

## ADOPTION PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2020

I was delighted to be selected to sit on the Adoption Panel as the IOW Council representative following my election in 2017. I have always been impressed by the dedication, professionalism and determination of the team to find the best “forever homes” for our island children and this is evidenced by the low rate of disruptions where placements break down; no disruptions this year.

It's fair to say that there have been many changes in the structure of our Adoption Service since we became a part of a new agency, Adopt South, in 2018. This brought together the services from Portsmouth, Hampshire, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. The logistics of the island created some challenges to be overcome, most evidently in the holding of panels here on the island both for approving prospective adopters and for matching panels.

However, we have a truly inspirational, dedicated team whose determination to achieve the best possible outcomes for our island children overcomes the obstacles that present themselves in this inevitably challenging service. As a result, further collaboration was undertaken with the Adopt South administrative team to facilitate our IOW service and ease the integration into the new agency. The team are now positively engaging with the new regional identity and the changes to practise are being embedded. I would like to point out that, during this time of flux, the team continued to put the best interests of our island children first and credit is due that the service was not only able to continue uninterrupted, but to continue to perform to the highest standards.

During 2019/20 a new service Manager was appointed to cover children in care on the island which comprises of the fostering and adoption teams, children in care, care leavers and Beaulieu House.

The service manager has worked with the fostering and adoption teams on restructuring the teams to make one permanence team focusing on both fostering and adoption work alongside the work of Adopt South. This team has a higher number of social workers to complete the assessment and support functions in fostering and adoption.

Having sat on many panels since joining the Panel in 2017, inevitably the formation of the Adopt South Agency and the advent of the pandemic have restricted my involvement on the Adoption Panel as the newly formed “Medina Panel” did not sit for some time initially. I have attended 3 training sessions on the mainland and hope to continue my involvement as the representative of the IOW Council.

Cllr Debbie Andre

04/09/2020