has achieved excellent outcomes for both the adopter's and children's journeys:

### Adopter's Journey & Adoption Support

- ↑ Enquiries **23% above** 589 target (727)
  - Face to Face – walk in events resumed
  - Achieved **93%** RAA Mystery Shopper Score
  - High advocacy levels from the public and business supporters
  - #IssyandEvie and ongoing sibling campaigns
- ↑ Adoption Information Sessions - **35% above** 383 target (516)
- **94%** of Registration of Interest Forms- 174 target achieved (164)
- **101** Adopters approved – 92% of target
  - **34%** (34) adopters approved for sibling groups
  - **35%** (35) adopters approved for Fostering for Adoption
- Average Assessment to Approval Conversion Rate is **above target at 66%**, against a target of 64%.
- **9** adopters sold generating **£265,289.49** +97% above target
- *Overall assessment timescales Stage 1 – 1.7 months*
- *Overall assessment timescales Stage 2 – 3.7 months*
- *Overall assessment journey 5.4 months*
- **3,378** enquiries to Adoption Support
- **£783,714.82** approved by the Adoption Support Fund +59% on Year 2
- **£45,726** of income generated from therapeutic courses

### Children's Journey

- **220** children with families identified + 47% on Y2
- **117** of these have been Hard to Place (53% of total) +89% on Y2
- **93** children have been formally linked to **77** families
- **37** siblings groups have had families identified +61% on Y2
- **18** children over the age of 5 years
- **25** children placed in Fostering for Adoption placements - **£67,000** saving to LAs
- Just **6** children with no potential links
- Just **4** children placed externally at **£120,689** (*only 48% of budget*)
- **354 days** for Scorecard 10, well below the government's guidance
- **123 days** for Scorecard 2, just 2 days outside of the government's guidance
- **135** Children's Plans sent to ADM
- **123** Placement Orders Made (31% increase on Y2)
- **38** adopter mentors

## Contents

<b>Executive Summary - Year 3 2021-2022 – Annual Results .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Adopt South's Third Year .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Introduction .....	7
Children's Journey.....	7
Adopter Journey.....	8
Recruitment .....	8
Stage 1.....	9
Stage 2.....	9
Adoption Support.....	10
Adoption Support Fund.....	11
Adoption Support for Adults.....	11
Adoption Information Exchange .....	12
Advantages of More Local Placements.....	12
Low Interagency Spend/High Number of Adopters Sold .....	12
Timely Matching/Scorecards .....	12
Strength of Comparisons with other Regional Adoption Agencies .....	13
<b>Isle of Wight – Local Authority Information 2021-2022.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Recruitment .....	14
Marketing and Communications Activity.....	14
Adopter Journey.....	14
Children's Journey.....	14
<b>Adopt South's Year 3 - Q4 Data .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Adopter's Journey: Enquiry to Approval .....	16
Enquiries.....	16
Adoption Information Sessions (AIS) .....	17
Pre-Stage Visits (PSV) .....	18
Registration of Interest Forms (RIF's) Returned .....	19
Number of Households forwarded to Assessment.....	20
Number of Households progressed to Stage 2 Assessment .....	21
Households Approved.....	22
Adopters approved for Fostering for Adoption (FfA) .....	23
Adopters approved for Sibling Groups.....	24
Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rates .....	25

Available Adopters .....	27
Timescales- Registration of Interest Form (RIF) .....	28
Timescales - Stage 1 .....	29
Timescales - Stage 2 .....	30
Timescales- Overall Adoption Journey .....	31
Family Finding .....	32
Hard to Place Children who have had families identified .....	33
Ages of Children who have had families identified .....	34
Number of Children under the age of 2 years .....	34
Number of Children between 2 – 5 years .....	35
Number of Children over 5 years .....	36
Number of Sibling Groups Matched .....	37
Children with no potential links .....	38
Children’s Information: Children’s Plans to Adoption Order .....	39
Children’s Plans referred to ADM/Relinquished Children to Panel .....	39
Summary of Placement Orders .....	40
Children Placed- Fostering for Adoption .....	41
Children formally linked .....	42
Adoption Orders .....	43
Disruptions - Pre-Adoption Order .....	44
Comparison of Scorecard 1/Scorecard 10 .....	45
Comparison of Scorecard 2 .....	47
Adoption Support- Activity .....	48
Referrals/Enquiries to Adopt South’s Advice and Support Line .....	48
Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNA’s), including ASNA Reviews .....	49
Adoption Support Needs Assessments – Timescales .....	50
Adoption Support – Caseloads .....	52
Adoption Support – Caseloads (Cont’d) .....	53
Adoption Support Offer - Comparison Table .....	54
Universal Services delivered in 2021/22 .....	56
Adoption Information Exchange .....	58
Adoption Support for Adults .....	59
Spending and Potential Saving Comparisons .....	60
Children Placed Externally .....	60
Interagency .....	61



Income Generated through Training .....	62
---	----

## Adopt South's Third Year

### Introduction

Adopt South's third year has continued to be strong and we have seen some significant achievements.

***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South approved the second highest number of adopters out of all 31 Regional Adoption Agencies and had the lowest number of children waiting.***

### Children's Journey

Families have been identified for **220** children and the excellent news is that this has included matches being identified for **117** hard to place children, including **37** sibling groups and **18** children over the age of **5** years.

- **114** Hampshire children
- **11 Isle of Wight children**
- **36** Portsmouth children
- **59** Southampton children

There were **93** children formally linked with **77** families. There are just **6** children with Placement Orders who currently have no potential links, and who Adopt South are actively family finding for.

Our third year has seen a significant increase in Placement Orders being granted. The delays with the courts due to COVID-19 last year, saw Children's Plans delayed in court. There have been **123** Placement Orders during Year 3, compared to **94** during Adopt South's second year and **97** in Adopt South's first year. Hampshire and Southampton saw the steepest increase with **60** Placement Orders being granted in Hampshire (compared to **49** last year) and **38** in Southampton (compared to **18** last year).

***Year 3 saw an average across the 4 Local Authorities of 354 days for Scorecard 10, which is well below the government's guidance of 426 days.***

***Year 3 saw an average across the 4 Local Authorities of 123 days for Scorecard 2, just 2 days outside of the government's guidance of 121 days.***

Adopt South's third year has also seen an increase in Children's Plans being referred to the LA Agency Decision Maker with **135** being referred. This compares to **130** during our second year and **122** during our first year. Southampton has seen the steepest rise with **38** referred, compared to **28** during last

year and **27** the previous year. These high numbers will no doubt lead to a continuing high number of Placement Orders in Year 4.

Since the launch of Adopt South, **319** children have been formally linked with adoptive families. Of these, **167** have been HCC children; **24 IOW** children; **50** PCC children; **78** SCC children.

## Adopter Journey

Year 3 saw **101** new adoptive households approved. Since the launch of Adopt South, **339** adoptive households have, therefore, been approved.

## Recruitment

Our third year has continued to see a very encouraging level of enquiries at the recruitment stage;

- **727** enquiries were received, **23%** above our annual target of 589.
- **516** households attended an Adoption Information Session, **35%** above our annual target of 383 households.
- **257** Pre-Stage Visits were undertaken, **3.2%** above our annual target of 249.
- **164** Registration of Interest Forms were returned.

The success of Year 3 has resulted in **153** new households being forwarded to assessment which is an excellent number and has resulted in a conversion rate from enquiry (727) to assessment (153) of **21%**.

**In the third year**, we made significant changes to our messages at the front door with greater emphasis on sibling groups, toddlers, children in primary school and children with additional needs, progressing with prospective adopters who were able to consider the children waiting for forever homes.

**Since the launch of Adopt South, 587 households have progressed to assessment.**

New initiatives which included our ***Speak to An Adopter*** sessions and the sticky chat button on our website, giving users three options to either call, *Arrange a Chat* or *Speak to An Adopter*, have been successful in driving recruitment, especially when there was no face-to-face route.

Our first live ***Adoption Webinar*** was also launched at the start of Year 3 which was hugely successful and monthly webinars are now taking place.



There is no doubt that our dedicated Recruitment Team, which includes two marketing specialists and a community project worker, have continued to help bring in some significant results. They are a very passionate, innovative team, who offer excellent customer service, always ensuring they call potential applicants back and arrange a visit without delay, at a time of the applicant's choice. This always includes a choice of weekends and evenings, as well as weekdays.

Our third year has continued to see many positive comments and feedback on social media from adopters about the service they have received, helping build Adopt South's reputation and has encouraged other potential adopters to progress with Adopt South, rather than with neighbouring Agencies.

## Stage 1

The Stage 1 team have progressed the **153** households during Year 3 and have continued to support them to build their skills. They have ensured all applicants have had at least one session of Virtual Reality to increase their understanding of the needs of adopted children.

*Stage 1 timescales have averaged **1.7 months** in Year 3, remaining well within the government expectation of 2 months.*

***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that last year, Adopt South was 1 out of just 2 Regional Adoption Agencies who averaged Stage 1 in timescales. It also shows that Adopt South adopters spend less time than any other RAA from enquiry to Stage 1.***

The specialised team have continued to encourage new applicants to consider placements of siblings, older children and children with additional needs, giving greater scope for placement.

## Stage 2

*Overall timescales of Stage 2 assessments achieved **3.7 months**, continuing to be well within the government expectation of 4 months.*

***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that last year, Adopt South was 1 out of just 5 RAA's who averaged Stage 2 in timescales. We were the only RAA, however, who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales.***

Regarding the overall adoption journey, the average timescale was **5.4** months and remains well within the government expectation of 6 months.

Following a child being placed, all adopters are encouraged to attend a therapeutic parenting course (Adopting Changes/Adopting Little Changes) to provide them with a toolkit of strategies they can draw upon to support them with caring for their adopted child.

Year 2 saw a pilot being rolled out, 'SteppingStones', a peer support group, which has quickly grown and a regular cohort of prospective adopters now attend once a week.

Very positive feedback has continued to be received with regard to how equipped adopters feel to care for their adopted child, which is borne out in the very low disruption rate since the commencement of Adopt South.

**Adopt South's Mentoring Scheme** has remained a strength with **181** families receiving support by **38** Adopter Mentors at the end of March 2022. Continuous development of the service now includes bespoke and targeted one-off consultations with Mentors who are experienced in specific areas of adoption. A total of 44 consultations covered challenging behaviour, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, unknown future needs, supporting heritage and culture, parental mental health and meeting birth parents as well as live Q&A sessions; **149** Prospective Adopters joined the sessions.

**The Fostering Buddy Scheme** was created to bridge the gap for Prospective Adopters who were struggling to gain childcare experience due to COVID-19. In Year 3, **10** Foster Carer Buddies carried out **95** chats.

## Adoption Support

During Year 3, the high demand for adoption support continued, with **3,378** enquiries to the Advice and Support Line. This is an increase of just 3% on the same period last year and supports the position that the enquiries to the Advice and Support Line are stabilising.

***In Adopt South's second year, the total number of enquiries to the Advice and Support Line was 3,268. When compared to the total of 650 enquiries in Adopt South's first year, this was a 402% increase.***

Since the launch of Adopt South, a total of **7,296** enquiries have, therefore, been made to the Advice and Support Line.

A total of **267** Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNA's) have been completed, a reduction of 8% on the same period in Year 2. The reduction in ASNA's suggests that the cases requiring an assessment are reducing, due to the wide offer that is available to families without the need to be open to a social worker.

During Year 3;

- **115** adoptive parents attended a workshop
- **44** adoptive parents attended a Coffee and Chat
- **26** of the **37** available consultation slots were used
- **21** adoptive parents attended a Face-to-Face support group
- **296** places were used by children and young people attending one of the Groundwork Fusion activities for young people
- **49** Educational Psychologist consultations were provided
- **18** Video Interaction Guidance packages were allocated.

At the end of Year 3, there were **367** adoption support cases open, an increase of 3% on the 357 adoption support cases open at the end of Year 2.

*During Year 3, **528** children and young people were open to a social worker and accessed an adoption support plan, a decrease of 5% compared to Year 2.*

## Adoption Support Fund

During our third year, **313** applications were approved by the Adoption Support Fund, with a total amount of **£783,714.82** being approved. (A **59%** increase compared to regular applications approved last year).

*This compares to £493,424.16 being approved in relation to regular applications for therapeutic interventions in our second year and a total of £572,555 when taking the COVID-19 ASF Scheme into consideration. During Adopt South's first year, £720,548 was approved.*

## Adoption Support for Adults

Adoption Support for Adults came into scope of Adopt South in April 2021. Initially it came in 'as is' but processes were quickly reviewed, and the new Adopt South Service for Adults went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

The work in this area supports adopted adults and birth relatives and those with a prescribed relationship to a deceased adopted adult, around accessing birth certificate information, access to adoption records and intermediary services.

Neither Southampton or the IOW provided intermediary services previously, and therefore the offer across the region has now improved.

During Year 3, **575** enquiries were made in relation to adult work, which led to **142** new referrals. **174** cases were allocated.

At the end of Year 3, there were **110** open cases.

## Adoption Information Exchange

Adoption Information Exchange and direct/indirect contact also came into scope of Adopt South in April 2021.

At the end of Year 3, there were **6,138** active exchanges across the region.

## Advantages of More Local Placements

With only **4** children (out of 93) being placed externally during Year 3 and just **3** (out of 118) and **4** (out of 108) in Year's 1 and 2, noticeable advantages have continued to be seen. These include the impact on staff time and significantly reduced travel, along with adoptive families being more able to access local adoption support.

## Low Interagency Spend/High Number of Adopters Sold

With just 4 external placements being purchased during Adopt South's third year, at a cost of **£120,689**, interagency spend has remained low and well within budget.

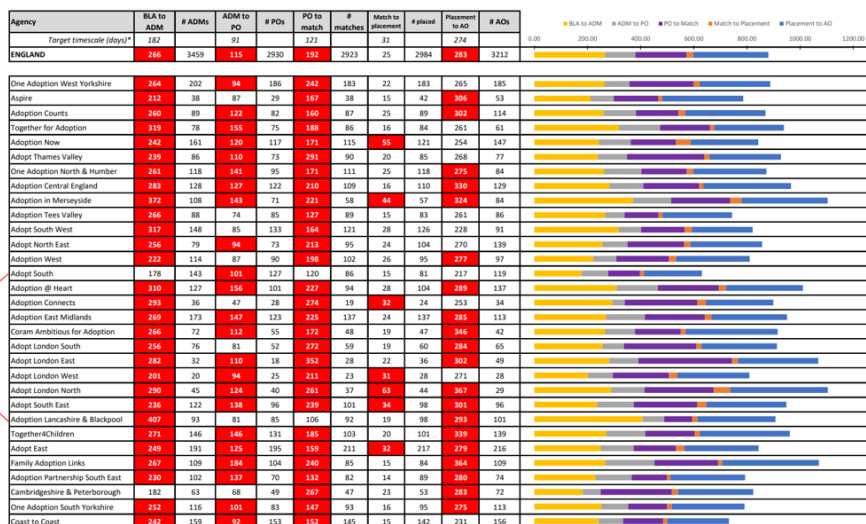
Although the current income target for sold adopters is £135,000, based on 5 placements of children from other RAA's with Adopt South adopters, at the end of Year 3, 9 adopters have been sold for a total of 12 children, generating an income of **£265,289.49**.

## Timely Matching/Scorecards

During Year 3, we have continued to see strong evidence of timely matching.

The most recent data insights (ASGLB – April 2022) have highlighted Adopt South as finding matches quickly.

## Timescales: children



Adopt South and  
Adoption Lancashire &  
Blackpool are finding  
matches quickly!

It's taking longer to make  
BIDs than in 2020 (245  
days); and POs (108  
days)...  
...though matches are  
quicker (216 days)

No impact yet nationally  
on time to place children  
following match. Was 27  
days in 2020...  
...but some RAAs do  
seem to be experiencing  
delays

ASGLB

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

coram.i  
Insight • Innovation

## Strength of Comparisons with other Regional Adoption Agencies

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) data which has been published for last year (April 2020 - March 2021) shows that out of the 31 Regional Adoption Agencies:

- Adopt South had the lowest number of children waiting.
- Adopt South approved the second highest number of adopters.
- Our adopters spent less time than any other RAA from enquiry to Stage 1.
- Adopt South was one out of just two RAA's who averaged Stage 1 in timescales.
- Adopt South was one of just five RAA's who averaged Stage 2 in timescales.
- We were the only RAA who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales.
- Adopt South placed more children with in-house adopters than any other RAA, spending less on interagency placements. Across the RAA's, there was an average of 31% of children placed externally, compared to just 3.7% for Adopt South.
- There were only two RAA's who placed more children than Adopt South in FfA placements.
- Adopt South was one of just eight who had Scorecard 1 under Government guidance.
- Although our Scorecard 2 averaged slightly outside of Government guidance, all RAA's averaged outside of this. Only 5 RAA's averaged lower than us.

## Isle of Wight – Local Authority Information 2021-2022

### Recruitment

#### Marketing and Communications Activity

- Beacon Magazine – Half page ads every quarter
- IW Radio – Rotation of our generic adverts & Digital Advertising
- Global – Capital Radio/Heart FM
- Bauer – Greatest Hits Radio (South Coast)
- IW County Press – Quarter page and Digital Advertising
- IW County Press – social media sponsored ads
- Hospital Magazine
- 3D Reach – mobile advertising
- IW County Press – #IssyandEvie Campaign
- Social Media – Hashtags with IWight to reach users of Facebook/Instagram

### Adopter Journey

25 enquiries 2021/22 (3% of total)

- Island wide across Newport, Cowes, Ventnor, Sandown and WestWight

4 Adopter Households Approved

### Children's Journey

Children's Plans ADM	Pre- Adopt South	Yr 1	Diff	Year 2	% Diff	Year 3	% Diff
	14	12	-14%	12	0%	6	-50%

Placement Orders	Pre- Adopt South	Yr 1	Diff	Year 2	% Diff	Year 3	% Diff
	9	5	-44%	11	120%	6	-45%

Children Formally Linked	Pre- Adopt South	Yr 1	Diff	Year 2	% Diff	Year 3	% Diff
	10	7	-30%	12	71%	5	-58%

Children Placed	Pre- Adopt South	Yr 1	Diff	Year 2	% Diff	Year 3	% Diff
Internal	3	7	133%	11	57%	5	-55%
External	7	0	-100%	1	100%	0	-100%

Children with no potential links	Pre- Adopt South	Yr 1	Diff	Year 2	% Diff	Year 3	% Diff
	2	1	%50%	0	-100%	0	0%

Children with Adoption Order	Pre- Adopt South	Yr 1	Diff	Year 2	% Diff	Year 3	% Diff
	11	9	-18%	5	-44%	14	180%

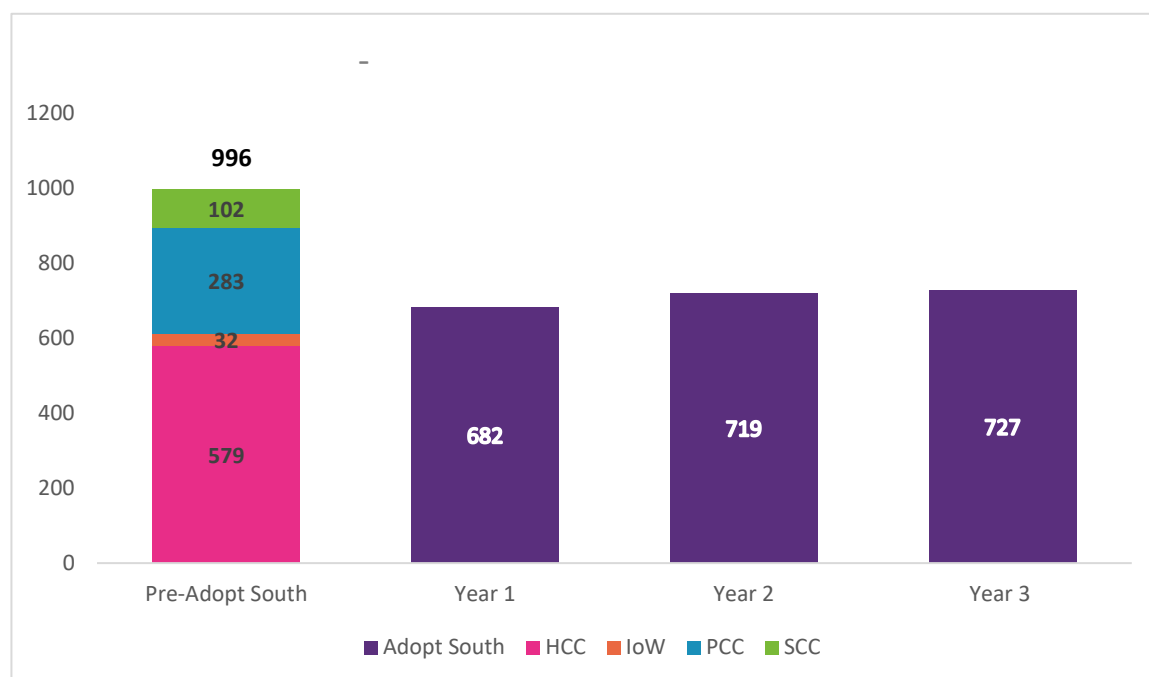


## Adopt South's Year 3 - Q4 Data

### Adopter's Journey: Enquiry to Approval

#### Enquiries

Table 1.1



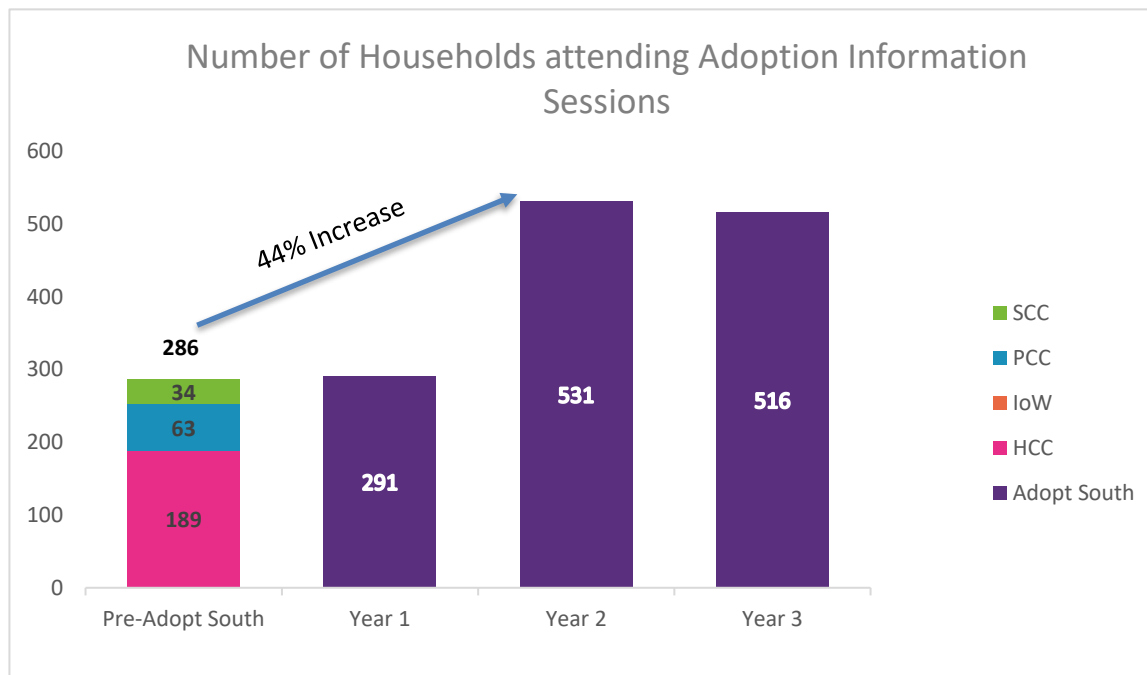
#### Commentary:

- A total of 727 enquiries have been received during Adopt South's third year, 23% above our annual target of 589 enquiries per year.
- Although enquiries have reduced since Pre-Adopt South, targeted advertising has led to a significantly improved conversion rate.
- Pre-Adopt South conversion to approval was at 9%; over the first two years with Adopt South the conversion rate averaged 17%, and 14% in Year 3 with a revised target for 2021/22.
- Although Year 3's conversion rate is lower than the average across our first two years, it reflects our change in messages at the front door and only progressing with prospective adopters who are able to consider the children we have waiting, siblings, older children and children with complex needs.



## Adoption Information Sessions (AIS)

Table 1.2

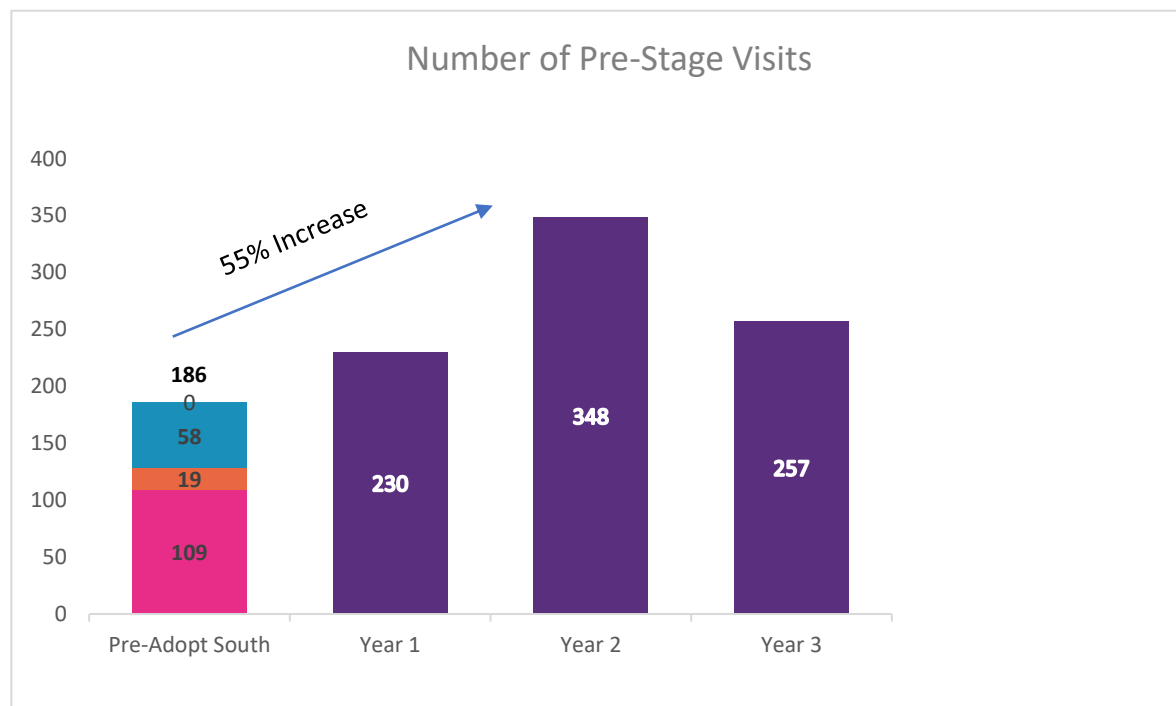


### Commentary:

- 516 households attended an Adoption Information Session during Adopt South's third year, 35% above our annual target of 383 households per year.
- The number of households attending Adoption Information Sessions increased by an average of 44% over Adopt South's Year 1 and 2 from Pre-Adopt South.  $(291+531/2 = 411 \text{ AIS})$

## Pre-Stage Visits (PSV)

Table 1.3

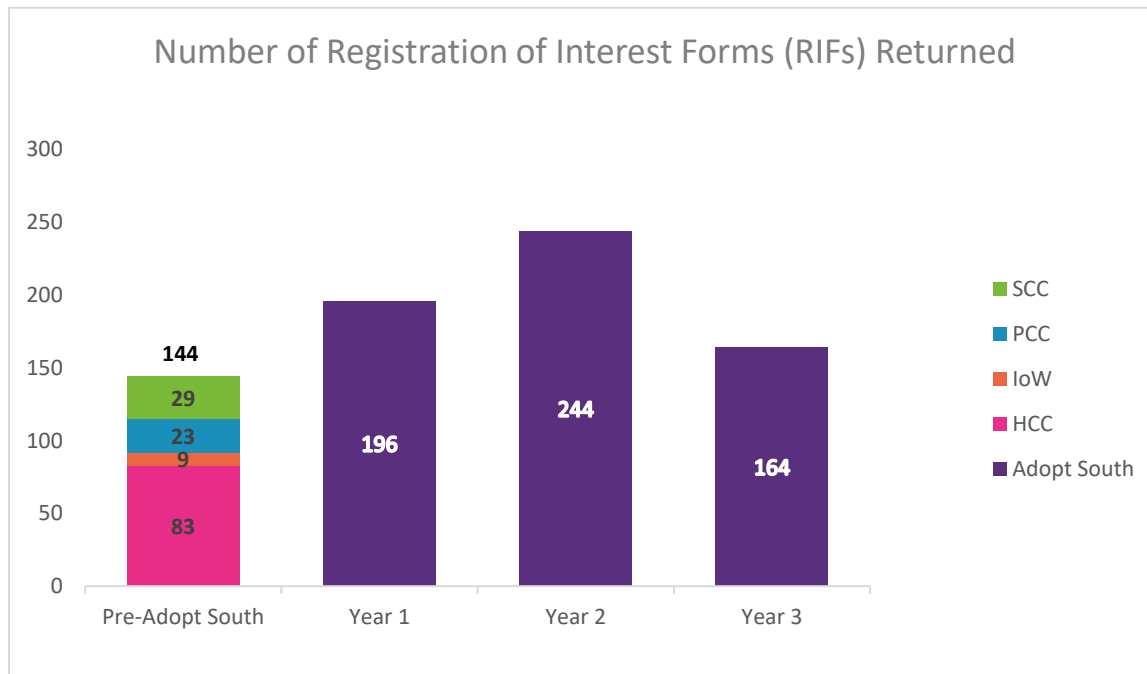


### Commentary:

- 257 Pre-Stage Visits were undertaken during Adopt South's third year, 3.2% above our annual target of 249 per year.
- Pre-Stage Visits increased from Year 1 to Year 2 by 55%. (A total of 230 in Year 1, compared to 348 households in Year 2).

## Registration of Interest Forms (RIF's) Returned

Table 1.4

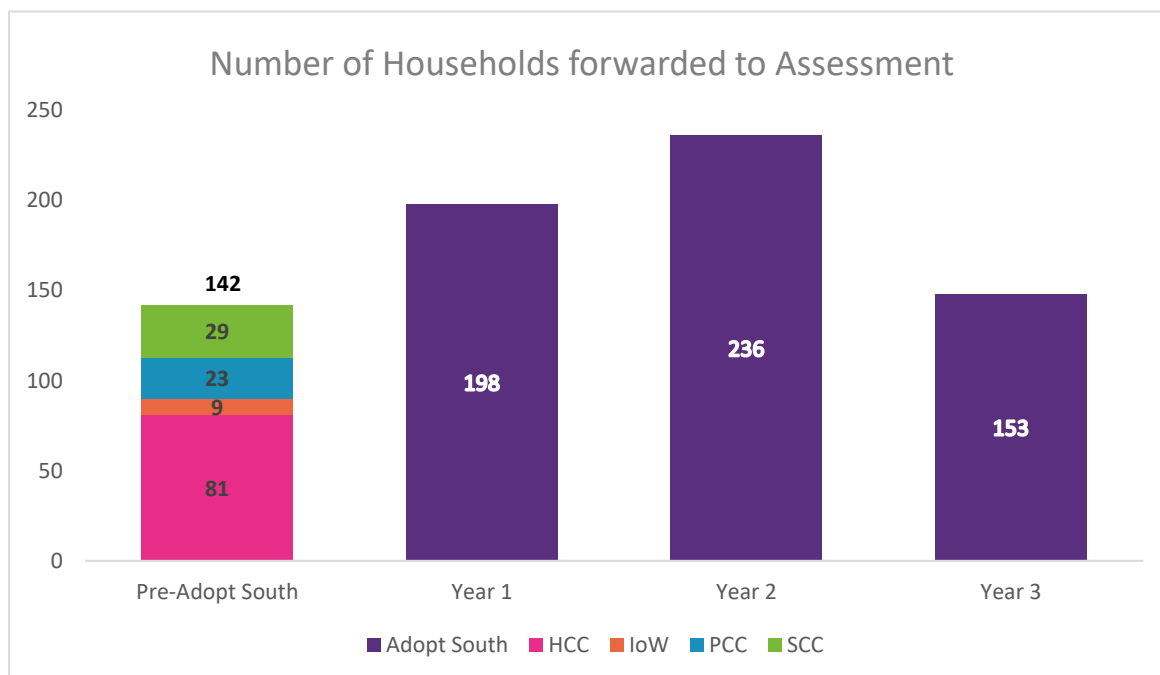


### Commentary:

- 164 Registration of Interest Forms were returned during Adopt South's third year, just ten households (6%) less than our annual target of 174 per year.
- The number of Registration of Interest Forms returned increased by 36% in Year 1 and 69% in Year 2. (A total of 144 were returned Pre-Adopt South, compared to 196 in Year 1 and 244 in Year 2).

## Number of Households forwarded to Assessment

Table 1.5

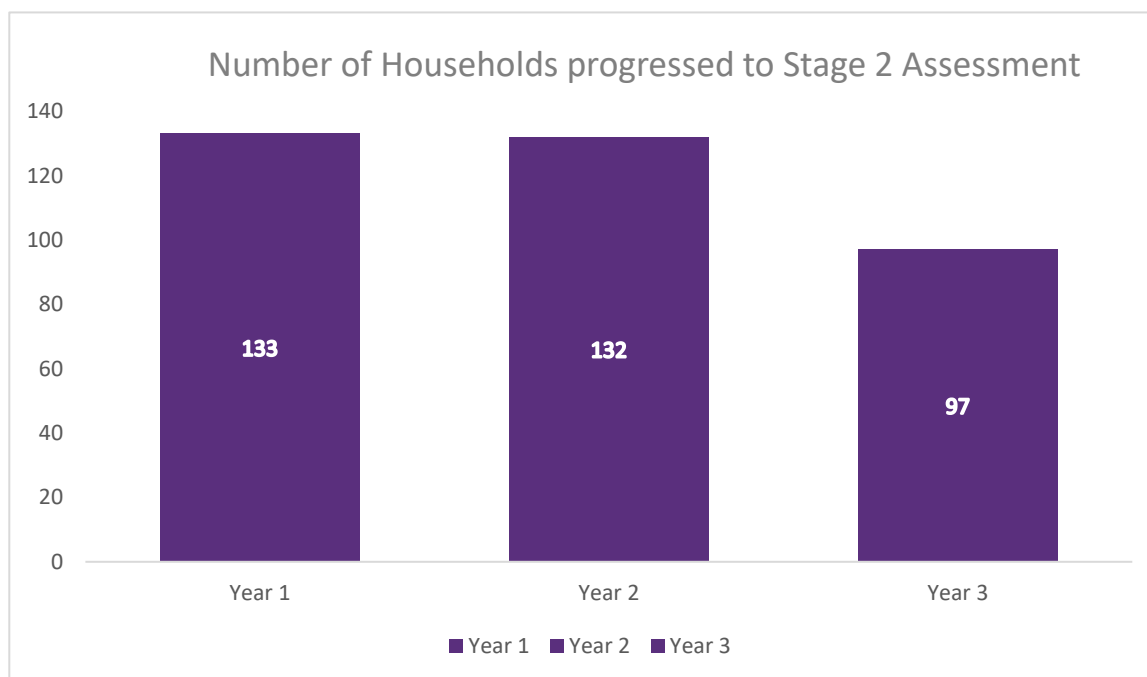


### Commentary:

- 153 households were forwarded to assessment during Adopt South's third year, just 11% less than our annual target of 171.
- The number of households forwarded to assessment increased by 53% on average during Adopt South's first two years. (A total of 142 households progressed Pre-Adopt South, compared to 236 households in Year 2).
- Pre-Adopt South conversion rate from enquiry to assessment was 14%; over Adopt South's first two years, it averaged 31%. During Year 3, it is 21% based on a new target adjustment.
- Although the number of households forwarded to assessment during Year 3 is lower than our first two years, this, again, reflects our change in messages at the front door and only progressing with prospective adopters who are able to consider the children we have waiting, siblings, older children and children with complex needs.
- ***Specifically targeting to recruit adopters for sibling groups in Year 3 has had great success, with families being identified for 37 sibling groups since April 2021.***

## Number of Households progressed to Stage 2 Assessment

Table 1.6

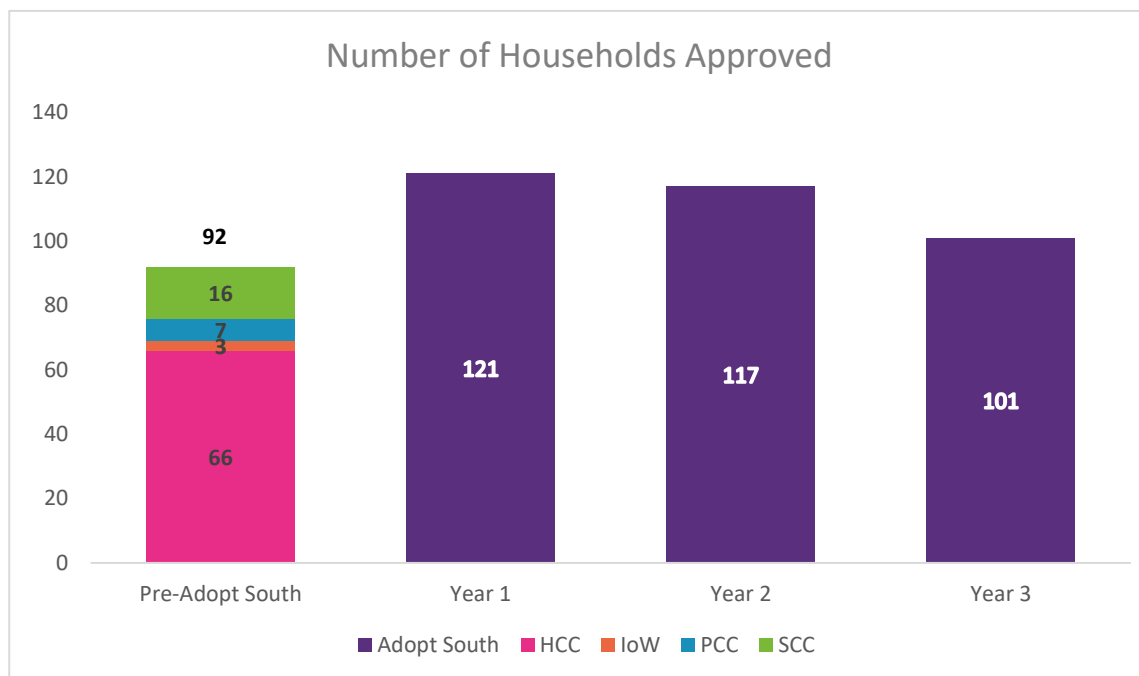


### Commentary:

- 97 households were forwarded to Stage 2 assessment during Adopt South's third year, slightly below our annual target of 119.
- The service target was to approve 110 new adoptive households this year. To allow for a potential 8% closure rate this equated to 119 assessments transferring to Stage 2 over the year. On average, this meant that 10 assessments per month needed to transfer from Stage 1 to Stage 2 for full assessment and equated to 30 assessments per quarter.
- 132 households progressed to Stage 2 in Adopt South's second year and 133 in Adopt South's first year.
- Although the number of households forwarded to Stage 2 assessment during Year 3 is lower than our first two years, it reflects the targeted work undertaken by the Recruitment and Stage 1 teams and the considerations from applicants who are more suited to the needs of the children waiting to be matched. There is presently a sufficient number of available prospective adopters to match with younger children. Having a focus on assessment, support and development of prospective adopters for sibling groups and older children allows us to ensure there is sufficient resource to match the children who are waiting.

## Households Approved

Table 1.7

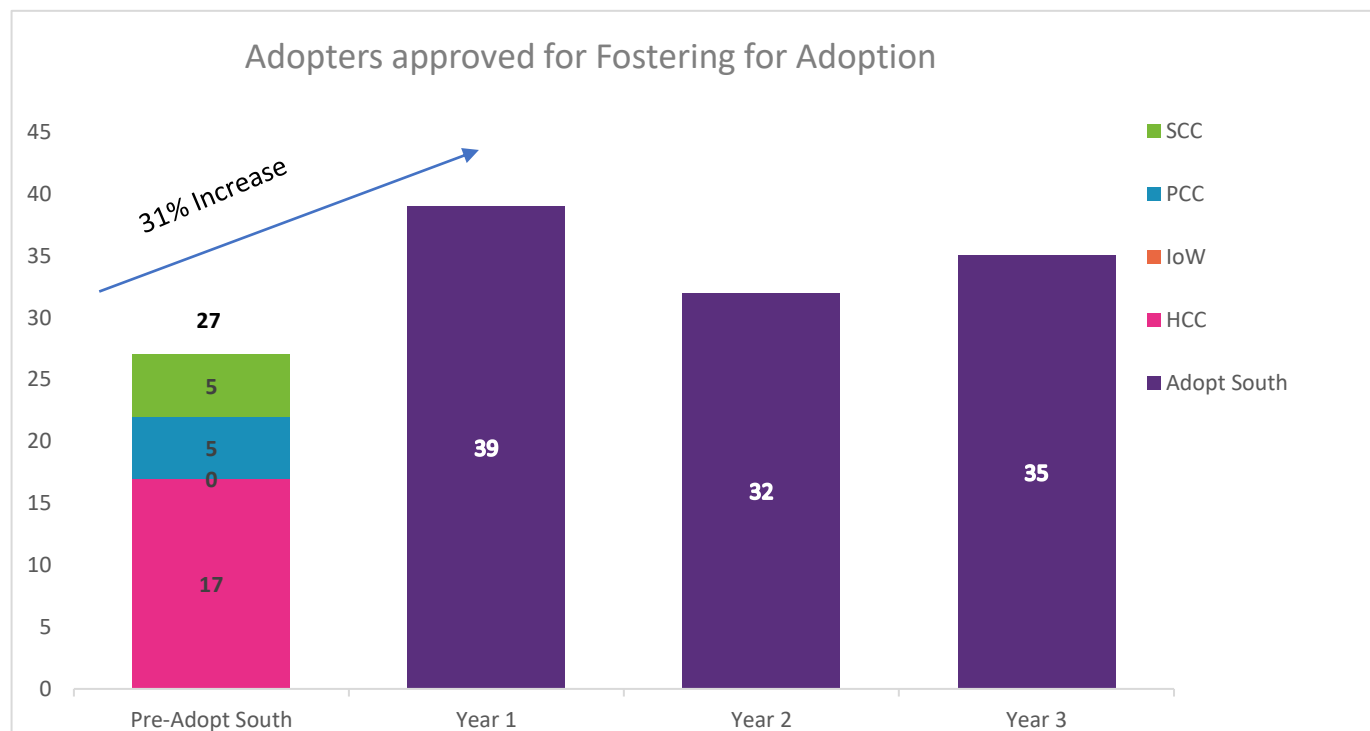


### Commentary:

- 101 new adoptive households were approved during Adopt South's third year, just nine less (92%) than our annual target of 110.
- The number of adopters approved increased by an average of 29% from Pre-Adopt South to the end of Year 2. (A total of 92 adoptive households were approved Pre-Adopt South, compared to 121 in Year 1 and 117 in Year 2).
- 339 adoptive households have, therefore, been approved since the launch of Adopt South, providing greater choice of matching.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South approved the second highest number of adopters out of all 31 RAA's last year.***

## Adopters approved for Fostering for Adoption (FfA)

Table 1.8

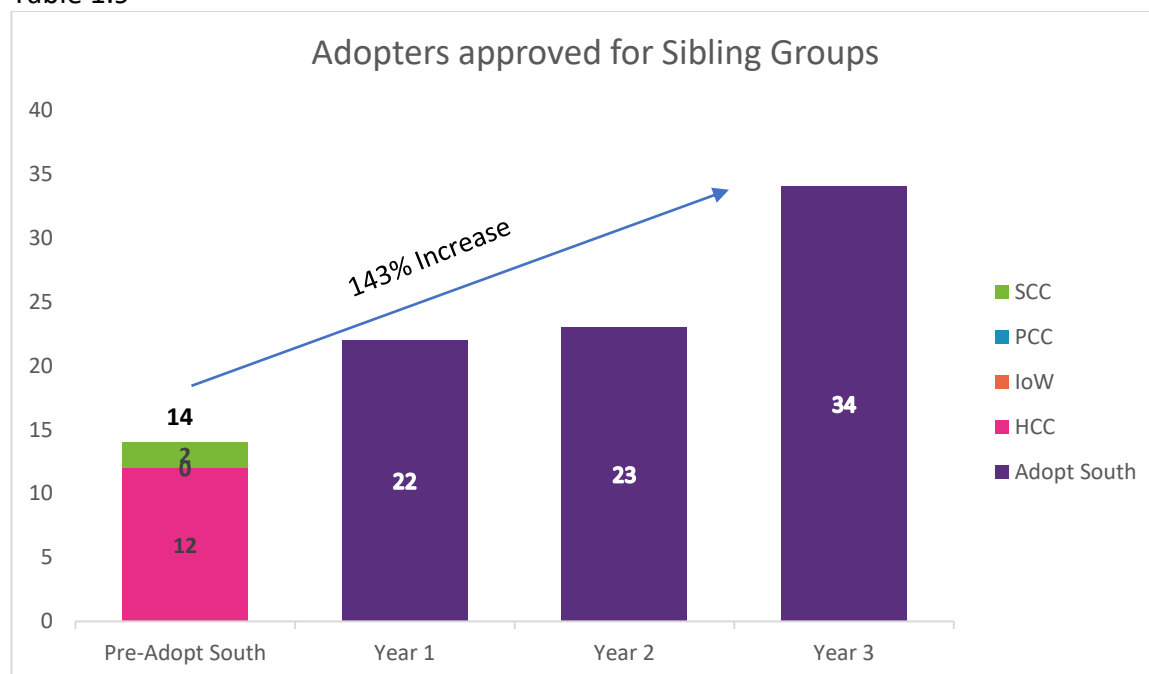


### Commentary:

- Out of the 101 new adoptive households approved during Adopt South's third year, 35 (35%) were approved for FfA.
- 39 adopters were approved for FfA in Year 1 and 32 in Year 2, compared to 27 Pre-Adopt South, an average increase of 31%.
- In addition to increased stability and reduced number of placements for an adoptive child, there is a reduction of costs.

## Adopters approved for Sibling Groups

Table 1.9



### Commentary:

- Out of the 101 new adoptive households approved during Adopt South's third year, 34 (34%) were approved for Sibling Groups.
- 22 adopters (out of the 121 approved) were approved for Sibling Groups in Year 1 and 23 (out of the 117 approved) in Year 2, compared to 14 Pre-Adopt South, an average increase of 61%.
- The IOW and PCC did not approve any for Sibling Groups in 2018/19.



## Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rates

Table 1.10

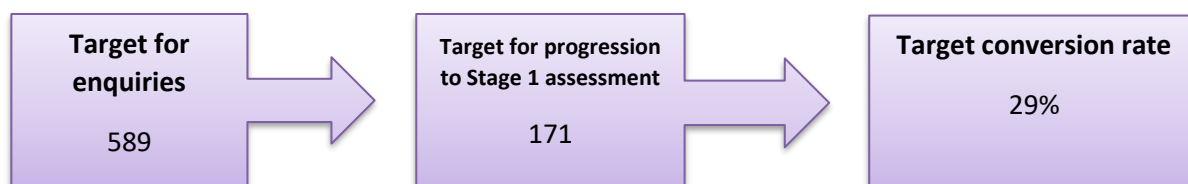
### Target enquiry to approval - per year



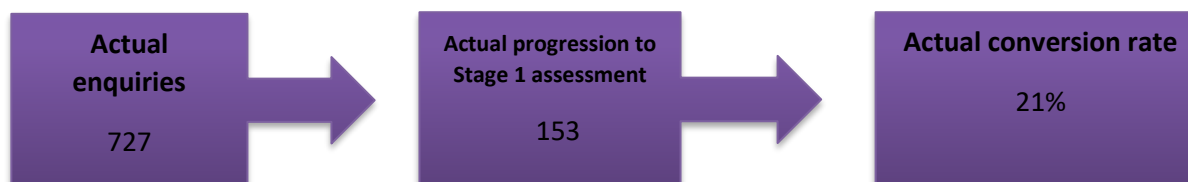
### Actual enquiry to approval – per year



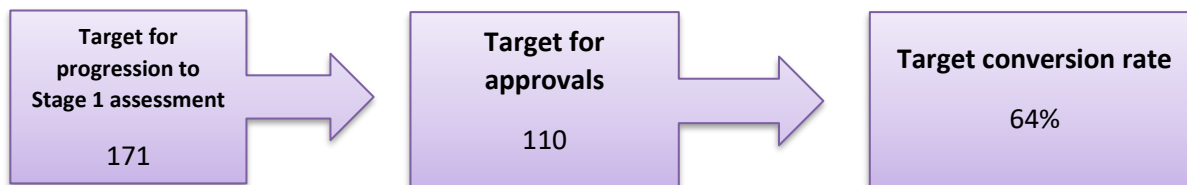
### Target enquiry to assessment – per year



### Actual enquiry to assessment – per year



### Target assessment to approval – per year



### Actual assessment to approval – per year

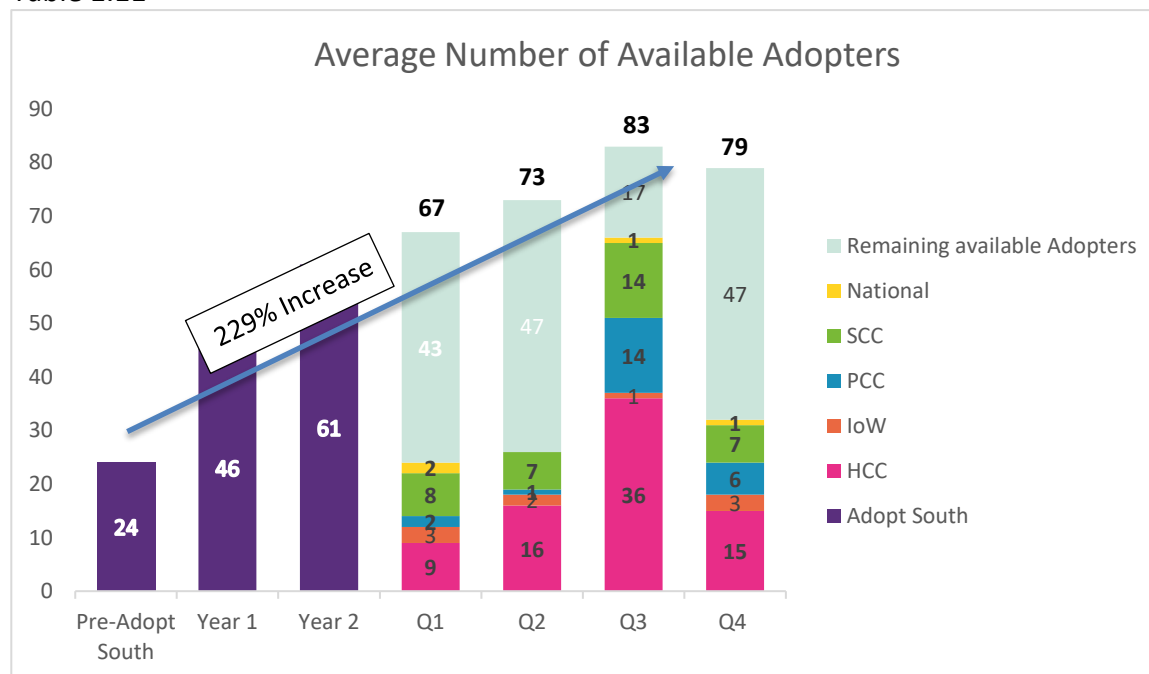


### Commentary:

- The target conversion rates allow for a 17.5% closure rate in Stage 1 and an 8% closure rate in Stage 2.
- Average Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rate for Adopt South's first two years was 17%, compared to 9% Pre-Adopt South.
- Average Enquiry to Approval Conversion Rate for Adopt South's third year is 14% against a target of 19%.
- The lower conversion rate in Year 3 reflects the high number of enquiries during the year and the lower number progressing due to the change in messages at the front door.
- ***Average Assessment to Approval Conversion Rate for Adopt South's third year is above target at 66%, against a target of 64%.***

## Available Adopters

Table 1.11

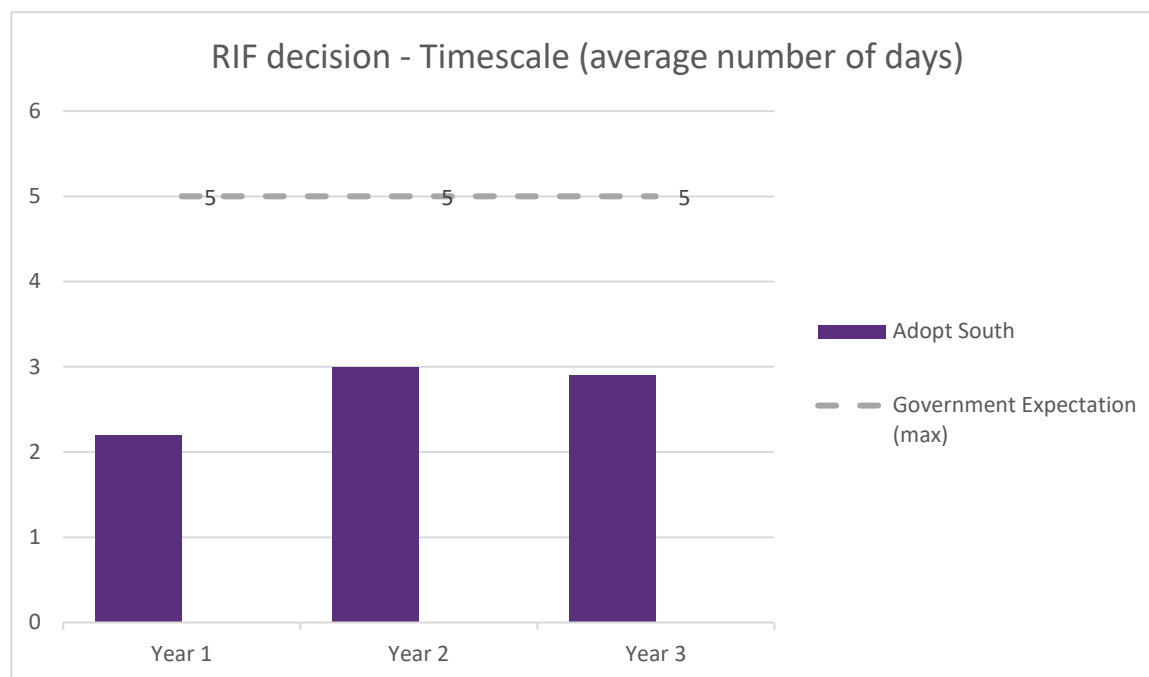


### Commentary:

- At the end of Year 2, there were 61 adopters available compared to 24 at the inception of Adopt South, an average increase of 123%.
- This has increased to 79 at the end of Year 3. However, 32 of these have been pre-linked with children either with Placement Orders or awaiting Placement Orders.
- A larger pool of adopters has increased choice and has led to better matches for children, reducing the need to purchase adopters externally.

## Timescales- Registration of Interest Form (RIF)

Table 1.12

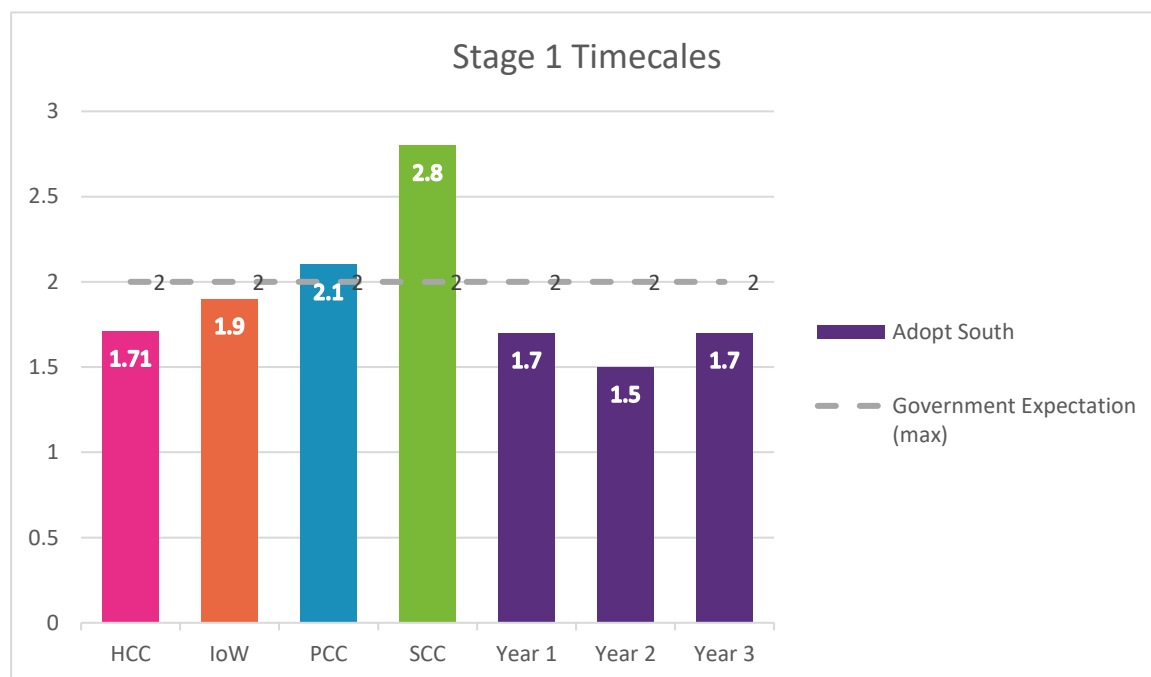


### Commentary:

- Registration of Interest Form timescales have continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's third year.
- Similarly, Adopt South's first and second year averaged well within the government timescale of 5 days.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South was the only RAA out of all 31 RAA's who met the 5-day timescale last year and had the lowest number of days from enquiry to RIF.***

## Timescales - Stage 1

Table 1.13

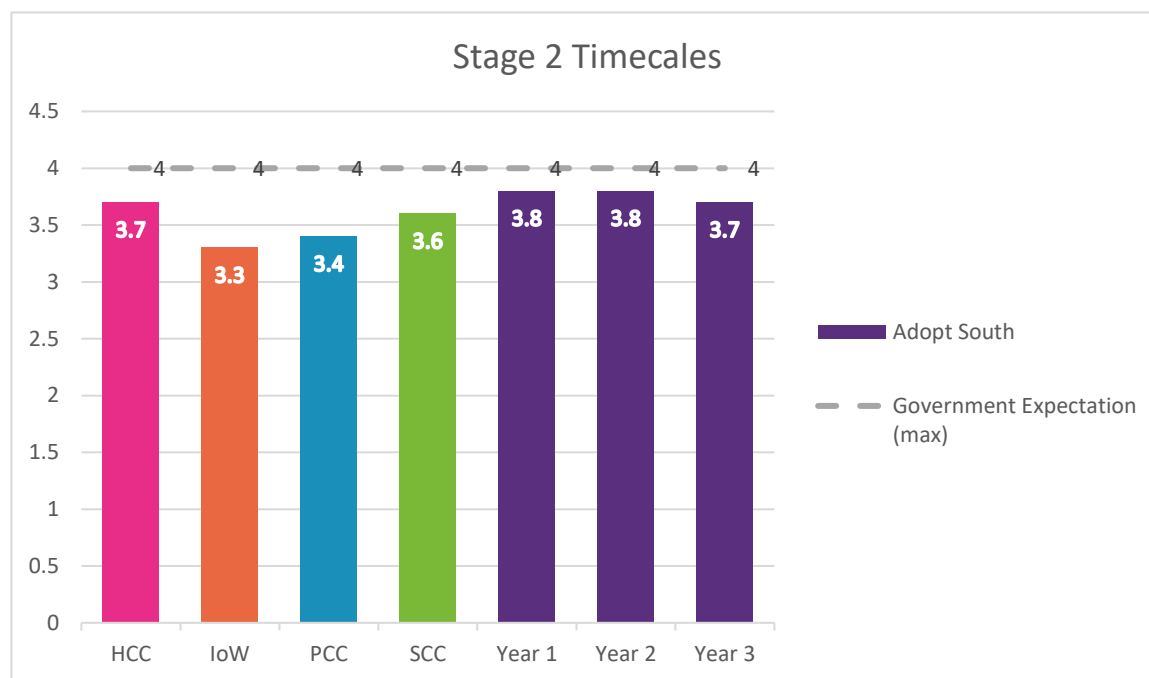


### Commentary:

- Stage 1 timescales have continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's third year.
- Similarly, Stage 1 timescales averaged well within government timescales during Adopt South's first and second year.
- PCC and SCC averaged outside of timescales Pre-Adopt South.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that last year, Adopt South was 1 out of just 2 RAA's who averaged Stage 1 in timescales. However, it is interesting to note, that Adopt South processed 236 Stage 1 cases and progressed these in timescales, compared to the other RAA's (Adopt London South's) 34!***

## Timescales - Stage 2

Table 1.14

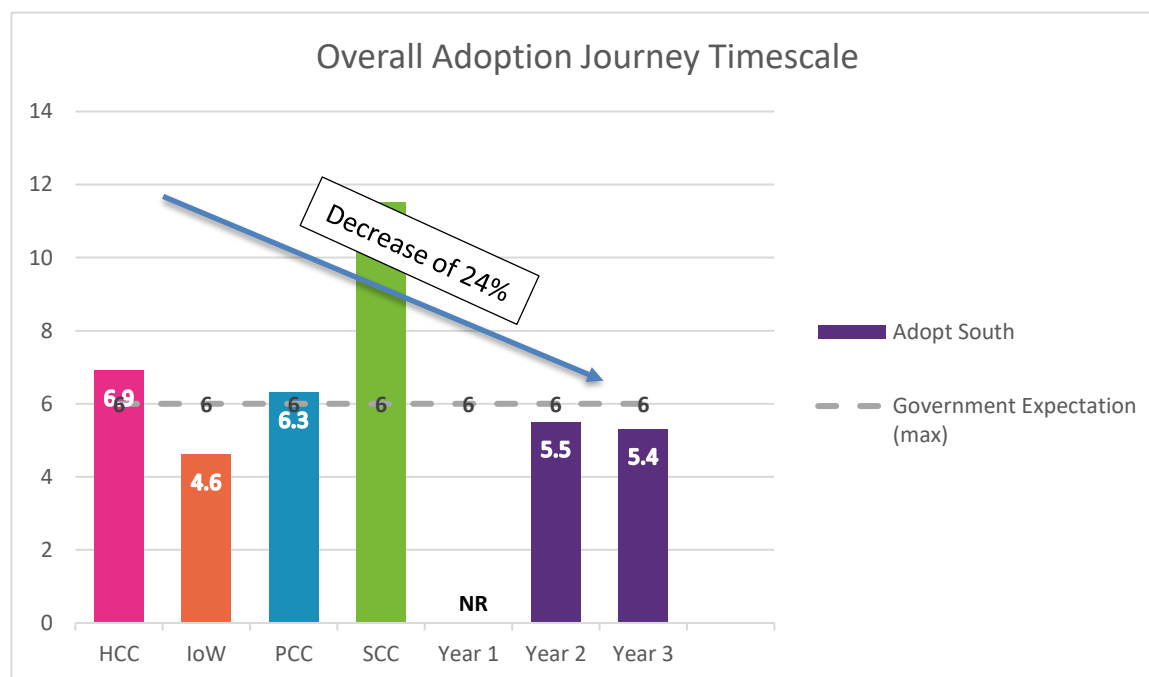


### Commentary:

- Stage 2 timescales have continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's third year.
- Similarly, Stage 2 timescales averaged well within government timescales during Adopt South's first and second year.
- SCC averaged outside of timescales Pre-Adopt South.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that last year, Adopt South was 1 out of just 5 RAA's who averaged Stage 2 in timescales. We were the only RAA, however, who achieved both Stage 1 and Stage 2 in timescales.***

## Timescales- Overall Adoption Journey

Table 1.15



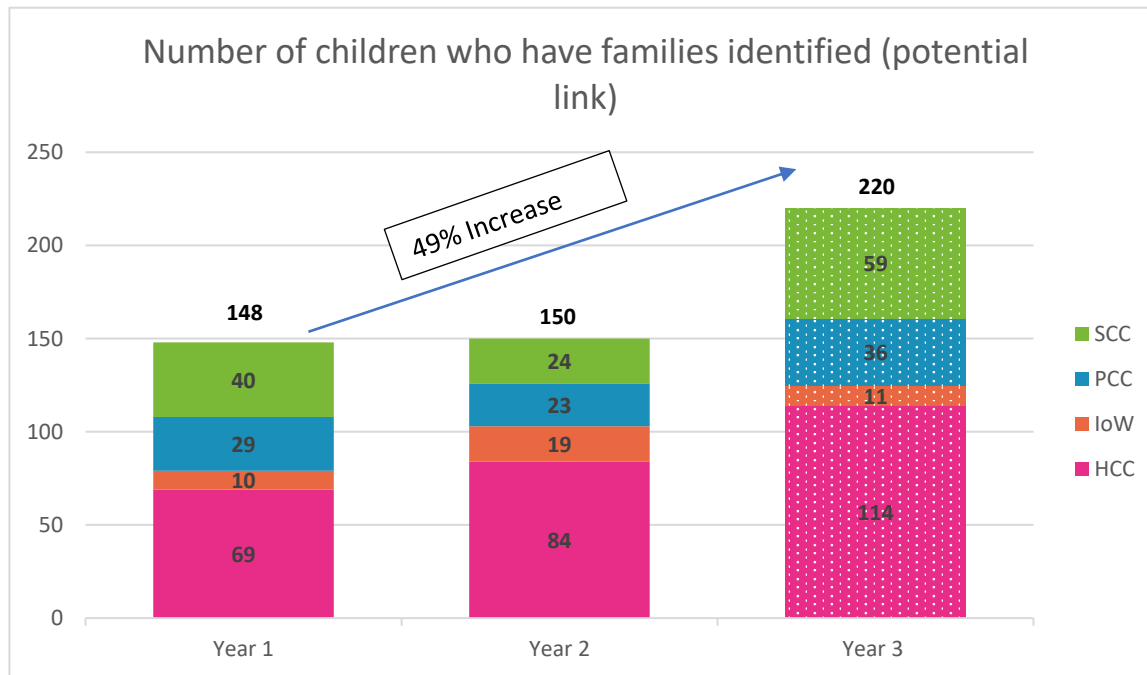
### Commentary:

- The overall adoption journey continued to average well within government timescales during Adopt South's third year.
- Similarly, the overall adoption journey averaged well within government timescales during Adopt South's second year.
- The IoW was the only Local Authority where the average overall adoption journey was within government timescales Pre-Adopt South.
- SCC had an overall timescale of almost double at 11.5 months Pre-Adopt South and timescales by the end of Year 2, were, therefore, reduced by 52%, and are now reduced further.

## Family Finding

### Children who have had families identified

Table 2.1



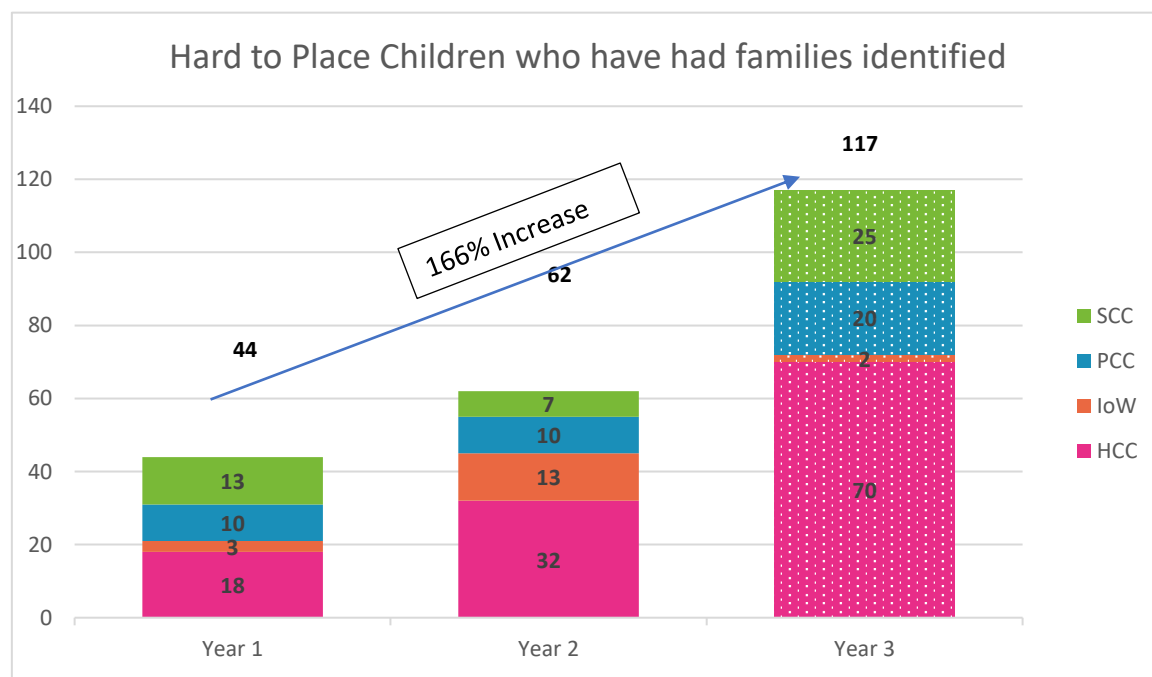
#### Commentary:

- **220** children had families identified during Adopt South's third year.
- This compares to **150** children having families identified in Year 2, an almost identical number to Year 1.



## Hard to Place Children who have had families identified

Table 2.2



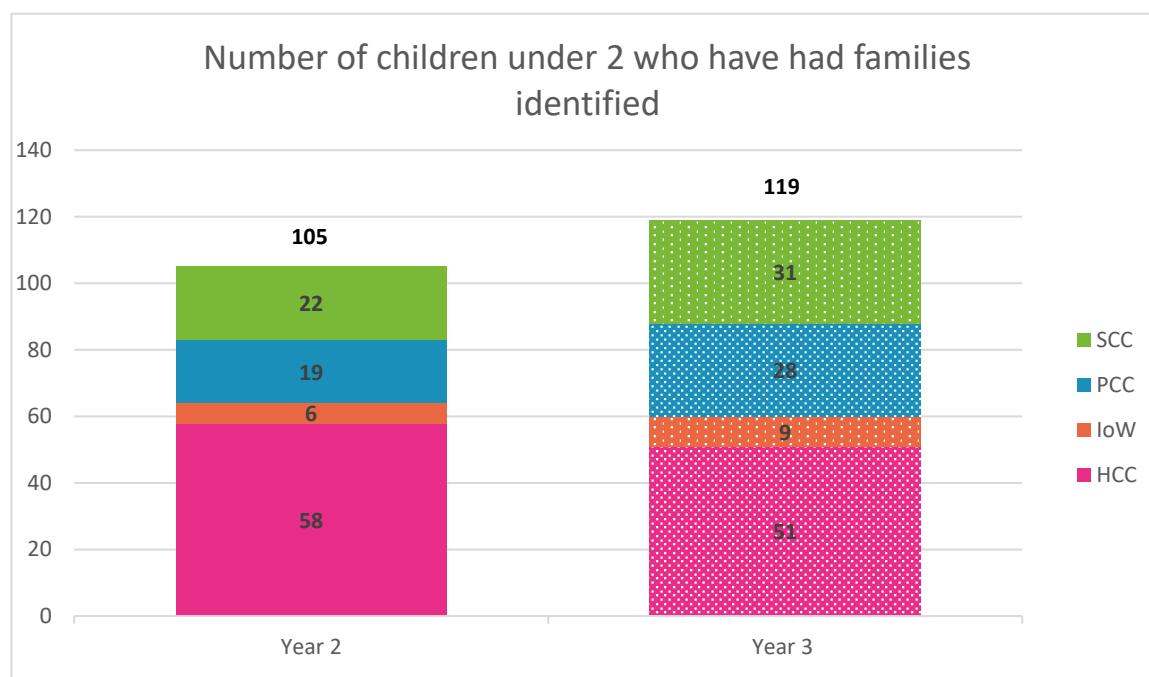
### Commentary:

- Of the 220 children who had families identified during Adopt South's third year, **117** were Hard to Place, including 37 sibling groups.
- This compares to finding families for **62** children who were Hard to Place (out of the 150 children) in Year 2 and **44** (out of the 148) in Year 1.

## Ages of Children who have had families identified

### Number of Children under the age of 2 years

Table 2.3

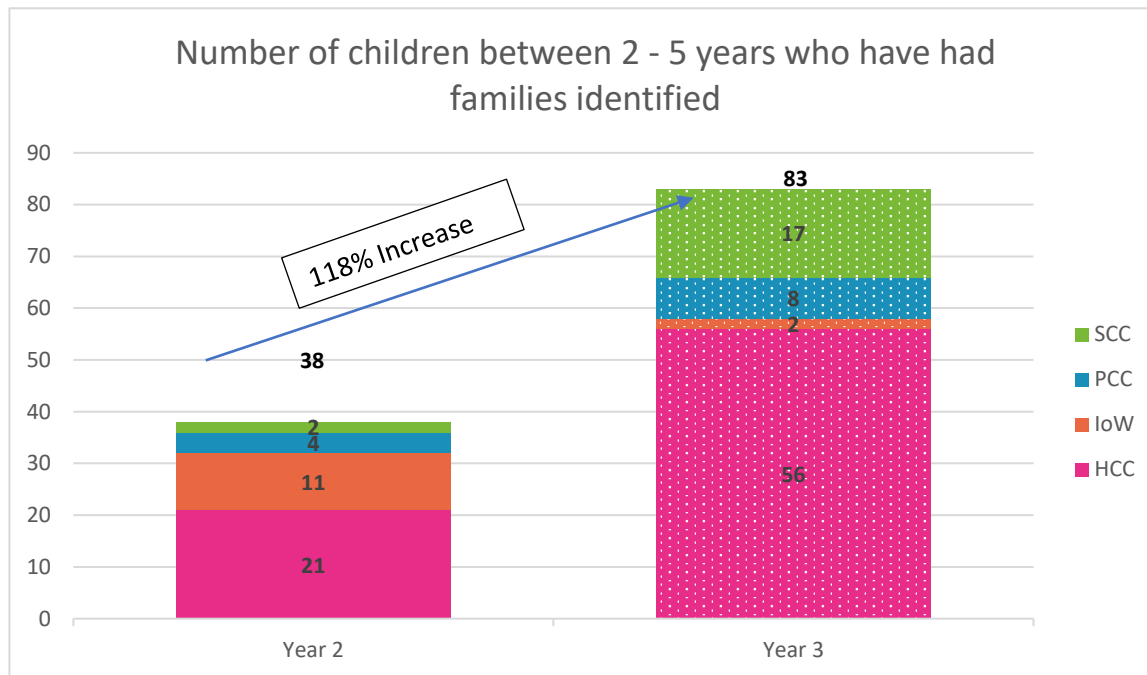


#### Commentary:

- **119** children under the age of 2 had families identified during Year 3.
- This compares to **105** children under the age of 2 having families identified during Adopt South's second year.

## Number of Children between 2 – 5 years

Table 2.4

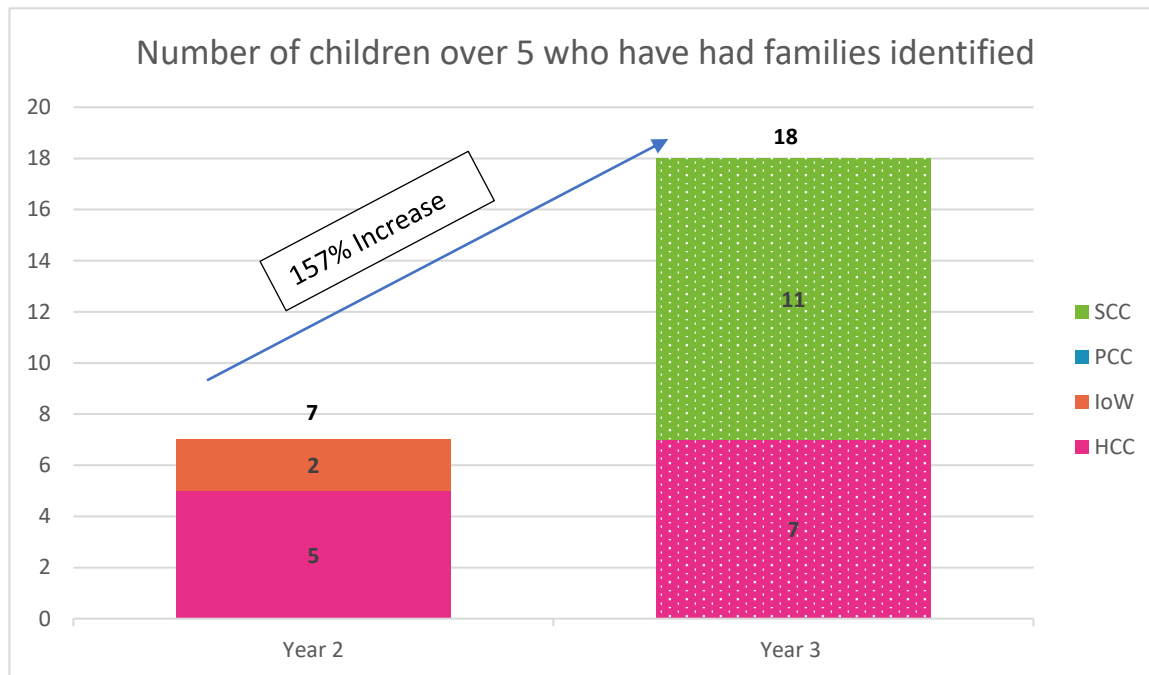


### Commentary:

- **83** children between 2- 5 years had families identified during Year 3.
- This compares to **38** children between 2- 5 years having families identified during Adopt South's second year.

## Number of Children over 5 years

Table 2.5

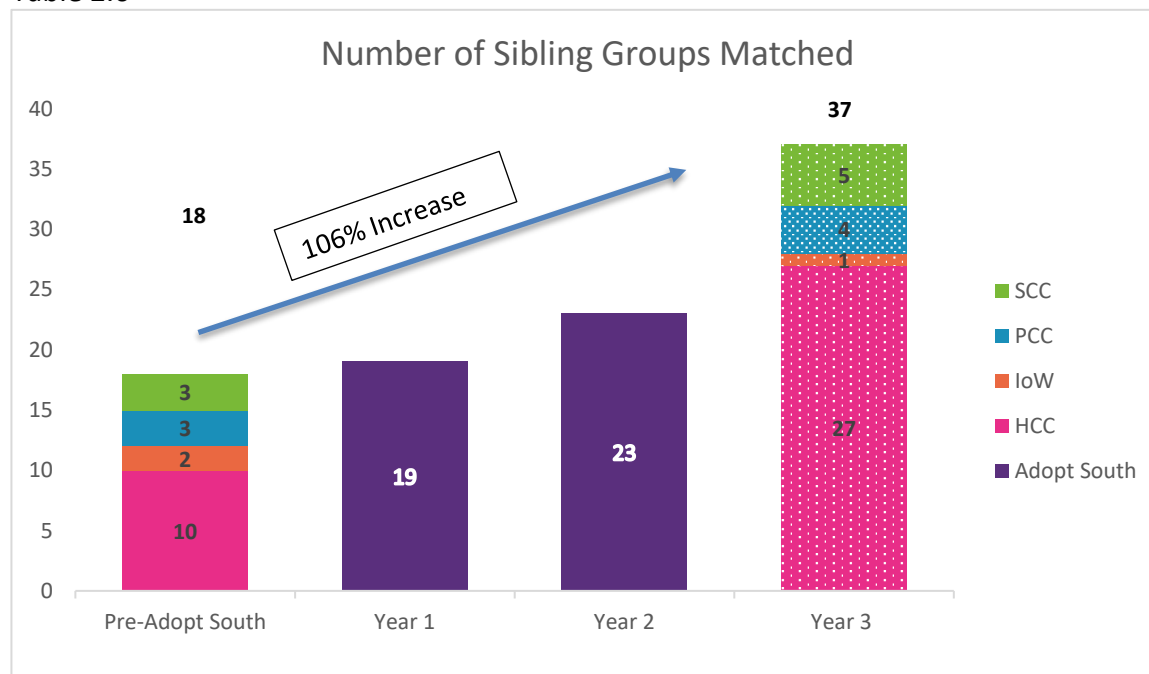


### Commentary:

- **18** children over the age of 5 years had families identified during Year 3.
- This compares to **7** children over the age of 5 years having families identified during Adopt South's second year.

## Number of Sibling Groups Matched

Table 2.6

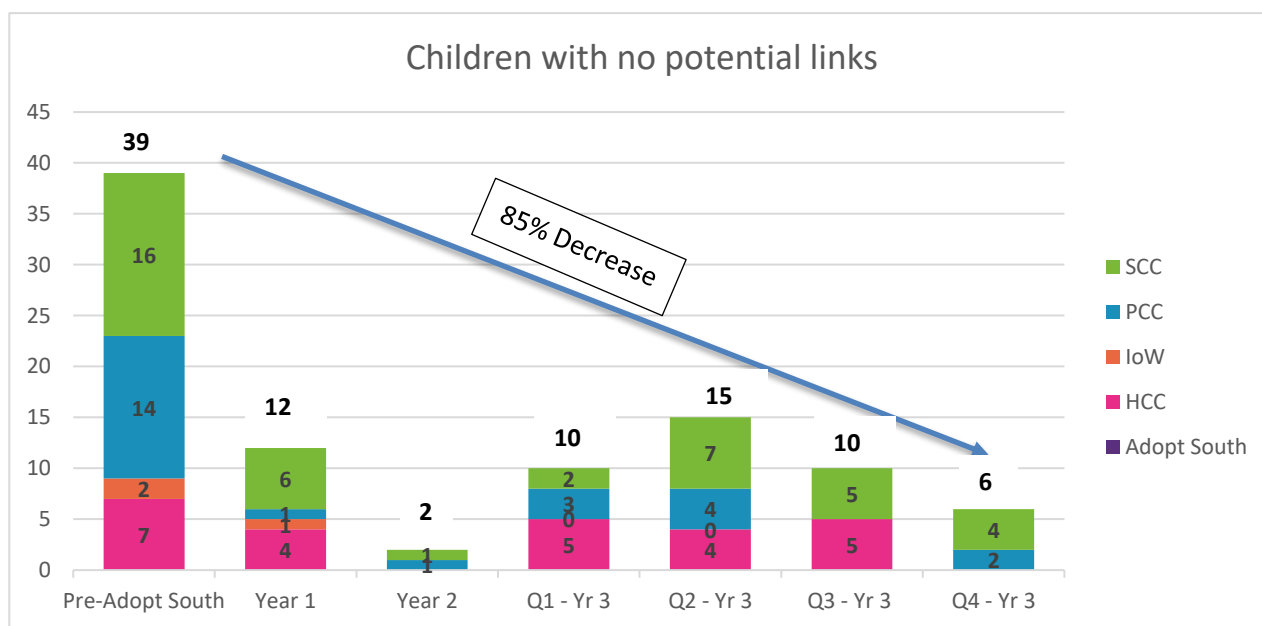


### Commentary:

- There has continued to be a steady trend of increasing sibling groups, which has continued during Adopt South's third year, with **37** sibling groups being matched.
- **23** sibling groups were matched during Adopt South's second year and **19** in our first year.
- There is a significant challenge nationally to recruit adopters for siblings.
- Additional costs include a higher need for Adoption Support.

## Children with no potential links

Table 2.7



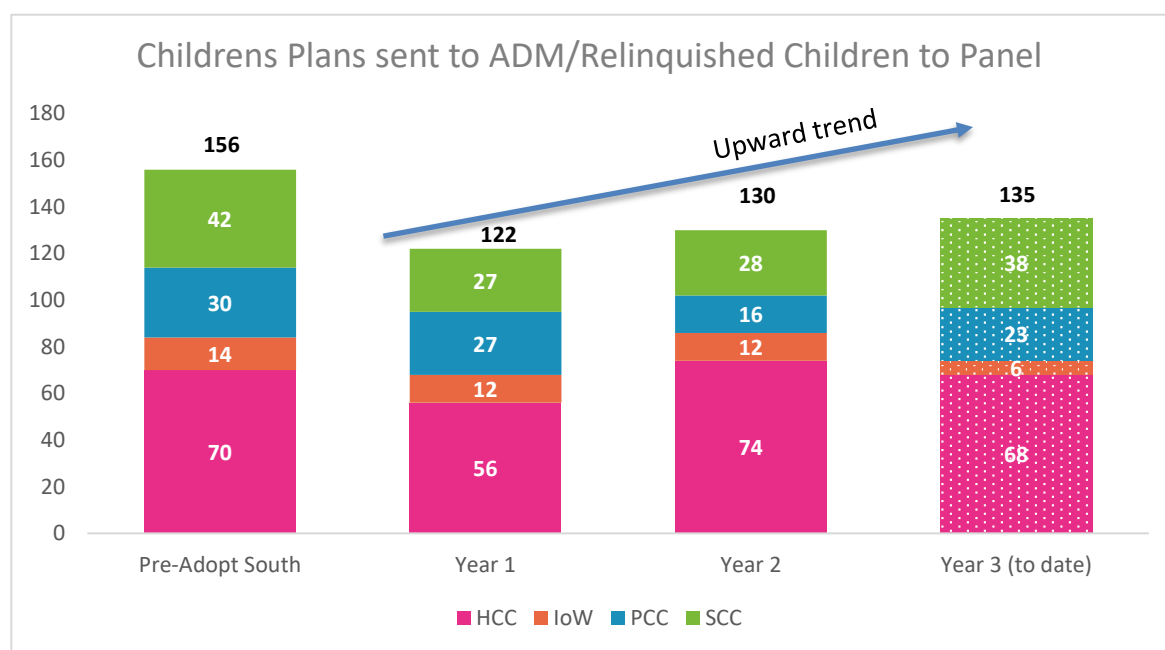
### Commentary:

- At the inception of Adopt South, there were 39 children who had no potential matches. This reduced to 12 at the end of Year 1 and to just 2 at the end of Year 2, an average reduction of 82%.
- At the end of Q2 - Year 3, this increased to 15, primarily due to the high number of sibling groups who had been referred to Adopt South during this quarter. However, the strategies implemented within recruitment, family finding, Stage 1 and Stage 2 have had a positive impact and the number of children without potential links reduced to 10 at the end of Q3, seeing 11 sets of siblings proceeding to confirmed matches, and 6 at the end of Q4.
- Of those waiting with no potential link, there is a sibling group of two children, where one child has a life limiting condition, and a 5-year-old girl, who has developmental delay.
- ***The recently published ASBLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that Adopt South had the lowest number of children waiting out of all 31 RAA's.***

## Children's Information: Children's Plans to Adoption Order

### Children's Plans referred to ADM/Relinquished Children to Panel

Table 3.1

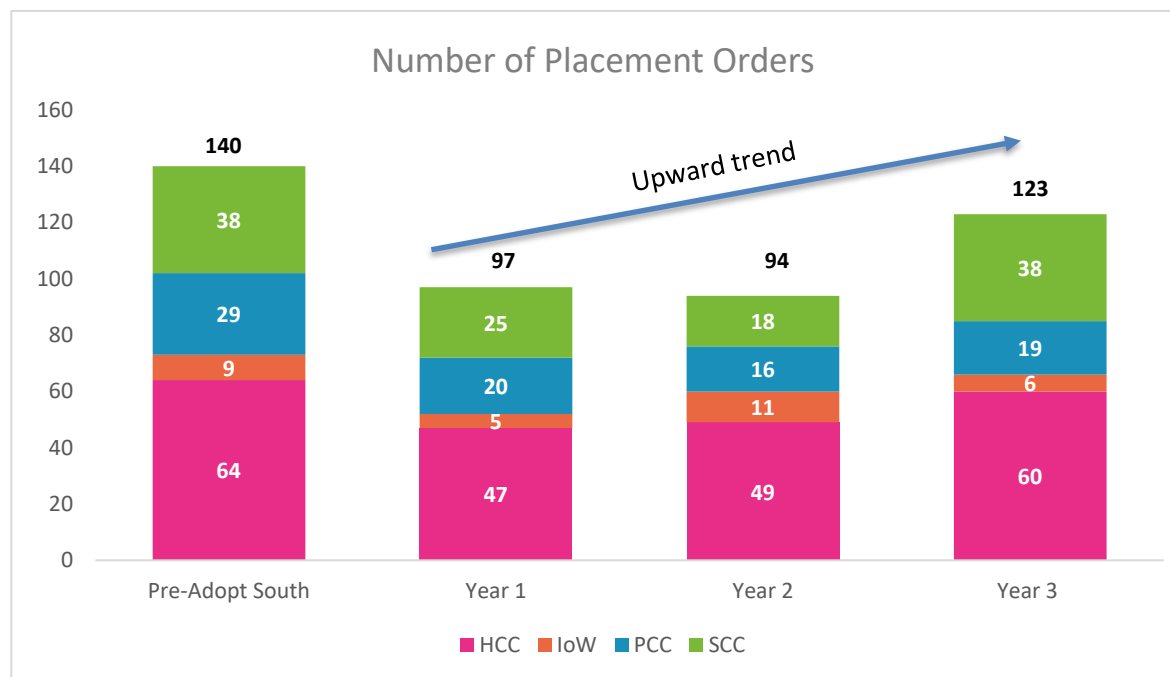


#### Commentary:

- 135 Children's Plans were referred to ADM/Relinquished Children to Panel, during Adopt South's third year.
- Although there was a reduction in Children's Plans in Year 1 as was the national trend, Year 2 saw a rise. Adopt South's third year has continued to see a rise, with SCC's numbers seeing a particularly steep increase.
- Year 2 saw a rise especially for HCC from Year 1 to Year 2 of 41%.
- The LA Children's Adoption Teams have continued to report an increase in Parallel Planning and a further increase in Children's Plans is likely to follow.

## Summary of Placement Orders

Table 3.2



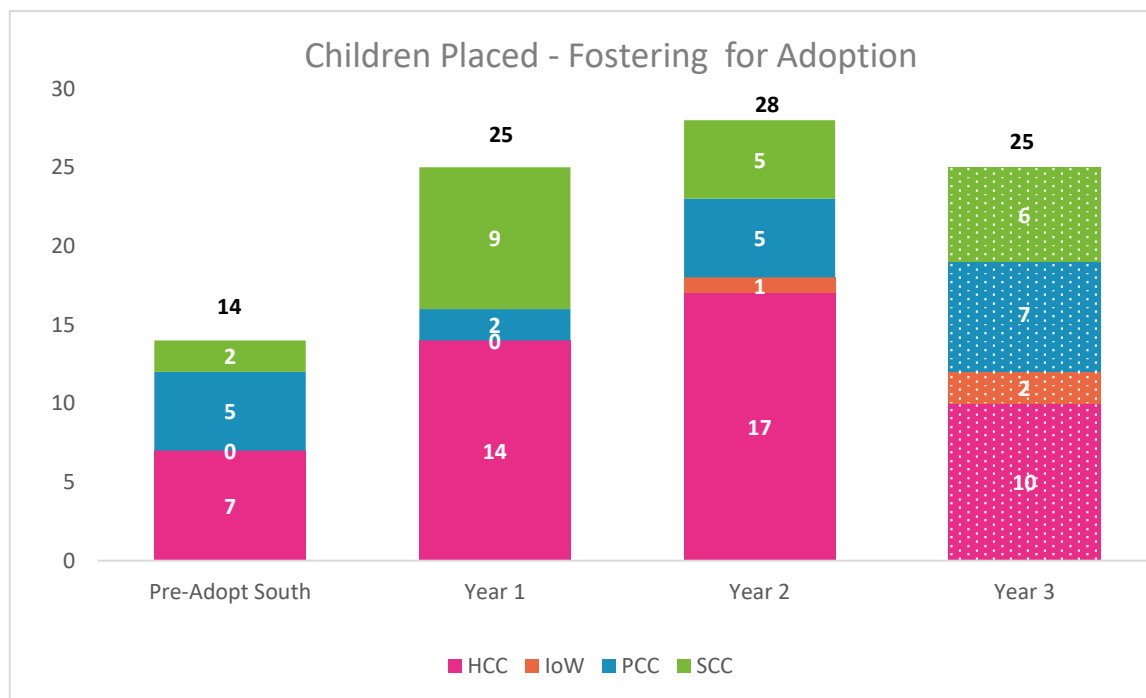
### Commentary:

- As expected, there has been a significant increase in Placement Orders being granted during Adopt South's third year.
- HCC and SCC have seen especially high numbers with 60 Placement Orders being granted in HCC and 38 in SCC.
- COVID had impacted on the courts and cases had been delayed, which had led to Placement Orders not increasing in line with the rise in Children's Plans. The LA Children's Adoption Teams had expected this sharp rise.
- The LA Children's Adoption Teams are continuing to report an increase in Parallel Planning and a further increase in Children's Plans and Placement Orders are likely to follow.



## Children Placed- Fostering for Adoption

Table 3.3

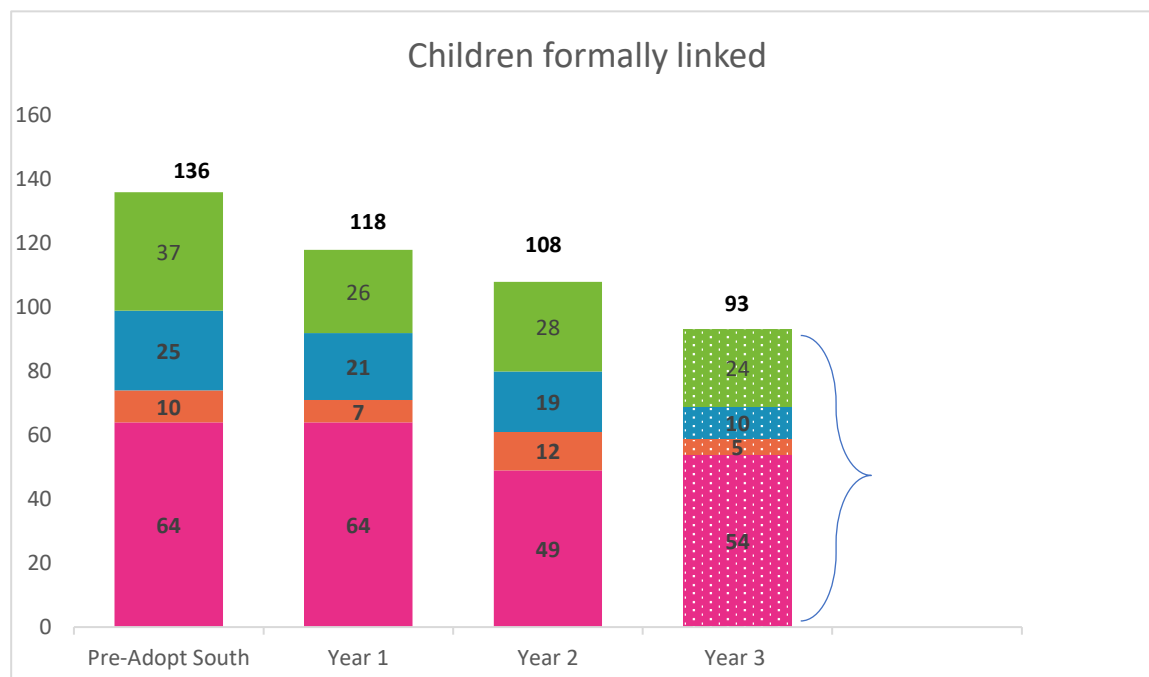


### Commentary:

- 25 children were placed in a FfA placement during Adopt South's third year.
- Although numbers have been a little lower during Year 3, there has been overall a continued rise in children being placed in Fostering for Adoption placements since the start of Adopt South.
- The impact for the LA is a freeing up of fostering placements and a reduced cost. (IFA- £44,194; In-house - £23,161).
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that last year only two other RAA's placed more children in FfA placements than Adopt South.***

## Children formally linked

Table 3.4

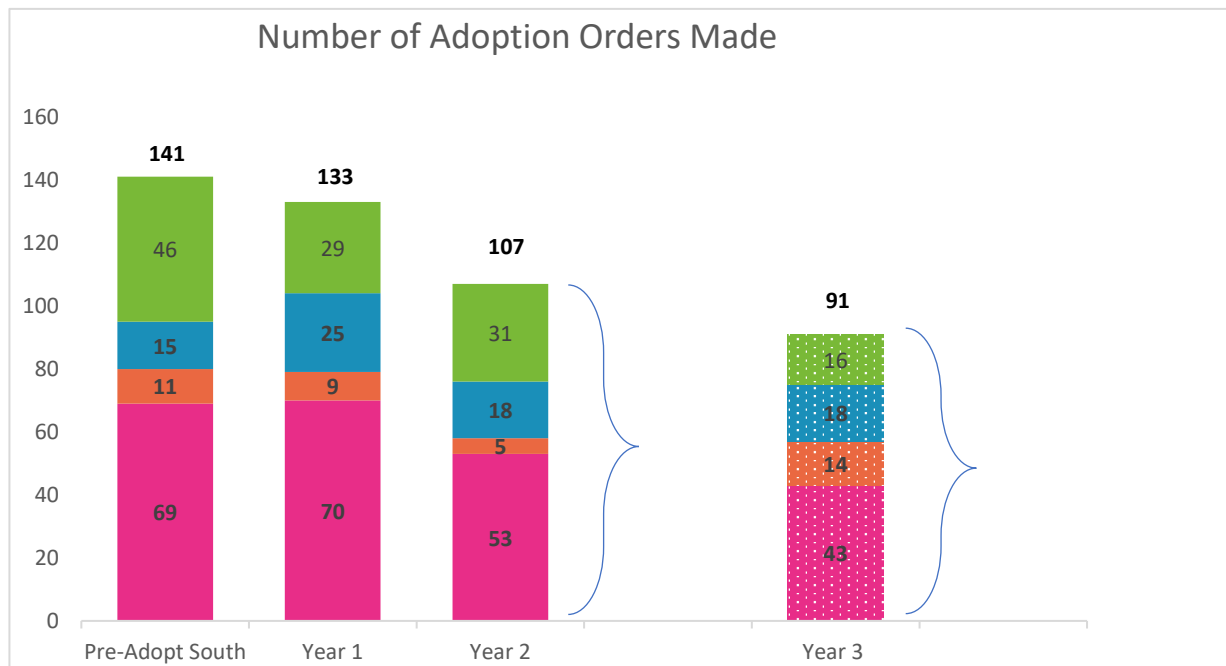


### Commentary:

- 93 children were linked with 77 adoptive families during Adopt South' third year.
- The number of children linked has been impacted by the Somerset Judgement. In total, there were 18 cases paused for 19 children. These will be presented to Panel in Q1 of Year 4.
- This compares to 118 children linked with 104 adoptive families in Year 1 and 108 children linked with 96 adoptive families in Year 2.
- ***Since the launch of Adopt South, therefore, 167 HCC children have been linked; 24 IOW children; 50 PCC children; 78 SCC children. A total of 319.***

## Adoption Orders

Table 3.5

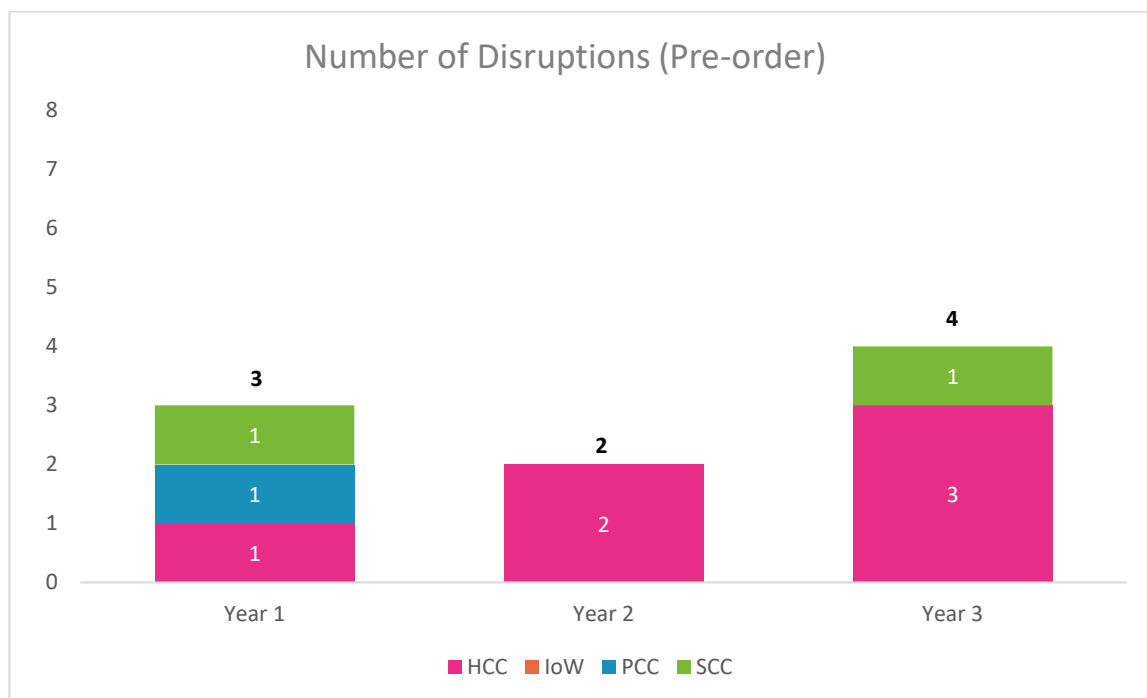


### Commentary:

- Adoption Orders have continued to be impacted by COVID and the courts only holding bi-monthly hearings.
- The number of Adoption Orders has also been impacted by the Somerset Judgement and cases being paused.

## Disruptions - Pre-Adoption Order

Table 3.6



### Commentary:

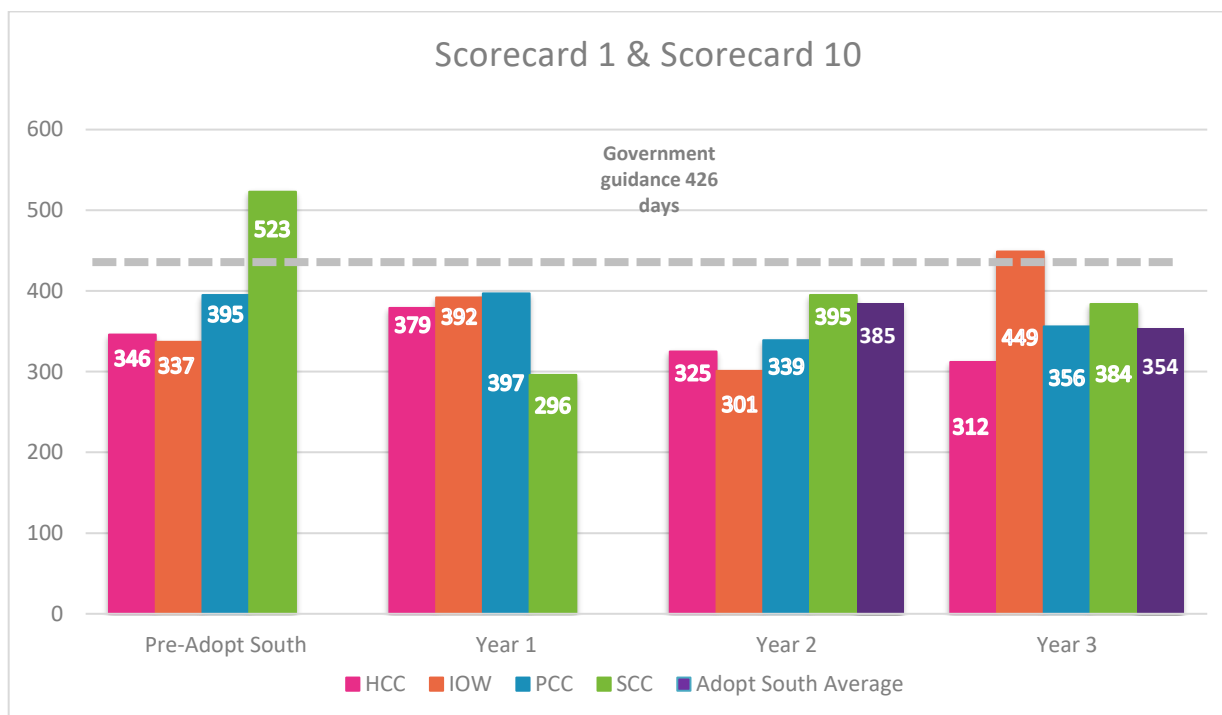
- There have been 4 disruptions (1 sibling group of 2 and 2 single children) during Adopt South's third year.
- A further sibling group of two remained with their adopters and although the placement didn't disrupt, they had their care plan changed as the Prospective Adopters no longer felt able to adopt them.
- There were 2 disruptions during Adopt South's second year and 3 disruptions during Adopt South's first year.
- There have, therefore, been 9 disruptions since the launch of Adopt South, a disruption rate of 2.82% (9/319 children linked). Comparisons show that this is low, ie, HCC's disruption rate Pre-Adopt South was 3.1% (2/64 children linked); One Partnership RAA who are a similar size to Adopt South have advised of a 4.4% disruption rate in their first year (2020/2021), 4/96 children linked.

## Comparison of Scorecard 1/Scorecard 10

Scorecard 1 - Average Time between the child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. (no longer used)

Scorecard 10 - Average Time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted, and for Fostering for Adoption placements.

Table 3.7



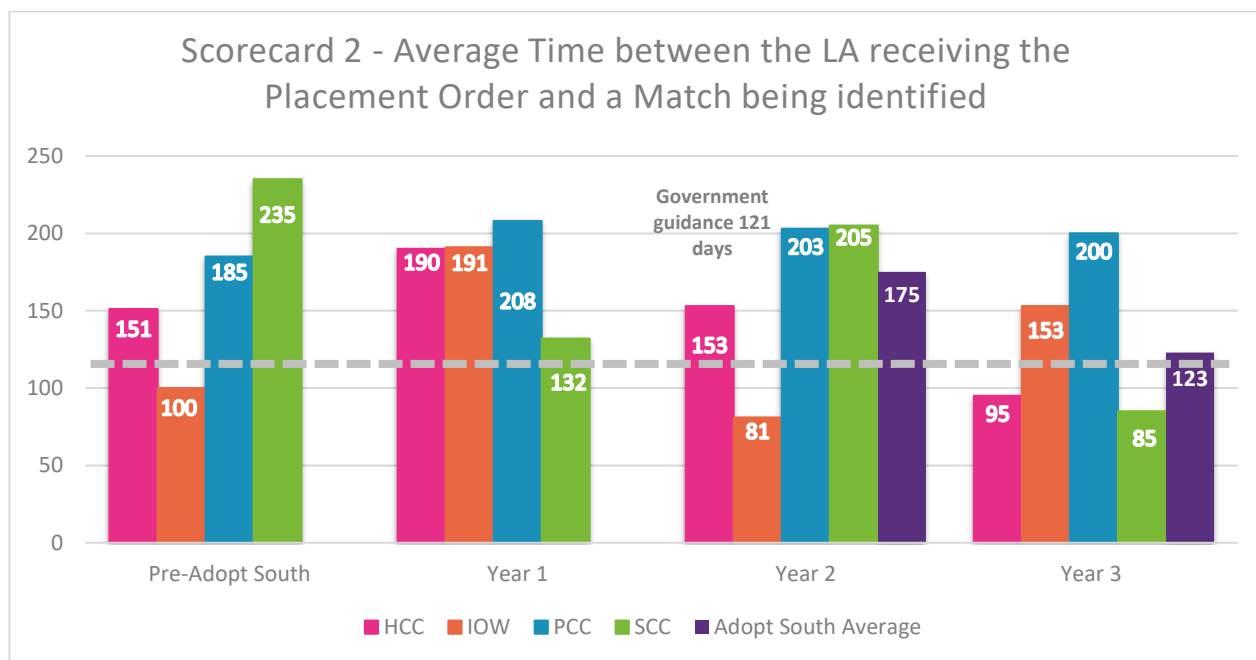
### Commentary:

- Scorecard 1 has now been superseded with Scorecard A10. This new scorecard has been adjusted from Scorecard 1 to take into account foster carer adoptions and FfA placements.
- During Adopt South's third year, all the Local Authorities for Scorecard 10, averaged scorecards well below the government's guidance, with the exception of the Isle of Wight, who averaged just 23 days above the government's guidance. Hampshire and Southampton continued to see an improvement on the low scorecards last year.
- The higher timescale for the IOW was due to one of the children who had an Adoption Order having cerebral palsy and it taking longer to find a family for him. The good news is that a family was found, and the Adoption Order has been made.

- Adopt South's Year 3 saw an overall average across the 4 Local Authorities of 354 days for Scorecard 10, well below the government's guidance.
- Average timescales were well within the government guidance for all 4 LA's during Adopt South's first and second year. The 4 LA's together averaged 385 days in Year 2, significantly under the government guidance.
- SCC averaged timescales outside of the government expectation Pre-Adopt South.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that out of the 31 RAA's, Adopt South was one of just 8 who averaged Scorecard 1 under the government guidance last year.***

## Comparison of Scorecard 2

Table 3.8



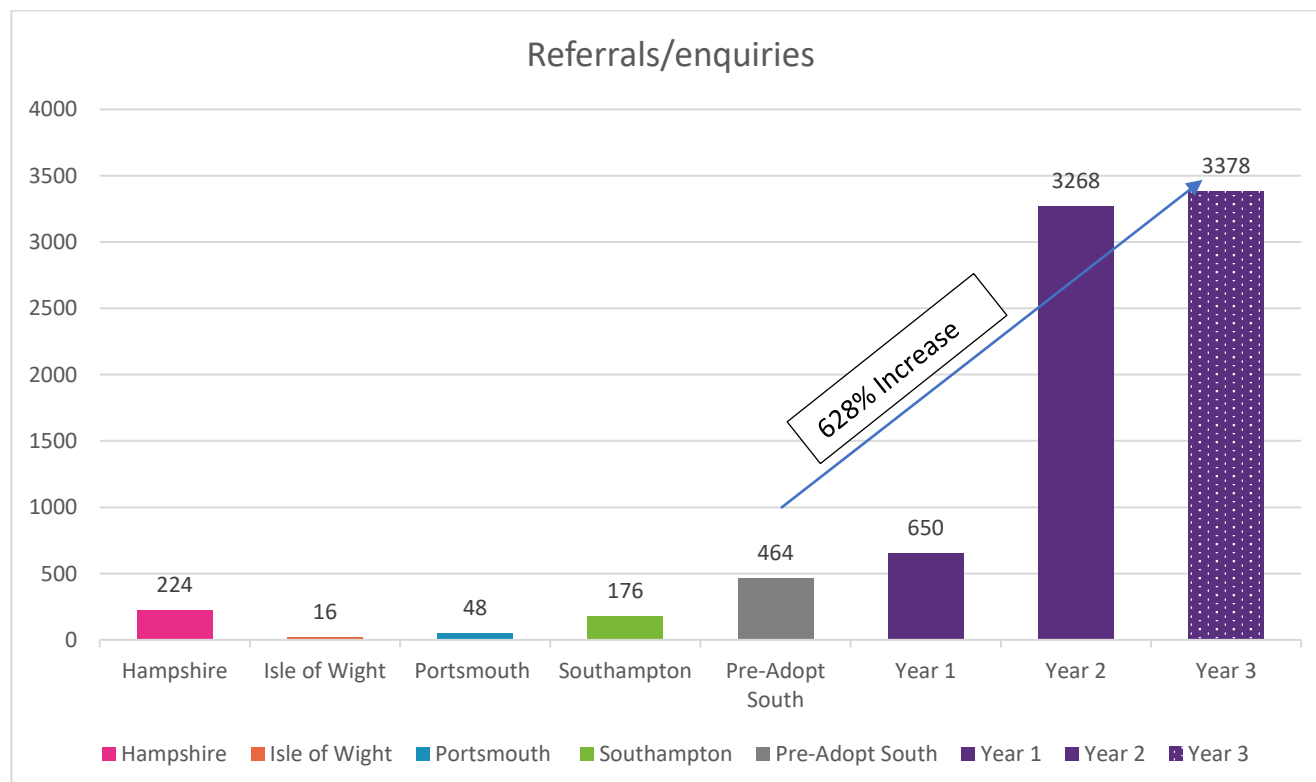
### Commentary:

- During Adopt South's third year, Hampshire and Southampton averaged scorecards well below the government's guidance. The slightly higher scorecards for the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth reflect the hard to place children who although it took longer, families were found.
- Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton continued to see an improvement on their scorecards last year.
- Year 3 saw an average across the 4 Local Authorities of 123 days, just 2 days outside of the government's guidance. This compares to 175 days in Year 2.
- ***The ASGLB data (April 2020- March 2021) shows that none of the 31 RAA's averaged timescales within the 121 days and there were only 5 RAA's who averaged timescales lower than Adopt South.***

## Adoption Support- Activity

### Referrals/Enquiries to Adopt South's Advice and Support Line

Table 4.1



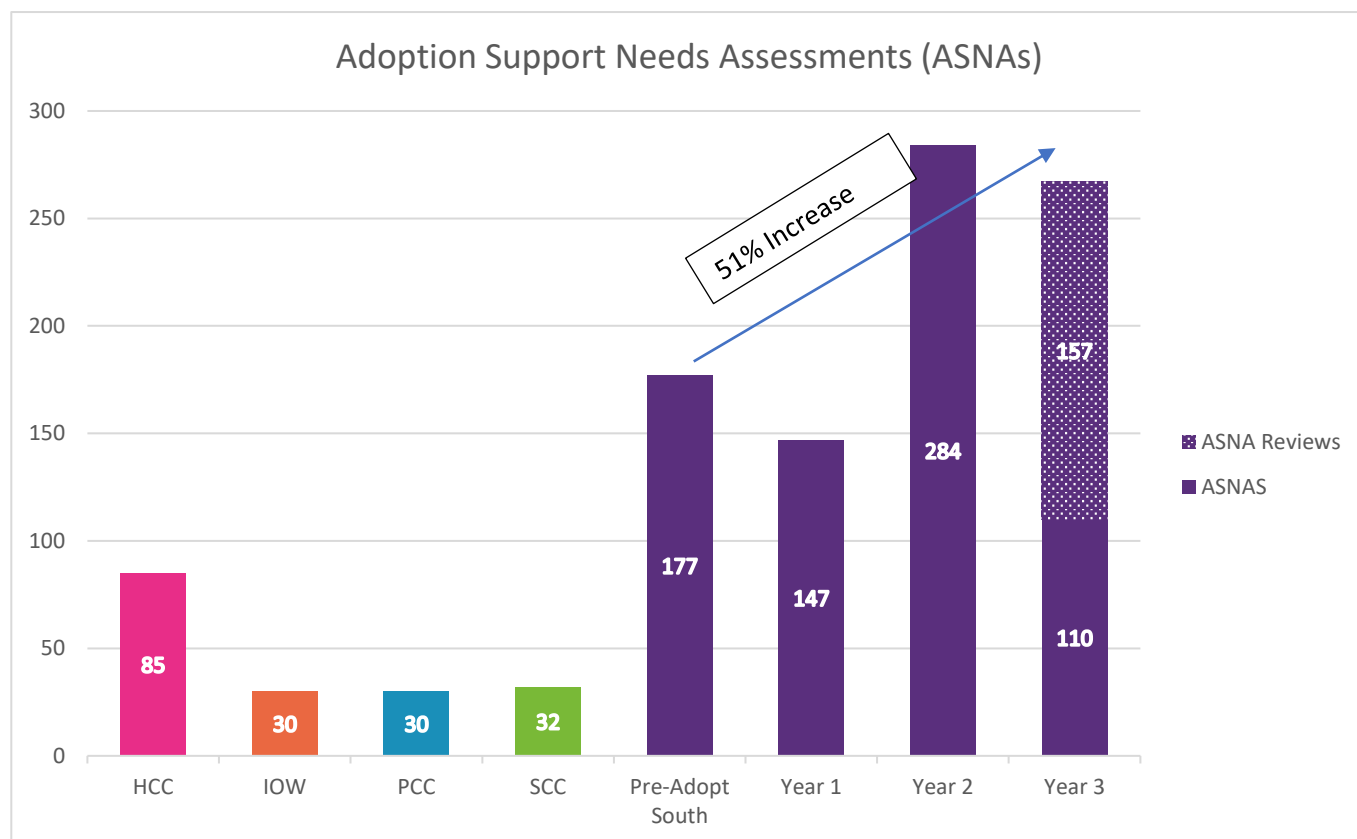
#### Commentary:

- During Adopt South's third year, there were **3,378** enquiries to the Advice and Support Line. This is a slight increase of 3% on last year, which does suggest that the enquiries are stabilising.
- Referrals and enquiries increased by **40%** in Year 1 of Adopt South when compared to the previous year's activity, and subsequently increased by **402%** in Year 2. (There were **3,268** enquiries in Year 2, compared to just **650** in Year 1)
- The implementation of a new DUTY system for Year 4 will provide the opportunity for further analysis of the enquiries coming into each part of the service.
- Increased demand on services due to COVID-19 and lockdowns.
- Increased awareness of Adopt South as a Regional Adoption Support Provider to both families and professionals.
- Increased preventative offer (universal services) has resulted in additional enquiries.



## Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNA's), including ASNA Reviews

Table 4.2



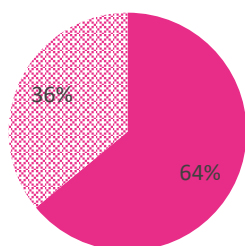
### Commentary:

- During Adopt South's third year, 267 ASNA's and ASNA reviews were completed.
- The average of new allocations was 41.3 per quarter, 165 in total. 141 new Adoption Support Needs Assessments, an average of 35.3 per quarter, were allocated during Adopt South's second year and 147, an average of 36.8 per quarter, during Year 1.
- There has been an increase of 17% in new allocations between Year 2 and Year 3. This is due to the end of the pandemic, and the announcement of the ASF being extended for another 3 years.
- There has been a reduction of 8% in the overall number of ASNA's completed, when compared to Year 3. Further work is planned in Year 4 to take a deeper dive into open cases to understand the factors impacting on this reduction.

## Adoption Support Needs Assessments – Timescales

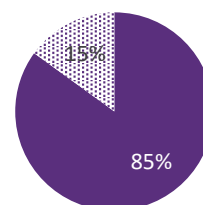
Table 4.3

% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales (Hampshire 2018/19)



■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days  
▨ % outside of timescales

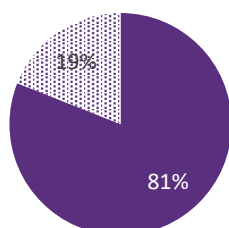
% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales of 45 days (Adopt South - Years 1 & 2)



■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days  
▨ % outside of timescales

Hampshire was the only Local Authority measuring timescales prior to Adopt South

% of ASNAs within and outside of timescales of 45 days (Year 3)



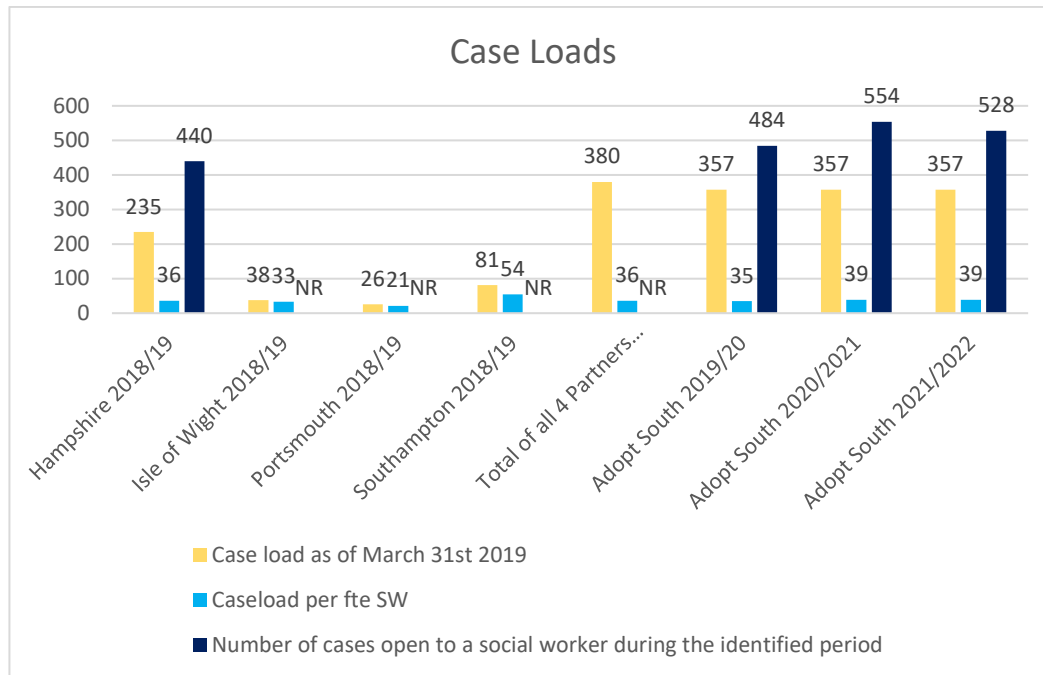
■ % of ASNAs within timescales of 45 days  
▨ % outside of timescales

**Commentary:**

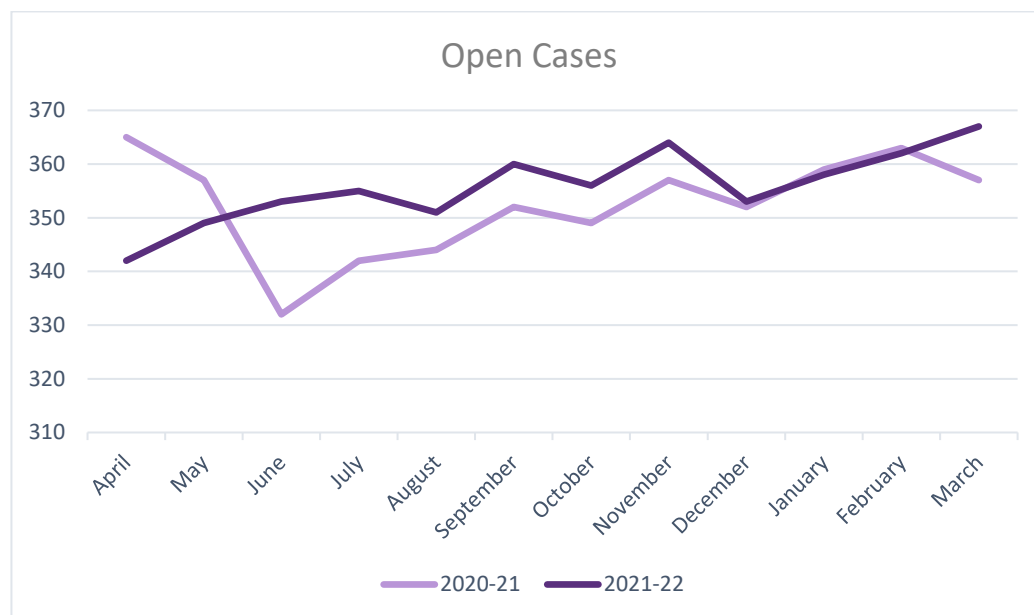
- During Year 3, **81%** of ASNA's were completed within the 45-day timescale, meeting the target of **80%** being completed within 45 days.
- This timely response to assessment and support reduces the number of cases that escalate to statutory teams across our partnership.
- The provision of the comprehensive adoption support offer reduces the risk of post adoption breakdowns and children returning to care.
- Adopt South's combined rate of post adoption breakdowns in Year 2 was **0.6%**, which was **81%** lower than the national average of **3.2%**.

## Adoption Support – Caseloads

Table 4.4



## Adoption Support – Caseloads (Cont'd)



### Commentary:

- In Year 1, the demand for Adoption Support Needs Assessments (ASNA's) was lower than predicted, due to the increase in universal adoption support services.
- The increase in demand for ASNA's in Year 2, is attributed to COVID-19; Q1 had 17 requests during the first national lockdown, and Q4 had 40.
- Caseloads per FTE social workers reduced for SCC, HCC and IOW in Year 1.
- A reduction in posts in Year 2 resulted in increased caseloads.
- Whilst the number of open cases within each quarter has remained relatively stable, the overall number of cases within one year increased 15% between Year 1 and 2.
- In Year 2, **554** children and young people were open to a social worker in the Adoption Support Team and accessed an adoption support plan.
- In Year 3, **528** children and young people were open to a social worker and accessed an adoption support plan, a 5% decrease on the number of cases open in Year 2.

## Adoption Support Offer - Comparison Table

Table 4.5

	HCC	IOW	PCC	SCC	Adopt South
Dedicated adoption support duty line during office hours	✓				✓
Mentor system for post adoption parents	✓				✓
Virtual Reality	✓				✓
One off consultations- 36 across the county/region	✓				✓
Video Interaction Guidance	✓				✓
Educational Psychologist Consultation	✓	✓			✓
Support Groups	✓	✓	✓		✓
Adolescence 2 session programme -3 hours each				✓	✓
Understanding your child's world through play				✓	✓
Life story workshop	✓		✓	✓	✓
Managing challenging behaviour (bite size)				✓	✓
Therapeutic Parenting (bite size)				✓	
FASD Workshop (bite size)				✓	✓
Education Matters (bite size)				✓	✓
Feelings Workshop			✓		✓
Attachment and Trauma Bite Size				✓	✓
Talking about Adoption (bite size)			✓		✓
Internet safety (bite size)				✓	✓
Secondary Trauma (bite size)				✓	✓
Sensory Workshops			✓		✓
Theraplay workshop	✓				✓
Stay and Play sessions	✓				✓
Soft Play exclusive use	✓				✓
Social events for adoptive families	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Groundworks Fusion activities for young people - on average 3 a month	✓				✓
Parenting Programmes					
Adopting Changes	✓				✓
Trauma Course	✓				✓
Knowing Me, Knowing You	✓				✓

### Commentary:

- Economies of scale have resulted in a significantly increased offer across the region.
- The universal and targeted offers have been increased to improve preventative services which has resulted in a number of families accessing support without the need for an ASNA.

- The offer has been developed with the consideration as to sustainability beyond the Adoption Support Fund. This has included creating revenue from therapeutic parenting programmes to invest in the training of additional facilitators.
- The provision of more local placements for LA's does mean there will be more families to support. There will be a reduction in the number of children placed in other areas meaning our responsibility to support these families will continue beyond three years.

## Universal Services delivered in 2021/22

Table 4.6

Service	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Advice and Support Line (emails and calls)	998	982	906	492
Resources sent to the database	2	3	3	2
Virtual Q&A / Chat Sessions	3	2	2	3
Parent Support Groups	4	3	5	6
Virtual Consultation Sessions	8	12	8	8
Families receiving mentor support	23	21	30	27
<b>Workshops</b>				
Setting Screen Time and Surviving Social Media Workshop	0	1	1	1
Attachment: Strengthening Relationships Workshop	0	2	0	1
Theraplay Workshop	1	0	1	1
Understanding Sensory Regulation Workshop	0	1	1	1
Terrific Teens Workshop	1	0	1	1
Our Lives Our Stories Workshop	1	0	1	1
<b>Parenting Programmes</b>				
Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma				
Knowing Me Knowing You Programme				
Nurturing Attachments Programme			1	1
Adopting Changes Programme	2	1	1	0
<b>Education Psychologist Support</b>				
Educational Psychologist Consultations	15	11	8	15
Video Interaction Guidance	11	4	3	0
<b>Family Activities</b>				
Under 5's Stay and Play Sessions	2	3	3	4
Soft Play Exclusive Use Sessions for under 12's	0	1	1	2
Groundworks Fusion Activities for young people	9	9	7	9
Social Events for Adoptive Families	0	0	0	0



Commentary:

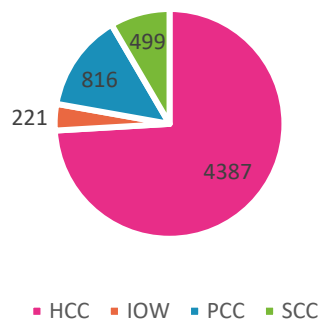
During Year 3;

- **115** adoptive parents attended a workshop
- **44** adoptive parents attended a Coffee and Chat
- **26** of the **37** available consultation slots were used
- **21** adoptive parents attended a Face-to-Face support group
- **296** places have been used by children and young people attending one of the Groundwork Fusion activities for young people
- **49** Educational Psychologist consultations have been provided
- **18** Video Interaction Guidance packages have been allocated.

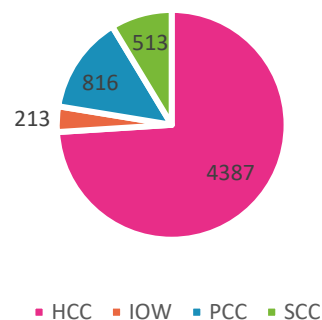
## Adoption Information Exchange

Table 4.7

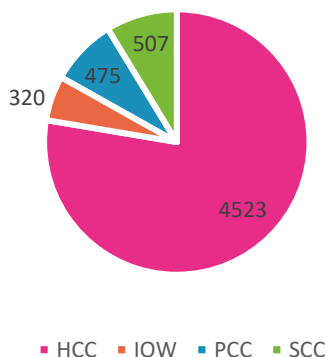
Active Adoption Information Exchanges - Q1



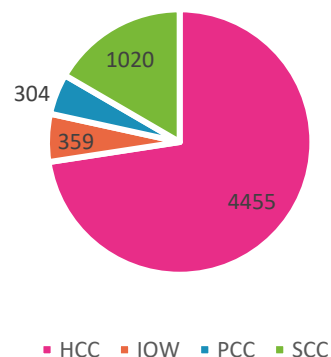
Active Adoption Information Exchanges - Q2



Active Adoption Information Exchanges - Q3



Active Adoption Information Exchanges - Q4



### Commentary:

- Adoption Information Exchange came into scope of Adopt South in Year 3.
- At the end of Year 3 there were 6,138 active exchanges

## Adoption Support for Adults

Table 4.8

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Number of enquires	68	175	157	175
Number of referrals	17	54	36	35
Number of cases allocated	42	49	48	35
Percentage of allocations in timescales	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases closed	46	58	35	42
Number of open cases	115	105	118	110

### Commentary:

- Adoption Support for Adults came into scope of Adopt South in Year 3, and the chart above outlines the current activity.
- The work in this area supports adopted adults and birth relatives and those with a prescribed relationship to a deceased adopted adult, around accessing birth certificate information, access to adoption records and intermediary services.
- In Year 3, **575** enquiries were made in relation to adult work, which led to **142** new referrals. **174** cases were allocated. At the end of Year 3, there were **110** open cases.
- The work came into Adopt South “as is” and the single point of referral launched in June 2021. This accounts for the significant increase in enquiries between Q1 and Q2.
- Caseloads per FTE social worker averaged **73** in Q3 due to a vacancy.

## Spending and Potential Saving Comparisons

### Children Placed Externally

Table 5.1

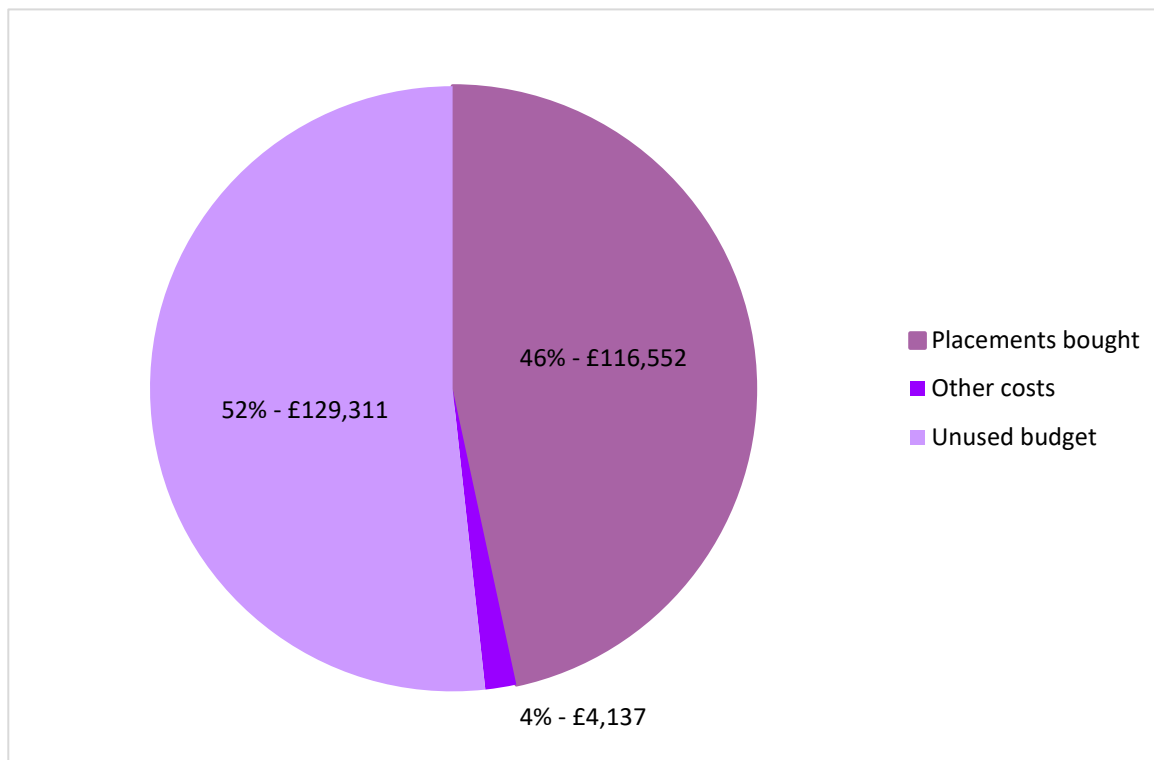


#### Commentary:

- 37 children were placed externally Pre-Adopt South (out of a total of 136), compared to 3 (out of a total of 118) in Year 1 and 4 (out of a total of 108) in Year 2.
- During Year 3, 4 children have been placed externally (out of a total of 93).
- **Comparisons with the other 30 RAA's show that last year, Adopt South placed more in-house than any other RAA and spent significantly less on external placements. Across the RAA's, there was an average of 31% of children placed eternally, compared to just 3.7% for Adopt South. A number of RAA's placed 50% of their children externally.**

## Interagency

Table 5.2



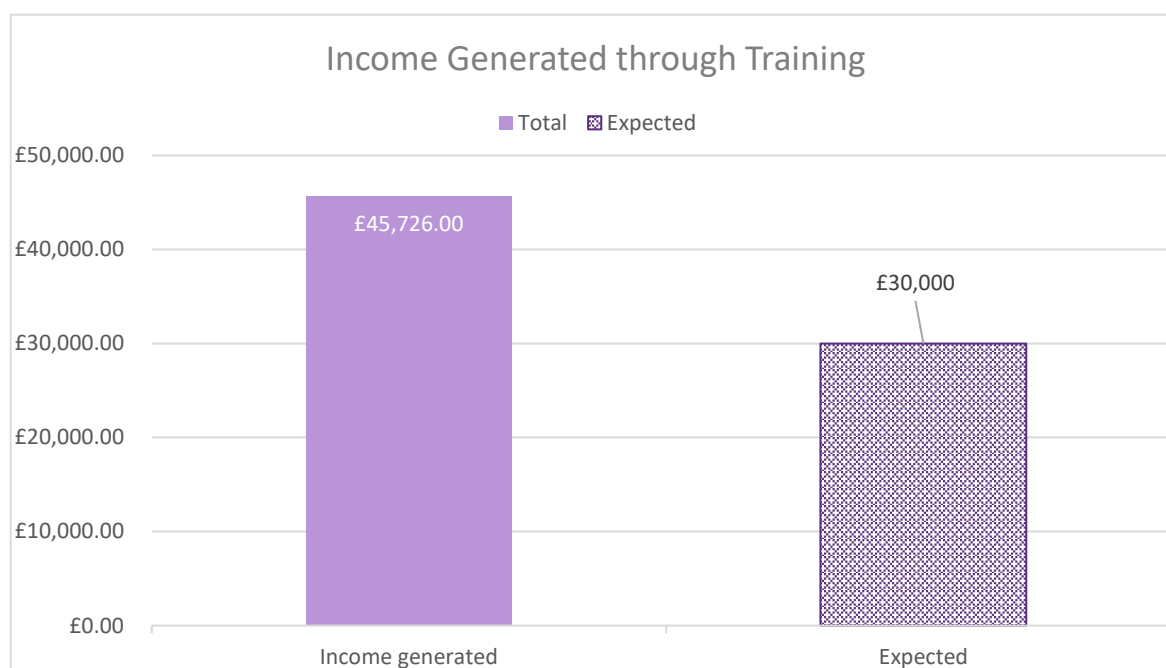
### Commentary:

- The current interagency purchasing budget (£250,000) is based on approximately 8 child placements (assuming a mix of RAA's & VAA placements).
- During Quarter 1, 1 interagency placement was purchased. This was for 1 child who was placed with adopters approved by Aspire, at a cost of **£27,000**.
- During Quarter 2, a further placement was purchased from PACT at a cost of **£35,552**. There have also been additional costs of £1,800 from a placement last year, together with supervision costs of £2,337 due to court delays in the granting of an Adoption Order, which exceeded 12 months, totally **£4,137**.
- During Quarter 3, a further two interagency placements were purchased, both for 1 child with Adopt Thames Valley, at a total cost of **£54,000**.
- There were no interagency placements purchased in Quarter 4.
- The total spend in Adopt South's third year on interagency placements was **£120,689**, an underspend on the budget of **£129,311**.
- This compares with **£96,620** in Adopt South's first year (3 interagency placements), and **£121,332** in our second year (4 interagency placements).

- *The current income target for sold adopters is £135,000, based on 5 placements of children from other RAA's with Adopt South adopters. The total income generated in Year 3 was £265,289.49, which reflected the sale of 9 Adopt South adopters for a total of 12 children from other RAA's.*

## Income Generated through Training

Table 5.3



### Commentary:

- There is an income target of £30,000 for the selling of training and workshops run by Adopt South staff.
- At the end of Year 3, **£45,726** of income had been generated through the selling of Adopt South's therapeutic courses - Adopting Changes and Nurturing Attachments.
- The income target at the end of Year 3 was, therefore, exceeded, by **£15,726**.

# Children's Services Performance Quarter Four 2021/2022

Steve Crocker, Director Children's Services

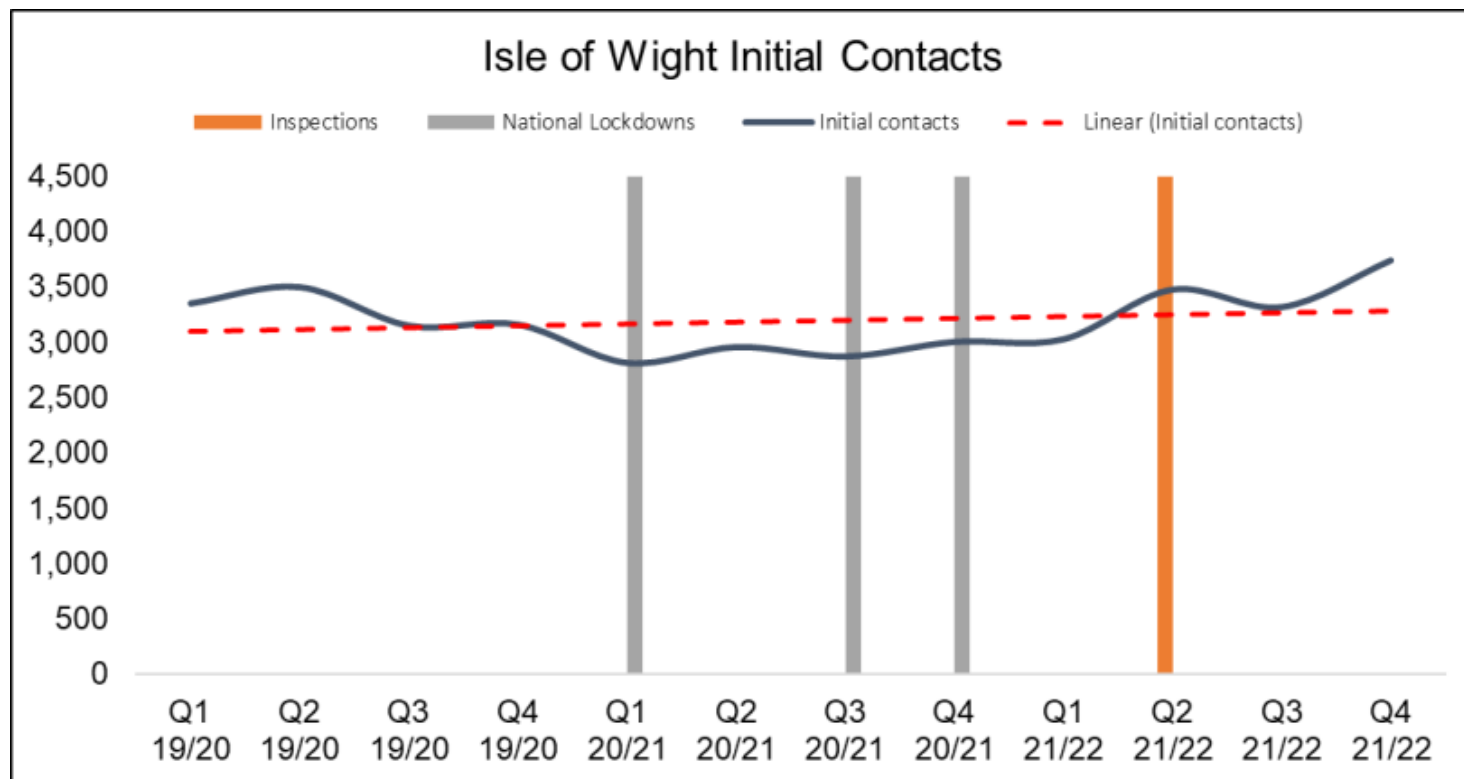
Page 119

# C&F Headlines

- Demand remains high across social care and early help with good performance sustained.
- We have additional funding for SWs however, continuing challenge to recruit, national issue, with additionality of 'island' factor.
- Ofsted focused visit July 2021, written letter received Sept. 21 (not a judgement). Headline: *The senior leadership team has continued at pace with their transformation project since the previous inspection in November 2018, when they were judged to be good.*

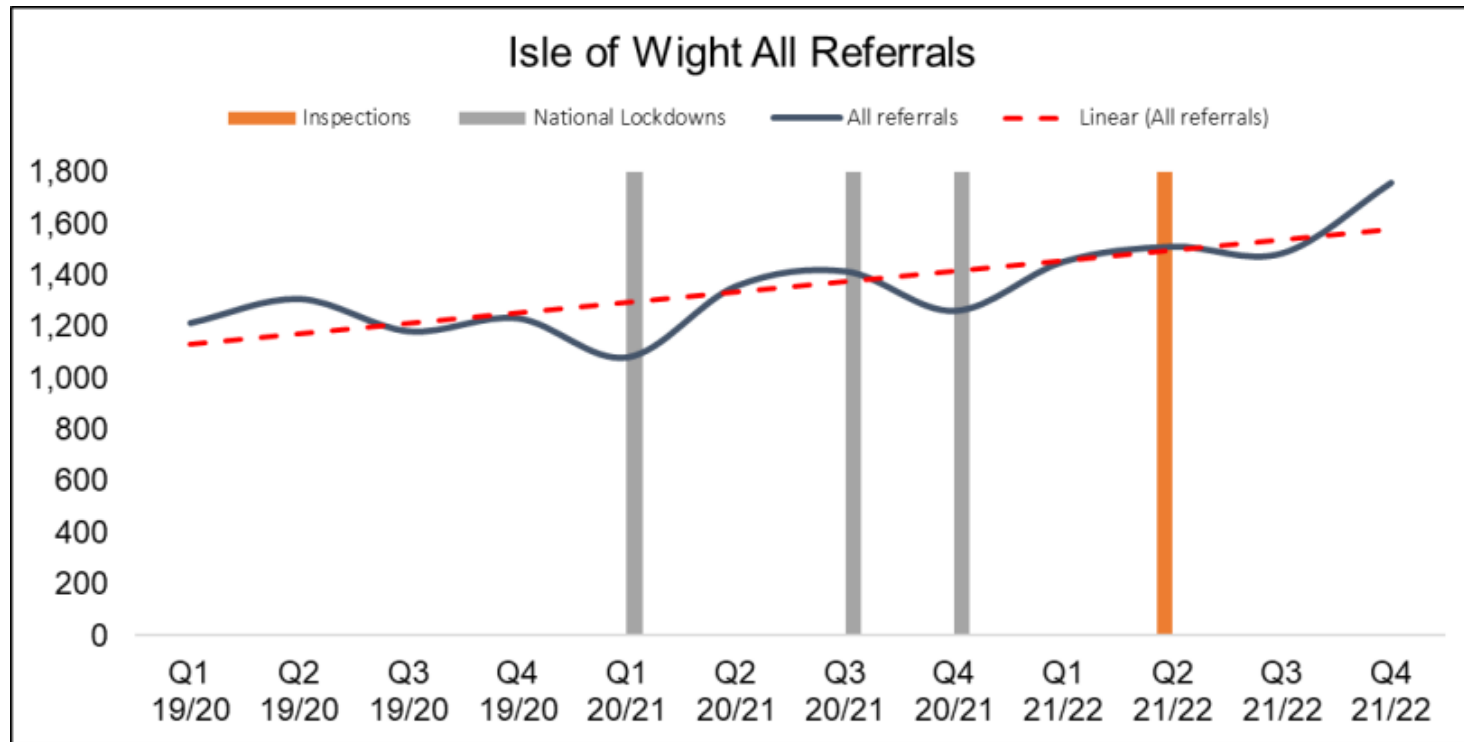


# Performance – Contacts

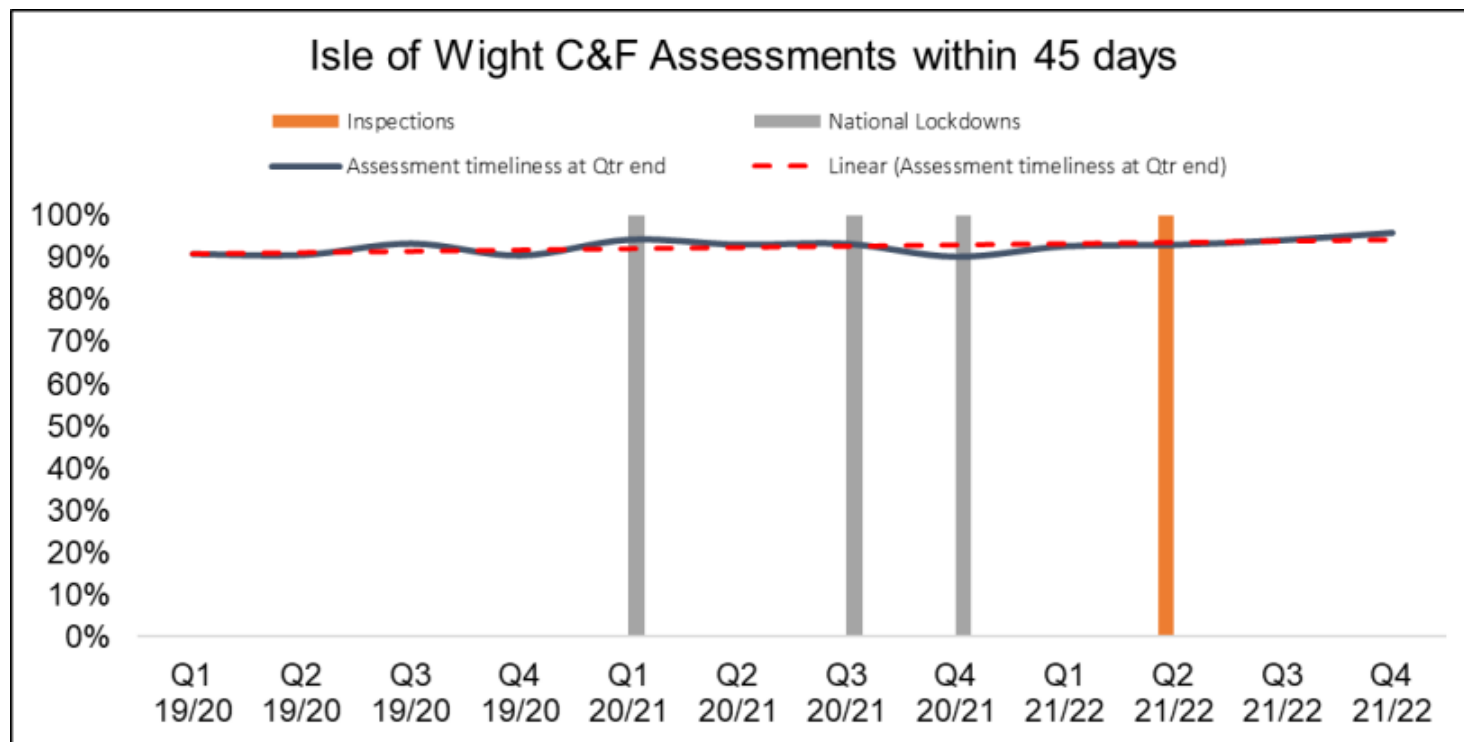


# Performance - Referrals

Page 122

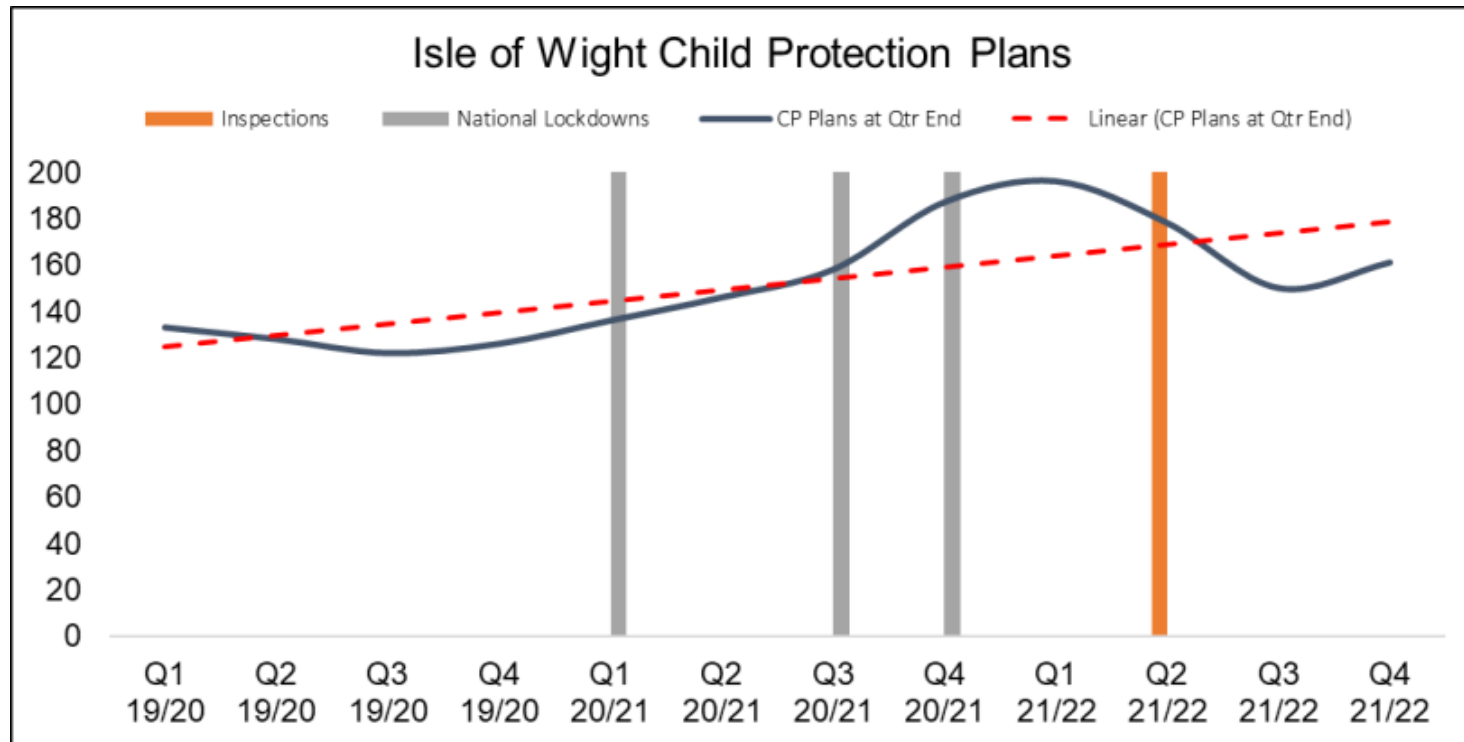


# Performance- timely response

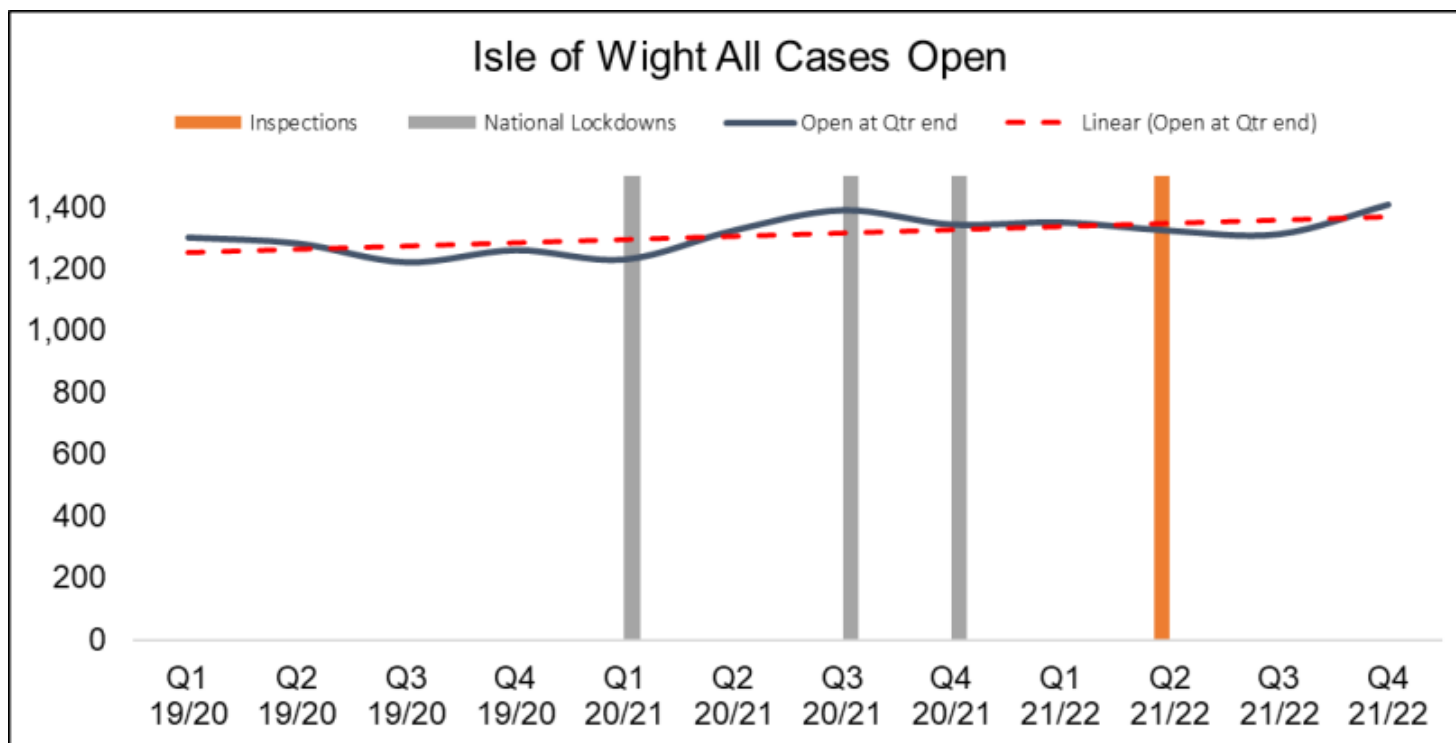


# Children subject to child protection planning

Page 124

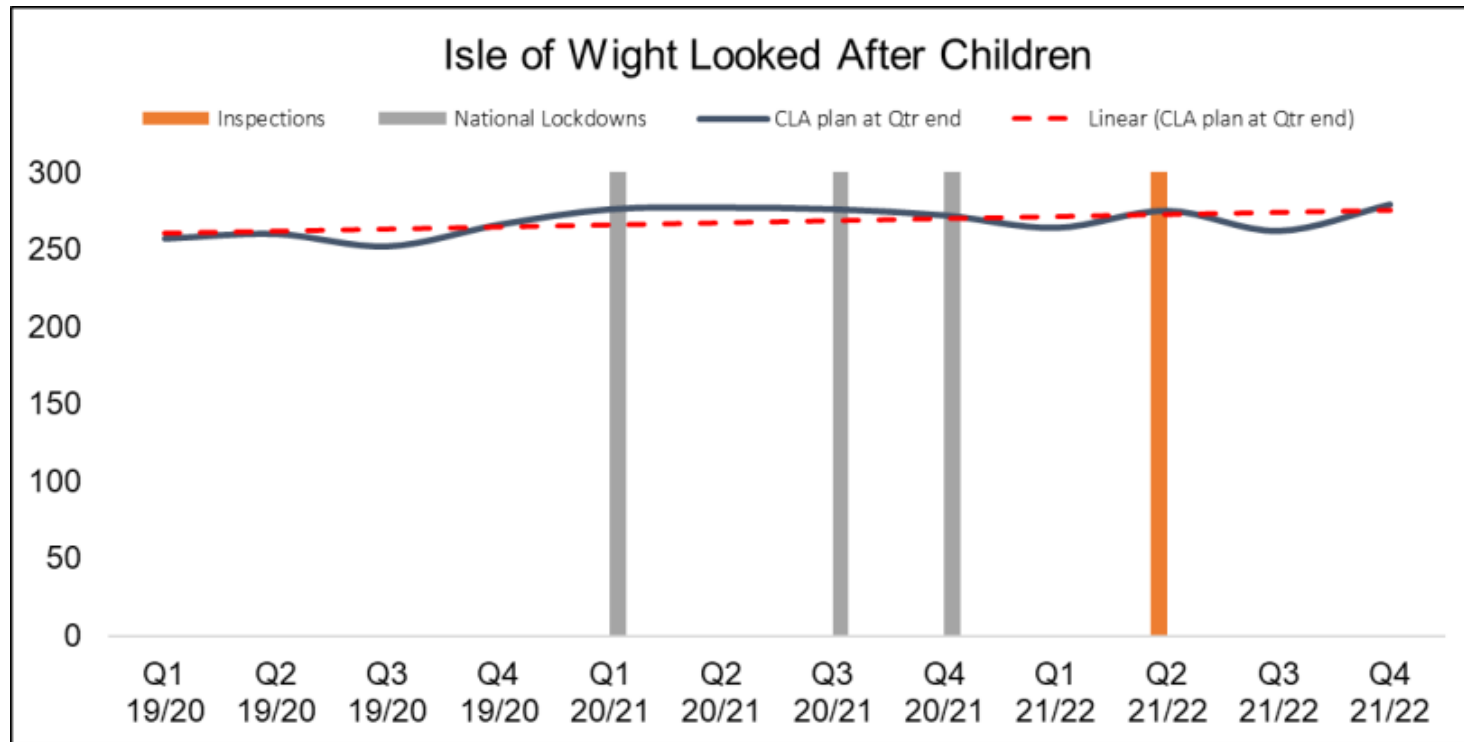


# Children in need

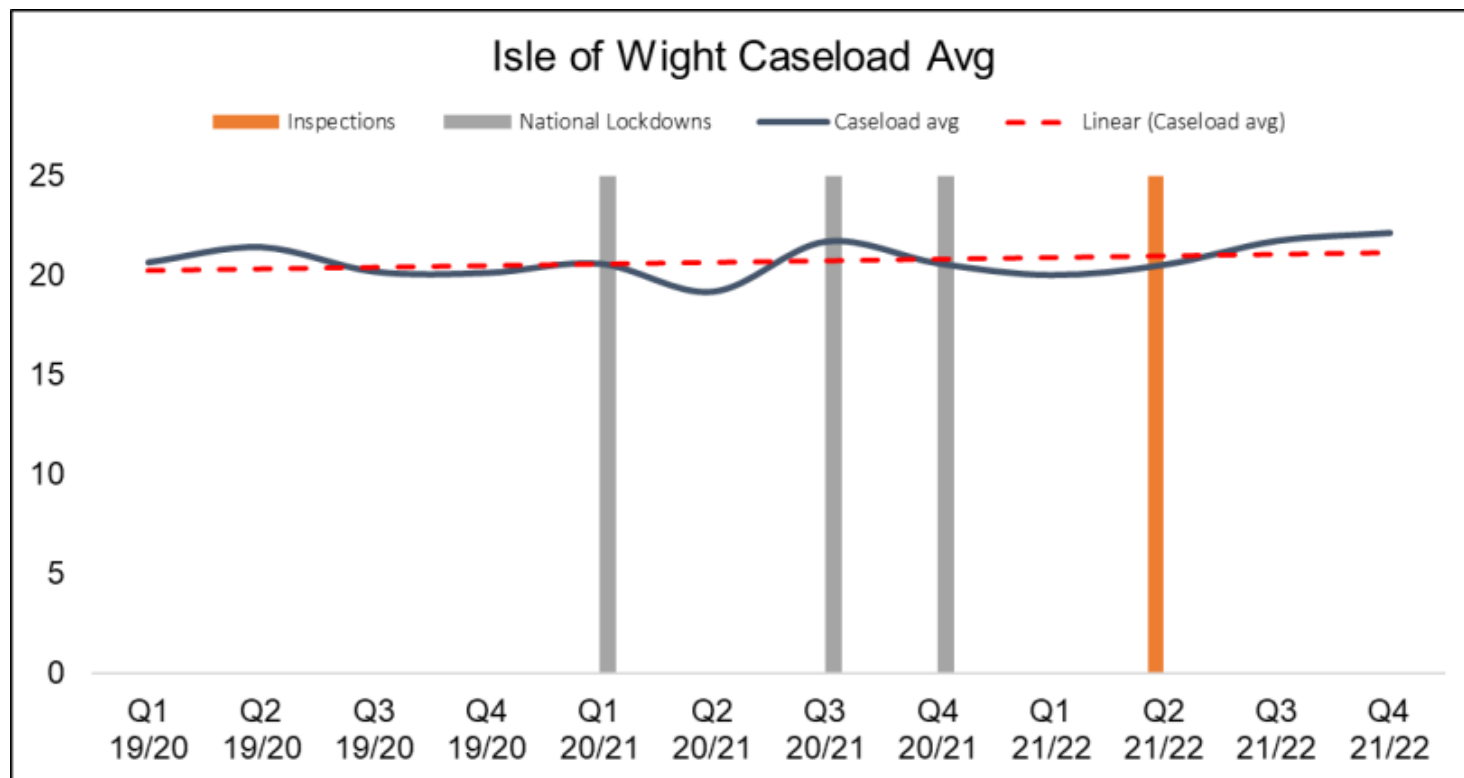


# Looked After Children (LAC)

Page 126



# Performance - Caseloads



# Quality Assurance

- Case file auditing undertaken every month by ATMs, TMs, SMs and CFMT.
- In quarter four, 48 case audits undertaken.
- Evidence of practitioner analysis which influences decision making in 90% of cases.
- Evidence that the assessment has informed the intervention/plan in 92% and evidence of positive outcomes as a result of this for the child/young person in 88% of cases.
- Evidence of multi-agency engagement in planning in 90% of cases, with evidence that this has improved outcomes for the child in 77% of cases.
- Case summaries reflect progress and positive changes for the child/young person in line with the assessment and plan in 77% of cases.
- There is evidence of management decisions in 90% of cases with decisions evidencing appropriate direction in the case to protect and improve outcomes for the child/young person.
- Evidence of supervision as per policy in 92% of cases.



# Education and Inclusion Headlines

- The September guarantee was 98.2% compared to national average of 94.3%. This is the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds given an offer of education, employment and training.
- 29% of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) were produced within 20 weeks for the last quarter. This is due to the focus being on phase transfers and some staff changes. New appointments are now in place and 75% of plans were produced within 20 weeks in April. National average is around 55%

# Education and Inclusion Headlines

- Proportion of schools graded good or better by Ofsted is 78%. Up 2% on last quarter.
- Number of children being electively home educated is 531 compared to 508 at the same point last year.
- Proportion of families that electively home educate that have engaged with the Local Authority during 2021/22 is 80%.

# Education and Inclusion Headlines

- Number of permanent exclusions in 2021/22 is 5 after two terms (17 in total in 2020/21).
- Number of fixed period exclusions in 2021/22 is 869 after two terms (1092 in total in 2020/21).
- There is no attainment data as examinations were cancelled in 2020/21 and a process was put in place to award grades to individual children. These grades are not published by the DfE as Island-wide attainment data.

# Education and Inclusion Headlines

---

- Attendance statistics have recently been produced for the 2020/21 academic year. These show that the attendance rate on the Isle of Wight was 95.3% compared to a national average of 95.4%.



This page is intentionally left blank

## Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills - Workplan 2022/25

DATE	AGENDA ITEMS	DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND	LEAD OFFICER/ CABINET MEMBER
1 September 2022	Schools White Paper	To consider the implications of the Schools White Paper, Opportunity for All, which sets out plans to make sure every child can reach the full height of their potential.	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	Annual complaints report – Children's Social Work	To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented.	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	Green Paper - SEND review: right support, right place, right time	To consider the Government's green paper about the changes to make to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) system in England.	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	School Place Planning	To consider the latest projections	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
1 December 2022	Performance and budget	Current performance trends and budget 2022/23	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	IW Safeguarding Children's Board annual report	To consider the annual report	Chairman of the Board
	Youth Offending	To consider a report on the work of the youth offending team	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills

2 March 2023	School attainment	To consider the annual report on attainment	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	Pathway into further education and training	To look at how young people can access further education and training	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	School Exclusions	.To consider the latest position regarding school exclusions following consideration of a report in March 2022.	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
June 2023	Performance and budget	Current performance trends and budget 2023/24	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	Children's health and wellbeing	To discuss key issues in relation to the health and wellbeing of children	Director of Public Health Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
	Fostering and Adoption Annual Reports	To consider the annual reports	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
September 2023	Annual complaints report – Children's Social Work	To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
December 2023	Performance and budget	Current performance trends and budget 2023/24	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills



	IW Safeguarding Children's Board annual report	To consider the annual report	Chairman of the Board
March 2024	School attainment	To consider the annual report on attainment	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
June 2024	Performance and budget	Current performance trends and budget 2024/25	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	Fostering and Adoption Annual Reports	To consider the annual reports	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
September 2024	Annual complaints report – Children's Social Work	To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
December 2024	Performance and budget	Current performance trends and budget 2024/25	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills
	IW Safeguarding Children's Board annual report	To consider the annual report	Chairman of the Board

March 2025	School attainment	To consider the annual report on attainment	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills

Items identified but no date set yet by the Committee :-

1. Youth Trust Annual Survey - To consider the findings of the annual survey undertaken by the Youth Trust.
2. Draft Isle of Wight Carers Strategy following a review before formal approval is given by the Cabinet
3. Social worker recruitment and retention
4. Autism