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Bridgend County Borough Council



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Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
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*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please
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Gwasanaethau Gweithredol a Phartneriaethol / Operational and Partnership Services

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: (01656)
643148/643147

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Andrew Rees

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: 14 July 2016

Dear Councillor,

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting will be held in Committee Rooms 2/3, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 20 July 2016 at 2.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 8
To receive for approval the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee of 7 April 2016.
4. Safeguarding of Children and Young People 9 - 18
5. Implementation of the 'When I am Ready' Scheme 19 - 52
6. Monitoring the Performance and Progress of the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service 53 - 140
7. Urgent Items
To consider any other item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should be reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh

Yours faithfully

P A Jolley

Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services

Distribution:

Councillors:

HJ David

MEJ Nott OBE

CL Reeves

Councillors

CE Smith

HJ Townsend

PJ White

Councillors

HM Williams

Invitees:

Councillor E Dodd

Councillor EP Foley

Councillor KJ Watts

Councillor DBF White

Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Nomination to be determined on 19 July 2016

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 7 APRIL 2016 AT 10.00 AM

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

M Gregory

CE Smith

HJ Townsend

HM Williams

Invitees:

Councillor E Dodd
Councillor EP Foley
Councillor RD Jenkins
Councillor E Venables
Councillor KJ Watts

Officers:

Judith Brooks	Group Manager Business Support
Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Nicola Echanis	Head of Strategy Partnerships & Commissioning
Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director Education & Family Support
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Susan Roberts	Group Manager School Improvement
Beverley Whiteley	Team Manager Children with Disabilities

122. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:

Councillor DBF White
Councillor PJ White.

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

124. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting of 3 December 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record.

125. SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014 (INCLUDING SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PART 6 LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN)

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into effect on 6 April 2016 and a project team had been established in the lead up to the implementation of the Act to ensure compliance with the Act under the leadership of Beverley Whiteley, Team Manager Children With Disabilities. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the Directorate is working towards a cultural shift and is now in a strong position to implement the Act.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing outlined the two key policy objectives of the Act seeking to transform the way in which social services are delivered, primarily through promoting independence and giving people a stronger voice and control. The Act also sought to promote partnership working in social care and to enhance the preventative role of social care and health, setting out overarching wellbeing duties to reduce or delay the need for care and support. It ensured that people receive the right support at the right time and place.

The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee of the main duties of the Act with reference to children in need of care and support, looked after and accommodated children and care leavers. She highlighted the main points of the 11 parts which make up the Act, particularly Part 6 of the Act which related to the authority's duties and responsibilities towards looked after and accommodated children as well as detailing arrangements and duties for leaving care, including making provision for post-18 living arrangements. The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that the Code explicitly states that once a child is in care all elected members and officers of the local authority, as corporate parents need to be concerned about that child and must take a set of principles into account when engaging with them and making any decision concerning them.

The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that Part 6 of the Act links with many other parts of the Act including duties surrounding Advocacy in Part 10 and required provision relating to children and young people in the Secure estate in Part 11. She stated that Part 6 stressed the duty to appoint an independent visitor for a child where it appeared to be in the child's best interest. Part 6 also makes provision for Short Breaks where required for a disabled child, although the Act also makes provision under Part 4, where this is considered most appropriate. She stated there is a duty under Part 3 to assess from time to time whether a looked after child has care and support needs and where those needs are eligible there is a duty to meet those needs. Part 6 also draws on the concept of working preventatively with looked after and accommodated children. She stated that the Act had strengthened the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer, although it had appeared to legislate what is already best practice in this authority.

The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that Placement choice has been highlighted as important and the Act introduced a placement hierarchy and set of "rules" that the authority must follow when deciding where to place a child it is looking after. It also placed a new requirement of an order of preference when considering out of area placements and also make clear that when considering the placement of a child in Key Stage 4 that a move of school should only be in exceptional circumstances. There is also a clear focus on the assessment of a child's mental/emotional health while undertaking a looked after child health assessment.

The Team Manager Children With Disabilities also informed the Committee that 'Foster to Adopt' has been introduced, which requires the authority to place a child with prospective adopters following the decision being taken that re-integration with birth family has been discounted but prior to the placement order being granted. This will require prospective adopters who wish to be considered to also be approved as foster carers.

The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that care leavers should expect the same level of care that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority is expected to make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need to come to terms with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood. She stated that there are also changes to the duties in respect of post-18 living

arrangements and the Act introduces the requirement for authorities to set up a 'When I am Ready' scheme for young people in foster placements who wish to remain living with their former carers beyond their 18th birthday.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing reported that planning for the implementation of the Act had involved a huge piece of work with 800 staff to be trained, with 50% of those staff having already been trained to support the transfer of knowledge into practice. She stated that the Act had brought about a whole range of new challenges and entitlements at a time of severe financial restraint with no additional resources being made available from the Welsh Government, apart from some transitional / transformational funding. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that funding had been available to the authority for two years to engage in work with prisoners at Parc Prison. The Committee questioned the demands of the prison population on staff time, the number of the authority's staff devoted to working in the prison and whether the pressures of having a prison in the authority's area could be recognised in the Revenue Support Grant. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that a working group had been established to work with Parc Prison where there is a need to provide care and support. She stated there may be a need to fund small aids and adaptations within the prison. Two Occupational Therapists and one Social Worker to support work within the prison. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that she would need to look at whether the financial pressures of supporting the prison could be included in the RSG. The Head of Strategy Partnerships and Commissioning informed the Committee of the role of Social Work staff working within the prison, it was hoped that the Youth Justice Board would fund continue to fund the Social Worker post at the prison.

The Committee questioned how better access to good information would be determined. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the Dewis Information System had been purchased which would be accessed by service users to enable to exercise choice and to make informed decisions. The system is compatible with the Digital Transformation programme.

The Cabinet Member Childrens Social Services and Equalities thanked the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing and team for the work they had undertaken in preparation for the implementation of the Act. She stated that the authority had already implemented many good schemes such as supported lodgings for people up to 21 years. The Cabinet Member Childrens Social Services and Equalities also informed the Committee that she and officers had met the Minister to discuss the lack of resources from the Welsh Government to support implementation of the Act as the Act was costing more than the grant funding received by the authority. The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that active offers in relation to advocacy were needed to be made to looked after children. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the advocacy proposal was still being finalised and that the Head of Safeguarding and Assessment represents the authority on a working group which was looking at advocacy.

The Committee requested clarification of the foster to adopt scheme. The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that the scheme operates differently in Wales to its operation in England in that the Act allows the authority to place a child with foster carers prior to proceeding with adoption. She stated that there is a very careful matching process prior to the fostering arrangement taking place.

The Committee requested clarification of the meeting needs duty under Part 4 of the Act. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the authority already meets its duties under Part 4 of the Act in order to protect the child

from abuse or neglect and by delivering a care and support plan. She stated that the Act strengthens processes the authority already has in place. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing also informed the Committee that the Western Bay collaboration has a child sexual exploitation strategy in place with the lead officer working closely with the police to identify children who are at risk and missing children. She stated that the MASH had been set up whereby key agencies such as the police, health and probation service had signed up to it and will be co-located. She also stated that a Child Safeguarding Board had been set up across Western Bay and is based in Bridgend. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the service had been subject to audit by Internal Audit which had found that processes are in place to ensure children are safeguarded.

The Committee questioned whether Direct Payments are in place. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that Direct Payments are already in place, however the Act had brought about a change in duties in that service users can now purchase services from the authority. She stated that service users who have substance misuse problems can have direct payments however the authority will use the direct payment to purchase services on service users' behalf. The Team Manager Children With Disabilities informed the Committee that Direct Payments were previously offered to children with disabilities only; however the Act widened the availability of Direct Payments to all children with needs.

The Committee questioned the authority had put in adaptations at Parc Prison. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that small aids and adaptations had been put in place at the prison, but she would confirm the type of aids that had been put in place. The Committee was informed that there are 64 children at Parc Prison who are the responsibility of the home local authority and not this authority, but the authority would have responsibility if they are looked after. The Head of Strategy Partnerships and Commissioning informed the Committee that Social Workers will ensure that children in Parc Prison receive statutory visits.

The Committee questioned how the Future Generations Act will link with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the wellbeing duty requires the authority to undertake a population assessment. She stated that wellbeing duty had been the subject of discussion at Corporate Management Board and there was a need to ensure the authority abides by its wellbeing duties. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that a project board on the implementation of the Future Generations Act would be set up.

RESOLVED: That the content and the actions set out for the future implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act be noted.

126. ROTA VISITING BY ELECTED MEMBERS

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that rota visiting to the Council's children's social care establishments is part of the quality assurance mechanism in place and is valued greatly. She stated that there are internal monitoring processes in place for rota visiting and that elected members contribute greatly to the programme and more visits by members are encouraged.

The Group Manager Business Support reported that comprehensive guidance for rota visiting had been developed with Members which is regularly reviewed. She stated that training sessions have taken place to ensure Members are updated on the process of rota visiting. The Group Manager Business Support informed the Committee that

concerns had been raised by Members about the variety of services they visit, however the purpose of the visits is to gain feedback on the quality of care received and it was hoped that Members would be able to spend time with different services users each time they visit.

The Group Manager Business Support reported that 28 visits had been carried out of a possible 63 visits to children's establishments between April 2014 and January 2016. She stated the next rota will commence in April 2016 and invitations will be sent to all Members to encourage a greater level of participation in rota visits. The Group Manager Business Support informed the Committee that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 March 2016 requested that consideration be given to including independent sector children's establishments on the rota visiting programme. This is currently being explored.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities commented on the need for more visits to take place to the Transition Unit at Newbridge House as more visits had taken place to Bakers Way.

A member of the Committee commented that the purpose of the visits was to look at the welfare of children and young people at those establishments and not to look at the conditions of the facilities. The Group Manager Business Support informed the Committee that the guidance in place for rota visits is quite detailed and there are management processes in place to report problems which relate to the condition of facilities at the establishments.

The Committee commented on the excellent training offered to Members to assist them in undertaking rota visits.

RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted:

 (2) That it be noted that next rota period will commence in April 2016 and invitations will be sent to all Elected Members to try and increase the level of participation.

127. **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN DEPRIVATION GRANT**

The Group Manager School Improvement reported on the support being delivered to improve the educational performance of looked after children. She stated that across Bridgend, there is an improving trend in GCSE performance at grades A* - G for looked after children and in 2014/15 no looked after children left education at the age of 16 without a qualification. However, the proportion of grades above C is still too low and is therefore an area in need of improvement. She stated that setting targets for cohorts of looked after children is problematic across Wales, given the variable nature of the looked after children population and the relatively small cohort sizes at local authority level. She informed the Committee that the Welsh Government has set a national target in the educational achievement of 15 year olds at Key Stage 4 of the Level 2 from 17% in 2014 to 25% in 2016.

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation informed the Committee that the authority is amongst the best performing local authorities in Wales for looked after children gaining GCSEs, however there remained a big gap in performance in educational attainment between looked after children and children who are not looked after.

The Group Manager School Improvement informed the Committee of the multi-level approach to supporting and targeting the educational performance of looked after

children, which is a priority in the Directorate's business plan. Each school had a designated teacher with responsibility to monitor and promote the education of looked after children. Designated teachers work closely with the Looked After Children in Education (LACE) Team. The plan is to develop capacity in schools and build on good practice across the five local authorities in the Consortium.

The Group Manager School Improvement informed the Committee of the change in the allocation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children, which was now administered by the Consortium and not schools to facilitate more strategic working. It was intended that Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children would be used to support interventions and practices that are proven to have the greatest impact and sustainability in raising the attainment of looked after children. The Group Manager School Improvement highlighted a list of schools that were successful in obtaining Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children in 2015/16. In response to a question from the Committee, the Group Manager School Improvement stated that schools outside Bridgend had qualified for Pupil Deprivation Grant where they provide education for Bridgend looked after children who are educated out of county as they possess the specialist facilities to do so.

The Group Manager School Improvement informed the Committee that the authority had commissioned Thrive through Pupil Deprivation Grant to provide training to a member of staff in each secondary and special school and a member of staff from each cluster in order to support looked after children within their schools and within their cluster. She stated that the main objective of Thrive is to support children's engagement and progress in learning so that they are ready for school, willing to join in, curious and keen to learn.

The Group Manager School Improvement informed the Committee that a virtual head teacher would be appointed to promote the educational achievement of all looked after children. Those children would be on a 'virtual school roll' even though they attend schools across and borough. The virtual head teacher will have the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers. She stated the authority intends to appoint a part-time virtual head teacher and to develop a virtual school for looked after children, funded from Pupil Deprivation Grant.

The Group Manager School Improvement highlighted 3 separate case studies which demonstrated local authority support for looked after children. The Committee commented on the positive impact which the LACE Team has had on achieving successful outcomes in the case studies reported for children who were formerly looked after.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

128. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 11.40 am

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

20 JULY 2016

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the work undertaken to safeguard children and young people in our communities.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 The report links to the following priority in the Corporate Plan:

- Helping people to be more self-reliant.

3. Background

- 3.1 Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means: protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.

- 3.2 Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to safeguarding the children and young people within our community from harm and as such all practitioners have access to a number of key documents which provide guidance and structure to their practice. For example;

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989)** stipulates that the state shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse including 'prostitution', trafficking for sexual purposes and involvement in the production of child sexual abuse images.
- **The Welsh Assembly Government's 7 Core Aims** include the right to '*enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation*'. This Core Aim is central to protecting children and young people from sexual exploitation.
- **The Children Acts 1989 and 2004** set out the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- **Social Services and Wellbeing (wales) Act 2014** – including its protocols and supplementary guidance documents setting out the assessments and support plans to provide family in need.

- **The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008** sets out the arrangements for safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- **The All Wales Protocol Missing Children 2011** sets out guidance to compliment good practice for all relevant agencies in dealing with situations where children go missing.
- **The All Wales Protocol Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at risk of abuse through sexual exploitation 2013** sets out guidance for practitioners on what to do if they encounter a child who is being sexually exploited or is at risk of being sexually exploited.

3.3 In **'Safeguarding Children: Working together under the Children Act 2004'** the Welsh Assembly Government emphasises that children involved in sexual exploitation should be treated primarily as victims of abuse, and their needs require careful assessment. They are likely to be in need of welfare services and, in many cases, protection under the Children Act 1989.

4. Current situation/Proposal

4.1 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service provides overarching support, specialist input and monitoring of a range of services, for example, by chairing meetings and tracking issues in relation to complex cases including those on the child protection register and looked after children; leading on child practice reviews and facilitating/undertaking case file audit activity. This is achieved through collaboration with partner agencies, Education, Health, South Wales Police, Community Resource Groups and neighboring agencies under the umbrella arrangements with the Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board.

4.1.1 The Board recognises its functions under Section 139 of the Safeguarding Board Regulations within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 as core business. Core Business/core functions underpin the effectiveness of a Safeguarding Children Board and are therefore written into the Terms of Reference for the Board and its management groups. Membership and structures are regularly reviewed and updated within the Safeguarding Board arrangements and work plans are aligned with this business plan and include core business functions to monitor effectiveness. These plans are regularly reviewed and amended throughout the year.

4.1.2 Core Business is undertaken through its established Management Groups: Child Practice Review, Policy Procedure & Practice, Quality & performance, Strategic Training and Communication and Engagement. It is therefore expected that the management groups continue to review, establish, monitor and report to the Board against individual work plans in place to undertake Core Business whilst also addressing individual actions set out within the Board's strategic priorities in order to achieve the overarching outcomes of the plan. We have representatives from our service on the Board and all of the management groups.

4.2 The Independent Reviewing Service which consists of one Service Manager and 6.5 Independent Reviewing Officers has an important Quality Assurance function and works towards ensuring all children within the care of Bridgend County Borough

Council have a robust, effective care and support plan. This plan is aimed towards improving outcomes for children and young people in providing a stable and secure childhood where their health, education and emotional wellbeing is promoted through effective care planning and support . It is the function of the Independent Reviewing service to ensure the care and support plan is appropriate and progressive in Safeguarding whilst meeting all identified needs.

- 4.3 Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) are required to independently review the Care and Support Plans of all Looked After Children and those children whose names are on the child protection register (CPR). The Looked After Children Review will include consultation with and attendance of relevant agencies (health, education and Police etc) and will usually include the child/young person, their Social Worker, carers and family members. Time scales for Reviews are set out in the Children Act 1989, with the first Review taking place within 28 days, the second within three months following the initial and subsequent Reviews within six monthly intervals thereafter. This service has consistently met high standards of compliance.

Child Protection Activity

- 4.4 At the time of writing this report the number of children's names placed on Bridgend's Child Protection Register is 181. In line with other Local Authorities these numbers increase and decrease reflecting the rates of registration against that of deregistration. There has been a gradual increase in the number of registrations against a smaller number of deregistration's. For example in June and December 2015 there were 30 additions to the Register compared to only 7 deregistration's of children and young people. Such activity has resulted in an overall increase in the number of children's names being placed on the Child Protection Register.

- 4.5 In response to this rise in numbers and to better understand the origins of the increase in registrations, the actions identified below are to fundamentally improve practice and to safely reduce the number of children's names being placed on the register.

- To assist the IROs in the effectiveness of monitoring and tracking of cases the Principal Officer for Permanence now attends the Permanence and Accommodation Panel in addition to the Legal Gateway meeting to ensure that the areas are linked and drift is minimised especially around cases of neglect where timescales for registration should be shorter to prevent children from experiencing persistent neglect.
- The IROs will carry out shadowing of each other's reviews to ensure that we have consistency in thresholds and practice.
- The IRO Service Manager will also have greater scrutiny over the requests for Initial Conferences and provide a monthly breakdown of the quality and appropriateness of these requests.
- Case file audits are being carried out in respect of the children and young people whose names have been placed on the CPR for longer than 12 months. Findings from these Audits will be analysed to consider whether the analysis of risk is proportionate and whether the children's names should remain on the

CPR with the added protection of the Public Law Outline process or whether these cases should be managed under the auspices of a Care and Support Plan.

- The Group Manager for Safeguarding will arrange to observe and report on the effectiveness of strategy meetings and provide training if required.

Public Law Outline (PLO) and Care Proceedings

- 4.6 When children's names have been on the child protection register for nine months and, due to the parents failing to adhere to the Child Protection Plan despite being provided support, it is proposed that consideration be given to continued registration, then the matter will be presented to the Legal Gateway Meeting for advice as to whether the case had met the necessary legal threshold to enter the pre proceedings process as set out by the Public Law Outline.
- 4.7 The pre proceedings process is set for a realistic period of time for families to engage in the necessary services to ensure that the child/ren needs are met and they are kept safe from harm. The family will receive a 'pre proceedings letter' which sets out:
- the Local Authority's concerns,
 - what the Local Authority has done to try to address those concerns,
 - what the family need to in order to address those concerns,
 - the likely outcome if they fail to do so which involves the Local Authority considering whether the children are able to remain in the family home and whether care proceedings should be issued;
 - informing them of a meeting that they must attend with legal representation.
- 4.7.1 The family then take that letter to a family law solicitor and will obtain legal aid to fund the attendance of that lawyer. During the meeting the concerns are set out clearly by the social worker (with legal representative for the local authority present) and an agreement signed setting out what the parents need to do whilst an assessment is undertaken by the Local Authority. The conclusion of this assessment will ascertain whether there have been improvements made by the parents for the case to return to Child Protection Matter or if there have been no improvements – legal advice will be obtained as to whether the threshold for care proceedings has been met.

Care Proceedings

- 4.8 This is a last resort situation for the local authority and will only be issued when the local authority has attempted to do all it can to work with and support the family but there has been no change and the child/ren are at risk of suffering significant harm should they remain in the care of parents.

Child practice Reviews

- 4.9 In 2013, Child Practice Reviews replaced what were known as Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). This new process stems from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales report published in October 2009 - *Improving Practice to Protect Children in Wales: An Examination of the Role of Serious Case Reviews*. This work

was pivotal to where we are today, and concluded that action was required to replace the SCR process which had become ineffective in improving practice and inter-agency working.

- 4.10 A key element of the new framework is different types of review – known as ‘concise’ and ‘extended’ – depending on the circumstances of the child involved. Child Practice Reviews will be effective learning tools where it is more important to consider how agencies worked together. The formal review processes are underpinned by multi-agency professional forums that are critical to improving practice, and will allow practitioners to reflect on cases – and not only where things have gone wrong – in an informed and supported environment.
- 4.11 The guidance sets out arrangements for multi-agency Child Practice Reviews in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected.
- 4.12 The overall purpose of reform of the review system is to promote a positive culture of multi-agency child protection learning and reviewing in local areas, for which the Western Bay Safeguarding Children’s Board and partner agencies hold responsibility.
- 4.13 A Multi-Agency Professional Forum is a multi-professional event facilitated for practitioners and managers, primarily to examine case practice and provide opportunity for consultation, supervision and reflection, and to disseminate findings from child protection audits, inspections and reviews, in order to improve local knowledge and practice and to inform the Board’s future audit and training priorities.
- 4.14 Concise Reviews: a concise Child Practice Review is carried out in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has –
- died; or
 - sustained potentially life threatening injury; or
 - sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development; *and* the child was *neither* on the child protection register *nor* a looked after child on any date during the 6 months preceding the date of the event referred to above.
- 4.15 Extended Reviews: an extended Child Practice Review is carried out in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has –
- died; or
 - sustained potentially life threatening injury; or
 - sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development; *and* the child was *on* the child protection register *and/or* was a looked after child (including a care leaver under the age of 18) on any date during the 6 months preceding the date of the event referred to.
- 4.16 Bridgend is currently undertaking three Child Practice Reviews following the identification of concerns where the above criteria have been met. One of the reviews is an historical review relating to a young person who, now that she is in a safe care arrangement, has disclosed she was sexually abused by her biological father.
- 4.17 The two other reviews being undertaken are Concise Reviews one of which involves a child who sustained serious head injuries and another where a child died

of natural causes but siblings were open cases to the department and are currently subject to care proceedings via the Public Law Outline.

- 4.18 The purpose of the reviews is to identify learning for future practice and involve practitioners, managers and senior officers in exploring the detail and context of agencies' work with the child(ren) and family. The review is intended to generate professional and organisational learning and promote improvement in future practice.
- 4.19 Recommendations from Child Practice Reviews are considered and actions agreed are reported to and monitored by the Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board. The lessons to be learnt are shared with senior managers and disseminated through learning events and training to Safeguarding practitioners.

Child Sexual Exploitation

- 4.20 Child Sexual exploitation (CSE) is the coercion or manipulation of children and young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, "protection" or affection. The vulnerability of the young person and grooming process employed by perpetrators renders them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent.
(All Wales Protocol CSE 2008)
- 4.21 Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy meetings in Bridgend are chaired by the Group Manager for Safeguarding and the frequency of these meetings is considered on a case by case basis with the primary consideration being the risk to the child or young person. A constant chairperson ensures continuity and oversight of the actions identified within the care and support plans, continuous evaluation of the level of risk posed to the child or young person and identification and monitoring of those persons who pose the risk to the child(ren). Information about these individuals is closely monitored by the Police and attending agencies to assist in the disruption of their activities to better protect children and young people.
- 4.22 The ages of children and young people who are subject to CSE strategy meetings range from 10 years to 17 years. Each meeting takes into account the specific vulnerabilities of these young people to ensure their care and support plan targets all aspects of their needs and their need to be protected and educated around the facets of grooming and sexual exploitation.
- 4.23 Currently Bridgend has 37 children who are subject to monitoring under the CSE protocol. This number has increased over the last three years but this does not necessarily indicate that CSE is becoming more of a concern in Bridgend. It does however evidence that professionals and agencies are now more aware of CSE and are better in identifying behaviours associated with such to protect those identified as being at risk of exploitation.
- 4.24 The Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board have ensured that across the region there are a number of practitioners who are trained to deliver CSE awareness raising training and further work is underway to increase available trainers and training opportunities. Bridgend SCDWP are developing a

comprehensive training program to ensure that all aspects of our community are involved in raising awareness of CSE across Bridgend and the Police force has also worked closely with us to develop and deliver training. South Wales Police has already delivered two members' training sessions to raise the awareness of CSE and are also working with us to facilitate training to Licensees, taxi drivers and door staff to identify offenders and protect children.

- 4.25 Good communication and collaborative working with the Police is essential in all cases and particularly so in CSE cases and cases where children are frequently reporting missing. The priority for all agencies is to protect children and young people but for the Police there is also the duty to investigate and prosecute offenders. In response to this South Wales Police now has a dedicated CSE team of investigators supported by a Police analyst who regularly completes a problem profile for the Bridgend area regarding children who are at risk of being sexually exploited and the perpetrators of exploitation. The Safeguarding team holds a data base of all young people subject to CSE meetings and also has substantial performance reporting arrangements with the Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board.
- 4.26 Focusing on a strategic multi-agency approach to CSE, Safeguarding services, South Wales Police, ABMU Health and BCBC Education department have formed a "CSE Task Force". The Task Force addresses issues such as identifying gaps in training, highlighting and tracking high risk cases, new CSE concerns identified outside of the strategy meetings, monitoring and mapping children and young people who are reported as missing with CSE concerns. When appropriate, forums will be convened with practitioners to share the group's findings thus ensuring vital information is shared and robust safeguarding measures are implemented.
- 4.27 As a result of the work carried out by the agencies and professionals involved in the CSE process more Child Abduction notices are being actioned. Notices are used in situations where a young person is visiting the home of an adult where it is suspected he/she may be at risk of being groomed for exploitation. They assist in the disruption of offenders' behaviours by outlining powers of arrest and prosecution if their contact with the child concerned persists. .
- 4.28 With regard to Child Sexual Exploitation and Education, the Child Protection Manager for Education delivers an annual programme of Child Sexual Exploitation training to year 8 pupils with their teachers present. This training is delivered jointly with South Wales Police Officers and evaluated on an annual basis. This ensures children and young people within the education establishments in Bridgend receive appropriate early education around the risks and behaviours associated with CSE.
- 4.29 The Sexual Offences Act 2003 has supported this work by introducing new offences to protect all children aged less than 18 years. The Act now provides specific offences in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation

Professional Abuse

- 4.30 The Safeguarding Service is responsible for dealing with and managing allegations of abuse about or against a professional staff member or volunteer in contact with children and vulnerable adults (or who manage, influence or supervise services).

- 4.31 This applies to all professionals, employees and volunteers working for or accredited to a public, voluntary, private agency, place of worship or faith organization or independent contractor whose work brings them into contact with children and young people. This includes all professionals across the Borough including prisons, secure training facilities and staff who transport children.
- 4.32 The Safeguarding Group Manager is responsible for chairing the Professional Strategy Meetings and ensuring that Safeguards and actions are appropriately considered and implemented. Based on the seriousness of the allegation or concern this process can result in recommendations that professionals' working practices are changed whilst investigations are ongoing or in some cases recommendations are made to suspend a member of staff.
- 4.33 Upon the conclusion of either child protection or criminal investigations a further meeting is convened to consider the findings and reach a conclusion based on the balance of probability whether the original concern raised has been founded, unfounded, unsubstantiated or substantiated. The need for any internal investigation or disciplinary action will also be considered upon the conclusion of this process.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

- 4.34 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a set of arrangements to manage the risk posed by the most serious sexual and violent offenders. These arrangements within Bridgend bring together lead professionals from the Probation Service, Mental Health Service, Housing, Public Protection and Children's Services on a fortnightly basis. These professionals are experienced in this arena and are effective in the sharing of information between agencies which is key in protecting the most vulnerable in our society.
- 4.35 The Group Manager for Safeguarding attends MAPPA to ensure continuity in information and process, and individuals who pose a risk to children and young people are identified and brought to the attention of Safeguarding practitioners at the earliest stage. The Group Manager also ensures agencies and professionals outside of Safeguarding make the necessary referrals to the department and they are then tracked to ensure assessments are carried out in a timely manner to ensure the protection of children, young people and their families.

General

- 4.36 To ensure governance of the safeguarding of children, young people and adults a Strategic Safeguarding Operational Group is chaired by the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing. This multi-agency group meets on a quarterly basis and includes representatives from children and adult services. This group considers information on all aspects of Safeguarding across both children and adults services with updates from the Western Bay Safeguarding Childrens and Adult Boards.
- 4.37 The Safeguarding Group Manager is the link to HMP Parc Prison and is a member of the Safeguarding Committee. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to consider Safeguarding arrangements and information of the Young Offenders Unit at the Prison. These arrangements and effective communication between the Young People, the Prison Service and Safeguarding services are assisted by the

presence of a Safeguarding Practitioner located within the unit. Any allegations made against staff members are considered under the professional abuse arrangements and investigated by Safeguarding Practitioners.

Corporate Parenting

- 4.38 Safeguarding is the responsibility of all and not the responsibility of Safeguarding services alone. It is of paramount importance that all Members prioritise Safeguarding when fulfilling their role as corporate parents and receive regular updates about Safeguarding activities across the Council. With a view to promoting awareness of this and raising the profile of Safeguarding across the whole of the Council, a Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been developed and implemented. Each directorate across the Council has identified an individual who is known as a Safeguarding representative to provide assistance and advice to staff should a safeguarding concern be raised. The representatives and Safeguarding leads from both Adult and Childrens services will meet on a quarterly basis to share information and consider practice and training of staff around Safeguarding. The Safeguarding leads will be available to these representatives to ensure that concerns are dealt with promptly and proportionately.
- 4.39 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016. Further guidance will be provided to Local Authorities specifically around enhanced statutory responsibilities and the Code of Practice is still being developed. There will be a large number of staff that will require training and Bridgend training department (SCDWP) is working closely with Welsh Government to achieve this.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 There will be an implication on Policy and practice once the new codes of practice come into force.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This is an information report. There are no equality matters relevant to this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, any budget pressures identified as a result of action taken to safeguard children and young people will be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 The Committee is requested to note the developments in the safeguarding of children and young people across the County Borough of Bridgend.

Susan Cooper,
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
June 2016

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10. Background documents:

None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

20 JULY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 'WHEN I AM READY' SCHEME.

1. Purpose of the Report.

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the implementation of the "When I am Ready" scheme in Bridgend County Borough Council. To ask the Committee to approve the 'When I Am Ready' Policy and the accompanying 'When I Am Ready' Financial Policy.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

- 2.1 The report links to the following corporate priorities:
- Smarter use of resources.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report on the 'When I am Ready' scheme on 3rd December 2015. 'When I am Ready' is a scheme which came into force on the 6th April 2016 through the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014(SSWBA). The scheme was developed by the Welsh Government in partnership with local government and key third sector partners to enable eligible care leavers to have the option of continuing to live with their foster carers once they attain 18 years of age. 'When I Am Ready' is not a regulated service. The 'When I Am Ready' policy has been produced and is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The SSWBA uses the term 'post-18 living arrangement' to describe a situation where a care leaver who has turned 18 years of age continues to live with his or her foster parent/s in an arrangement facilitated by the Local Authority.
- 3.3 All 'looked after children' who have been placed in care and are approaching the age of 18 years of age are eligible to be considered for 'When I Am Ready'. Under section 108 of the SSWBA the Local Authority must, through a Pathway assessment, ascertain whether a young person and their foster carers wish to make a post-18 years of age living arrangement. This is regardless of whether the young person is undertaking full or part time education, training or employment or none of these activities. However there is an expectation that any young person accessing the 'When I Am Ready' scheme will commit to undertaking skills development to prepare for their future.
- 3.4. The main aims for 'When I Am Ready' are:-
- To provide stability and continuity for young people leaving foster care as they prepare for independent living.
 - To improve the life chances of looked after children

- To provide looked after children with increased opportunities to exercise choice and control over their lives.

3.5 'When I Am Ready' helps to ensure that young people do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements which can have a negative impact upon their education, training or employment, or upon their developing independent living skills.

3.6 'When I Am Ready' extends until:-

- The young person leaves the arrangement or
- The young person reaches their 21st birthday (provided they have been continuously living in that arrangement since their 18th birthday) or
- The young person completes their agreed programme of education or training after their 21st birthday (provided they have been continuously living in that arrangement since their 18th birthday).

4. Current situation.

4.1 There are currently three 'When I am Ready' living together arrangements in place in Bridgend County Borough. Through the Accommodation and Permanence panel, social workers present young people who fit the criterion for progression to be cared for through a When I am Ready placement. At present, there are 'When I Am Ready' arrangements for a further five young people agreed. There are a further nine young people who will meet the criteria over the next year based on our current cohort of Looked After Children.

4.2 A list of outcome measures has been developed in line with the National Outcomes Framework to monitor and evaluate the success of the 'When I Am Ready' scheme at a local and national level. The outcomes will also be reported through the requirements of funding provided by the Supporting People grant (see below).

4.3 There are implications for carers in terms of:

- Claiming benefits;
- Housing situation;
- Insurance notifications;
- Becoming excluded licensees.

These reasons may lead to carers choosing not to offer this option.

4.4 Young people may choose not to enter into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement due to them possibly not wanting to sign formal living together agreements or entering adulthood with the expectation that they claim housing benefit.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 This scheme is being implemented as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act to promote equality of opportunity and life chances for previously accommodated children without discrimination. The 'When I Am ready' scheme is available to all Bridgend Looked After Children meeting the requirements of

category one; (A child who is aged 16 or 17 is being looked after by a Local Authority and has been looked after by a Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks which began after he or she reached 14 and ended after he or she reached 16). Children and young people will have equal opportunities when transitioning into adulthood.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 Each 'When I Am Ready' placement will cost the Local Authority £185 per week minus all relevant claimable benefits (see page 6 of the financial policy) and, as appropriate, contributions from the young people themselves as detailed in the 'When I Am Ready' policy. The £185 is the Welsh Government recommended basic allowance for all children accommodated aged 16-17 years. This £185 is subject to inflationary increase as directed by Welsh Government on an annual basis. Housing benefit is dependent on circumstances of individual applications; young peoples' contributions are a minimum of £20 per week. The Local Authority would meet any remaining cost i.e.; not more than £70 per week per placement but potentially less depending on the individual and their personal circumstances.
- 7.2 The 'When I Am Ready' placements will be funded partly by Bridgend County Borough Council Supported lodgings budget within Safeguarding and Family Support and partly from Welsh Government Grant (Supporting People Programme Grant - SPPG). The amount provided by SPPG is £69,252 for the year. Any further placement costs are funded through the Just Ask Plus team budget.
- 7.3 As all Category One Looked After children are entitled to 'When I Am Ready' provision upon attaining the age of 18, there is the potential for increased costs to the Local Authority over the forthcoming years. A significant increase in provision is not anticipated but would be partially offset by existing Supported lodgings arrangements ceasing. Requests for additional SPPG funding for those placements would be made in the first instance if required.
- 7.4 A When I Am Ready financial policy has been produced and is attached at **Appendix 2**.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 It is recommended that the corporate parenting committee takes note of the information contained within this report and approves the policies appended to the report.

Susan Cooper
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June 2016

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Background documents
None

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Bridgend County Borough Council

Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

Children Social Care

When I am Ready (WIR) Scheme Policy

April 2016

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The law and regulations supporting this document can be found in:

- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014
- Part 6 Code of Practice on Looked After and Accommodated Children 2015
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- “When I am Ready” Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers. Welsh Government (October 2012)
- The Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Care Leavers (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care Planning Placement and Case Review (Wales) 2015
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

1. Policy Statement

Bridgend County Borough Council wants all our children and young people to

- thrive and make the best of their talents;
- live healthy and safe lives;
- be confident and caring individuals throughout their lives;
- know and receive their rights.

Children and young people themselves also aspire to this vision of what their lives can and should be.

The Local Authority is committed to ensuring it provides high quality services, considering a range of options to promote positive outcomes and meet the needs of each child under it's corporate parenting responsibilities.

The Local Authority endeavours to ensure that all of our Looked after Children will be provided with the right type of placement which meets their needs, provides them with some choice about where they live, and enables them to benefit from positive experiences similar to those experienced by other children of the same age. Placements should support Looked After Children to transition into adulthood with confidence, a strong sense of self-worth, and the skills and abilities to thrive.

If good outcomes are achieved, the different needs of children and young people – social, physical, emotional, cultural and learning including the benefits of good health and being part of a stable and nurturing family will aid children and young people to develop the necessary personal and social skills or other attributes which will secure their safety and wellbeing during their transition into adulthood.

'When I am Ready' is a scheme developed by the Welsh Government in partnership with local government and key third sector partners to enable care leavers to continue to live with their former foster carers once they turn 18. The 'When I am Ready' Arrangement can continue until the young person reaches their 21st birthday or completes their agreed programme of education or training after their 21st birthday, if continuously living in the arrangement since their 18th birthday.

Section 108(3) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act places a duty on Local Authorities to provide support for young people and foster carers who wish to remain in 'post 18 living arrangements'. As an adult, the young person is no longer legally 'in care' or 'looked after' and the arrangement therefore differs from a foster placement.

The WIR Scheme is part of a wider package of support which the Local Authority provides to young people leaving care.

This policy details the arrangements for the implementation of WIR arrangements within Bridgend County Borough Council.

2. Aims of 'When I am Ready' (WIR)

2.1 This policy reflects the Local Authority's commitment to improve outcomes for children who are looked after. The aims of Bridgend CBC's 'When I am Ready' scheme are:

- Development of Independent Living Skills – Young people leaving care will receive on-going support from their WIR Providers to assist them in developing the necessary confidence, emotional and practical skills to prepare them for their transition to independent living.
- Stability and continuity - Young people leaving care continue to have security, protection, practical and emotional support and can continue to live in a supportive family and household environment.
- Improve the life chances for looked after children - The opportunities for care leavers to access post-18 education, training and employment opportunities are maximised and the number of young people experiencing periods of homelessness or housing instability is reduced.
- Provide young people with increased opportunities to exercise voice and control over their lives - Young people can influence the timing of their transition from care, and are not obliged to leave their former foster family before they feel ready to move to greater independence.

3. Entitlement to WIR

3.1 A 'WIR' arrangement can usually be made for a young person if they are in a situation described below:

- The young person was a 'looked after child' immediately prior to their 18th birthday and was living with foster carers in a placement arranged by the Local Authority AND
- The carers were acting as approved foster carers for the young person immediately prior to their 18th birthday AND
- The young person is deemed, under current legislation, to be an eligible child within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 immediately before they reached 18 ('Category 1' young people under the SSWBA 2014 AND
- The young person and the foster carers both wish to enter into a 'When I am Ready' arrangement, and the arrangement has been set out in the young person's pathway plan AND
- The Local Authority is satisfied that such an arrangement is not inconsistent with the young person's well-being AND
- A proportion of the allowance paid to the 'When I am Ready' carer will be paid for by the Local Authority.

As long as the young person is in a situation outlined above a WIR arrangement can usually be made regardless of whether they are in full or part time education, training or employment or none of these activities. However, there will be an expectation that any young person accessing WIR will commit to undertaking skills development for the future.

3.2 If a young person is aged under 18 is in one of the follow circumstances and tells us that they would like the opportunity to live in a WIR arrangement after they turn 18 we will explore this option. The circumstances are:

- A young person is under 18 and living in a residential home
- A young person under 18 would like to remain in a stable setting post 18 but the foster placement in in danger of breaking down before the young person's 18th birthday
- A young person would like to remain in a stable setting but not with their current carers
- A young person is under 18 and would like to remain in a stable setting but their current carers do not wish to enter into a WIR arrangement

It would be a usual expectation that the young person has remained stable in the foster placement for a period of at least 6 months prior to turning 18 and all the other aspects of the scheme's criteria above are met. Young people living in residential accommodation cannot stay in that setting in a WIR Arrangement beyond their 18th birthday.

3.3 WIR arrangements are transitional and the expectation is that the young person will move on to more independent living arrangements. There are young people whose care and support needs are complex and ongoing and for who a move on to independent living will not be an appropriate longer term option. The WIR scheme cannot be used to facilitate an Adult (Shared Lives) placement and cannot be used as an interim arrangement whilst such a placement is being made.

4. Legal status

4.1 WIR arrangements are centred on family, stability and preparation for independence. Legally a WIR arrangement is recognised as a 'post 18 living arrangement' between adults not a foster care placement.

4.2 As part of the WIR arrangement the young person and WIR carers will agree how they will live together as adults. This will be outlined in a Living Together Agreement (LTA) which replaces the young person's Care Plan and Placement Information Record. This will cover the same range of issues whilst focusing on the young person's specific independent living needs associated with them remaining in a WIR arrangement. The LTA will outline what is expected of both the young person and the WIR Provider to ensure that the young person is adequately prepared for their transition to independent living.

4.3 The WIR Provider and the young person must sign an Excluded License Agreement which outlines the commercial basis on which the young person is affectively lodging in the WIR Provider's home

Despite the changes in legal status, the over-riding principle is that the young person continues to be part of the home and that he or she remains a member of the family.

Young Person

- No longer a 'Looked After Child' or 'Accommodated'.
- Will be a Category 3 Care Leaver (Care Leaver aged 18 or over) and is entitled to relevant support – including a Pathway Plan, personal advisor and certain financial entitlements.
- Will not be living at home as a 'foster child' but as an 'excluded licensee'.
- Will be expected to make financial contributions to the WIR Provider.

Foster Carer(s)

- No longer foster carers for the young person but 'WIR providers'.
- Will no longer receive 'Fostering Allowance' for the young person. Separate WIR financial arrangements apply.
- Can remain registered foster carers for other children. Fostering regulations must continue to be complied where Provider remains registered.
- Must have appropriate household and liability insurance.

Full details of the WIR financial arrangements can be found in the separate WIR Financial Arrangements Policy document.

5. Planning and Preparation for a WIR Arrangement

- 5.1 The young person and the foster carer will be talked through the WIR scheme by their Social Worker / YPA or Supervising Social Worker and will be given written information around the time that the young person turns 15 ½.

Written information will include:

- WIR Policy. A copy of the policy will also be available online and updates will be provided on any changes to the policy or practice around 'WIR' which occur during the period covered by the pathway plan or during the young person's WIR arrangement.
- What a 'When I am Ready' arrangement is and eligibility for the scheme
- The financial implications for young people and carers
- A summary of the key arrangements, roles and responsibilities of the young person, the WIR Provider and others
- Information about how to request an arrangement
- Alternative supported accommodation options
- Information about the support available from the Local Authority to a young person and their WIR Provider(s) during the course of a 'When I am Ready' arrangement
- Information on other sources of advice and support, including advocacy services and peer support groups available to the young person

- 5.2 The Supervising Social Worker should initially gain the views of the foster carer before any discussion takes place with the young person. The young person's Social Worker also needs to assess how appropriate such an arrangement would be for the young person and explore all accommodation options open to them.

- 5.3 If a WIR arrangement is thought to be suitable and both the young person and the carer express a wish to enter in to the arrangement, this will be written in more detail at the first Pathway Plan review completed after the young person's 16th birthday. The plan will be monitored through the Pathway Planning process until the age of 17½ when a more formal assessment will take place and be presented to the Accommodation and Permanence Panel for agreement. Approval and review of WIR providers will take place at the WIR panel will meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Group Manager for Regulated Services
- 5.4 An excluded licence agreement must be agreed and signed for all WIR placements

6. Support, Monitoring and Reviewing Arrangements

- 6.1 Once the WIR arrangement is operational, the young person's allocated social worker is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of services and has a central role in keeping in touch with the young person and monitoring the progress of the WIR arrangement.
- 6.2 The young person can request advice at any time from their allocated social worker or personal advisor and will continue to have all entitlements consistent with their care leaver status.
- 6.3 Where other foster children remain in placement, the Supervising Social Worker from the Local Authority Fostering Service will continue to provide support to the carer in relation to the WIR young person when they transition to WIR Provider. However, where no foster children remain in the home or in the case of WIR transition from Independent Foster Agency placements, the role of the Supervising Worker will be undertaken by a member of staff from Bridgend Foster Care
- 6.4 The WIR arrangements and Living Together Agreement should be reviewed at the Pathway Plan Review not less than every 6 months. The Living Together agreement provides a framework for monitoring; this should include a review of what is working well and outcomes achieved by the young person as well as any problems or difficulties which have emerged. A review can be arranged earlier by agreement between the young person, WIR Provider and professionals involved. All WIR placements will be expected to evidence outcomes as requested by Welsh Government.

7. Duration of and Ending a WIR Arrangement

- 7.1 The 'WIR' arrangement extends until: -
- The young person leaves the 'WIR' arrangement, or;
 - The young person reaches their 21st birthday if continuously living in the arrangement or;
 - The young person completes their agreed programme of education or training after their 21st birthday, if continuously living in the arrangement since their 18th birthday.

- In cases of exceptional circumstances, it is deemed by the Local Authority that the placement is no longer consistent with the young person's wellbeing. The Group Manager for Disability, Transition and case Management or the Group Manager for Regulated Services, will be responsible for agreeing that a placement is ended.

7.2 The 'WIR' arrangement can be ended before the young person's 21st birthday by the young person or the 'WIR' Provider giving relevant notice. Both parties should give as much notice as possible and in most circumstances a minimum of 28 days' notice. In extreme circumstances, where an arrangement suddenly and irreparably breaks down, it may be considered reasonable for the young person to leave on the same day (although this will be extremely rare, and the Local Authority would continue to have a duty of care if this did happen). The parallel move on plan would become active immediately.

7.3 Where a young person moves on from a WIR arrangement into more independent living, but then wishes to move back in with their carer (for example, if they have found living alone harder than anticipated) the arrangement will no longer be a WIR arrangement. The Local Authority will consider its duties under the relevant legislation and decide if it would be appropriate to support the arrangement on another basis.

8. Alternative WIR Arrangements

8.1 Higher Education

8.1.1 Where a young person attends Higher Education and lives away from the WIR placement during the term and returns to their WIR arrangement for the course vacations. The Local Authority will provide vacation accommodation (or the funds to secure it) during the summer holiday and the support allowance pro rata for overnight visits to the WIR Providers home at other times.

8.1.2 Where a young person remains living with the WIR Provider and attends Higher Education on a daily basis, they will be expected to apply for all grants, loans and bursaries available to them. From these funds, the young person will be expected to pay the rental charge for their WIR Arrangement and the contribution towards their utility costs as in all other cases.

8.2 Armed Forces

8.2.1 Where a young person in a WIR arrangement joins the Armed Forces, the WIR arrangement will remain available until they have completed their initial training period. The Local Authority will pay the support allowance pro rata for each overnight period when the young person returns to the WIR arrangement during this period. After the initial training period, if the young person remains in the Armed Forces, the WIR arrangement will come to an end and any continuing relationship will be a private relationship between the young person and former foster carer.

8.3 Other Circumstances

- 8.3.1 In exceptional circumstances, a retainer may be paid to a WIR Provider where a young person is held on remand or in hospital. The maximum timescale for the payment of a retainer will be equivalent to that allowed under the Local Housing Allowance system. Decisions around the payment of the retainer can only be authorised by the Accommodation and Permanence Panel and with agreement from the Head of Service.

9. Safeguarding

9.1 Foster Children in WIR Household

- 9.1.1 Where a young person reaches the age of 18 and fostered children are also living in the placement, all aspects of the legislation relating to fostering continue to apply and govern the regulation of the whole household.

Once the young person has turned 18 and moved on to the WIR Arrangement they will require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

A Risk Assessment will always be undertaken to ensure that the Authority is satisfied that there are no other concerns about the young person remaining in the placement with foster children.

These processes will need to have commenced in sufficient time to ensure that the check and risk assessment are completed by the young person's 18th birthday.

- 9.1.2 Additionally, foster carer/s should be reviewed and returned to the Fostering/GM Panel for a change of circumstances (new adult member of the household – 'WIR' young person). Fostering/GM panel will need to give due deliberation to the impact of the 'WIR' arrangement on foster carer's terms of approval, including the numbers approved for, and whether this number includes the 'WIR' young person. The WIR arrangement is not part of a regulated service, therefore does not necessarily have to impact on the number of foster placements a provider is approved for.

9.2 No Foster Children in WIR Household

- 9.2.1 When a young person turns 18, and there are no other foster children in the household, the legislation relating to fostering will no longer apply. Where it is clear that the 'When I am Ready' carer will not be fostering any further children, it is appropriate to terminate their approval as a foster carer.
- 9.2.2 Where it is possible that the WIR Provider may foster again in the future, it would be inappropriate to terminate their approval, given the length of time that re-approval would take. The Local Authority will need to ensure that the WIR Provider does what is necessary under the fostering regulations to keep their approval status open.

10. Supervision, Support and Training

10.1 The Local Authority is committed to ensuring WIR Providers receive support and supervision for their role and will do this by providing:

- An identified support worker will provide not less than 2 monthly supervision (to support attendance and information being shared in/at Pathway Plan, Living Together and WIR Provider Reviews), support and guidance to help the WIR Provider operate within the standards and policies of the WIR scheme.
- A copy of written material relating to the WIR scheme to guide the WIR Provider in appropriate and effective support of the young person. This will include guidance around the Local Authority's policy and procedures as well as emergency contact information.
- The young person's allocated Social Worker or Personal Advisor will assist the WIR Provider in dealing with, or coordinate access to, other services to practically support the development of the young person's personal and independent living skills.
- Encouragement and support of the WIR Providers continuing development needs by providing training in key areas, relevant to needs as identified in supervision meetings.

11. Complaints and Representations

11.1 Young People or Foster Carers / WIR Providers may wish to make complaints or representations about aspects of the WIR Scheme or decisions made about them. If the matter cannot be informally resolved following discussion with the allocated Social Worker or their Line Manager or the Group Manager Disability, Transition and Case Management or the Group Manager Regulated Services, then complaints can be made through the Local Authority's Complaints procedure.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

12.1 The Group Manager Disability, Transition and Case Management, the Group Manager Regulated Services and a Finance Officer for the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate will meet:

- Bi-annually to review the profile and uptake of the WIR Scheme
- Annually to review qualitative information collated regarding the outcomes of the WIR scheme
- To discuss the reporting of the above information to the appropriate monitoring mechanisms within the Council.

This information will be collated in line with the recommendations made in the Welsh Government 'When I am Ready' Guidance document April 2015 and to support the Supporting People Outcomes evidence presented to Welsh Government annually.

12.2 This policy will be reviewed 12 months after implementation and every 3 years thereafter.

Bridgend County Borough Council

Childrens Social Care

‘When I am Ready Scheme’ – Financial Arrangements Policy’

June 2016

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out: -

- The financial requirements and benefit issues for young people who take up a “When I am Ready” Arrangement (WIR Arrangement);
- The financial and payment implications for When I am Ready Providers (WIR Providers);
- The “When I am Ready” allowances (WIR Allowances) to be paid by the LA;

1.2 Following a young person’s 18th birthday, the legal basis on which they occupy the property (former foster care home) changes and they become an ‘excluded licensee’ who is effectively lodging in the WIR Providers home. Whilst the term ‘excluded licensee’ is a legal one, and the carer may also become, and be deemed the young person’s landlord, it should not denote that the young person will be treated any differently than when they were a fostered child and they should continue to think of it as home.

The associated change from foster child to adult member of the household, and for the carer from foster carer to WIR Provider, (technically the young person’s landlord) should be carefully and sensitively planned in order to ensure that both the young person and the provider understands the nature of the arrangement and that the positive aspects of being in foster care are not diminished by the new legal terminology and different financial arrangements.

An excluded licensee can be asked to leave the property by the WIR Provider, who must give ‘reasonable notice’. In extreme circumstances it may be considered reasonable for the WIR Provider to give very short notice and ask the young person to leave on the same day.

1.3 The procedures outlined in this policy are applicable to all young people looked after by Bridgend County Borough Council if they are living with approved foster carers on their 18th birthday, whether that be Bridgend Foster carers, Family and Friends carers or Independent Fostering Agency carers (IFA). The policy also applies to those young people in Residential Care.

The policy further applies to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who reach the age of 18. However, in circumstances where the young person is awaiting a ‘Removal Notice’ continued financial support must be reviewed on a case by case basis.

2 Financial Arrangements - Young Person

2.1 Depending on their circumstances young people in a 'WIR' arrangement may be able to claim one or more of the following means-tested benefits for their personal needs from their 18th birthday. It should be noted that Universal Credit (UC) is being rolled out for single people between the ages of 18-64. It is gradually replacing Housing Benefit (HB) for working age customers starting with those single people who would have claimed Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). UC will encompass housing cost payments which will be paid direct to the claimant. However, if arrears of rent occur the landlord could request an APA Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) providing evidence of rent arrears.

- Income Support - under the 'Relevant Education' rules if they are 'estranged' from their parents and are undertaking non-advanced full-time (12+ hours) education or training course.
- Education Support Allowance (ESA) (income-related) – where young people who are deemed 'sick or disabled'. They can also claim Personal Independence Premium (PIP) if severely disabled;
- JSA (income-based) - if registered as unemployed and are actively seeking full-time employment;
- Housing Benefit - As an "excluded licensee", any element of Housing Benefit claimed by the young person can considerably offset payments made to the WIR Provider by Children's Services. The level paid depends on the WIR arrangement being a commercial one and that care leavers are entitled to claim the LHA rate for a 1 bed room flat up until they turn 22.
- Council Tax Reductions Scheme (CTRS) (previously known as Council Tax Benefit) – Young people undertaking full-time education are "invisible" for council tax purposes. However, there may be an impact on the 'WIR' Provider's eligibility to 25% single person's discount and CTRS. Children's Services will consider this on a case by case basis.
- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) – All young people engaged in education post 16 can claim EMA up until 19. It is funded by Student Finance Wales and has to be applied for. Assembly Learning Grant (ALG) can be claimed from the age of 19 and again, this must be applied for.
- Education Bursary - all full-time (12+ hours) further education courses and most training schemes, this is paid by the college or training provider

2.2 If the young person is engaged in education/training or is actively seeking employment then they could be eligible for benefits. Eligibility for HB in these scenarios depends on the type and level of education or training and which benefits if any the young person is claiming. The young person will contribute a weekly amount from their disposable income to the 'WIR' Provider for their contribution to Household Costs. This will assist their preparation for

independent living. This charge will also apply to young people in apprenticeships.

2.3 The young person will have to sign the Excluded Licence Agreement. They will be required to pay the following costs as part of the WIR arrangement: -

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------|
| • Rent | 2016/17 Rate | £95.00 |
| • Contribution to Household Costs | 2016/17 Rate | £20.00 |

2.4 For those young people in employment the situation is a little more complex. The biggest factor will be how much they are actually earning (Net Pay/Salary). This may affect their ability to claim HB. There is a threshold above which the young person will be deemed to be in a strong enough financial position to pay their own rent and contribution to household costs.

2.5 The agreed threshold is calculated as follows (based on 2016/17 rates): -

(2 x current JSA Rate)	+	Current LHA for a 1 bedroomed Flat	
		2 x £55.23	+ £80.55
		Total =	£191.01

2.6 All young people in employment must make a claim for HB. If they are not eligible then they will be responsible for paying the full rent themselves due to their earnings.

2.7 For those young people whose earnings are such that they only get some HB then the Local Authority will make up the difference between the amount of Housing Benefit received and the agreed rent.

2.8 From their income the young person will be responsible for buying their own clothes, toiletries; mobile phone contracts/top ups and other items previously covered by the fostering allowance paid to the foster carer. This encourages the young person to develop their budgeting/independence skills. They will also be responsible for insuring their personal belongings.

3 Financial Arrangements – ‘WIR’ Provider

3.1 The WIR provider will also need to sign the Excluded Licence Agreement. They will receive the following payments as part of the WIR arrangement: -

- Rent from the young person (usually through Housing Benefit)
- Contribution to household costs from the young person
- A WIR Support Allowance paid by the Local Authority

3.2 The ‘WIR’ Support Allowance paid to the WIR Provider is exclusively for the practical and emotional package of support that is being provided by that Provider. Unlike the fostering allowance previously paid to the foster carer, it

does not include any element to be given to or spent on the young person such as personal items, clothing, travel, holiday allowances and costs associated with birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals.

- 3.3 The 'WIR' Support Allowance is exclusive of the contribution to Household Costs paid by the young person to the WIR Provider. It is also exclusive of Rent which will be paid direct to the WIR Provider.
- 3.4 UC will encompass housing cost payments which will be paid direct to the claimant. However, if arrears of rent occur the landlord could request an APA Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) providing evidence of rent arrears. If not on UC, any HB, by prior arrangement, will be paid direct to the landlord. If there is a break in payments as a result of the young adult's actions then Children's Services will cover this payment whilst the issue is resolved.
- 3.5 The young person claiming their own benefits and/or the Education Bursaries available will not normally have any impact on the "WIR" Providers own means-tested benefits, should they be claiming themselves. However, Housing Benefit will have an impact on the WIR Provider's own housing benefit claim and in these cases care will need to be taken in order to ensure claims are appropriate and lawful. Should the WIR provider be claiming housing benefit in their own right and lose an amount of Benefit due to the young person making a Housing Benefit claim then Child and Family Services will make up the difference provided evidence is supplied to show that this is the case
- 3.6 The payments made by Bridgend County Borough Council are made up partly from the Supported Lodgings budget (BCBC funding) and are partly Government Grant funded (SPPG).
- 3.7
 - a) If the young person goes away to university then the local authority will provide vacation accommodation (or the funds to secure it) during the summer holiday and payment of the WIR support allowance pro rata to the WIR Provider for any overnight visits to the WIR Providers home at other times.
 - b) If the young person is engaged in training with the Armed Forces, the local authority will pay the WIR support allowance to the WIR provider pro rata for any overnight visits to the WIR Providers home during this training period.
- 3.8 It will be the WIR provider's responsibility to inform their mortgage provider/landlord and building and contents insurer that they will continue to support a former foster child as a young adult under a WIR arrangement. Otherwise, there may be a breach of the mortgage/tenancy conditions and it may result in insurance cover being void.
- 3.9 It will be the WIR Provider's responsibility to investigate the tax, national insurance and benefit consequences of entering into the WIR scheme. Any

financial losses due to benefit, tax or national insurance implications should be notified to the LA (with evidence). This will allow the LA to reimburse the WIR Providers who lose income due to the WIR scheme.

- 3.10 If there is a possibility that the WIR provider will be transporting the young person in a WIR arrangement then they must continue to hold comprehensive business insurance and all documents related to having a roadworthy vehicle.
- 3.11 The WIR provider should be advised about having liability insurance to cover situations that might arise regarding an allegation made by the young person against a foster child in placement, the WIR providers or against the young person. The WIR providers should clarify these arrangements by the time of the young person's 18th birthday

4 The WIR Allowance

- 4.1 The overall WIR Allowance (Using rates for 2016/17) will be: -

Standard Allowance –

Rent	Usually Housing Benefit	£95.00
Contribution to household Costs	Young Persons Payment	£20.00
The WIR Support Allowance	LA payment from shared budget. Funded from core budget and part supporting people grant	£70.00
TOTAL		£185.00

- 4.2 The WIR Allowance will generally apply to all 'WIR' arrangements which are in place to provide continuity and stability for the young person and will not usually be of a higher level. In exceptional circumstances, and with the authority of the Head of Service, consideration will be given to paying a higher rate allowance where the young person's support needs are significantly increased.

5 DWP and HMRC

- 5.1 In the majority of WIR arrangements the financial details will not impact on the WIR provider's benefits and/or Tax or National Insurance contributions. However, it can become very complex where it does. The WIR Provider will be encouraged to seek professional advice where this may be the case.

Appendix 1

When I am Ready

Excluded Licence

Agreement

Terms of the Excluded Licence

1. Introduction

1.1 This excluded licence agreement is between:

a) The **Licensor**:

(Throughout this Excluded Licence Agreement, the Excluded Licensor will be referred to as **'the Landlord'**).

And

b) The **Excluded Licensee**:

Full Name:

Date of Birth:

National Insurance Number:

(Throughout this Excluded Licence Agreement, the Excluded Licensee will be referred to as **"you"**).

This excluded licence concerns Premises at:

(Throughout this excluded licence agreement these Premises will be referred to as the **"the Premises"**).

1.2 **The Premises** is a Detached House

With:

The shared use of (Tick as appropriate)

Living room Dining Area Bathroom

Utility Room Kitchen Garden

This excluded licence begins on:

This excluded licence will be for a period of _____ months.

2. Occupation of the Premises

- 2.1 You have the right to live at the Premises for the length of the excluded licence as long as you keep to the terms of this agreement.
- 2.2 You are entitled to occupy the Premises from the start of this excluded licence agreement. A Signature form for the agreement is attached at the end of the agreement
- 2.3 You must use the Premises as your only home or your principal home. You will be expected to sleep overnight at the Premises a minimum of 4 nights every week.
- 2.4 The Premises is to be used for residential purposes only. You must not carry out any trade, business or profession from the Premises or allow any other person to carry out any trade, business or profession from the Premises unless written permission is received from the Landlord. The Landlord has the right to refuse permission or withdraw permission if it considers that the Premises are unsuitable or that the trade, business or profession could be a nuisance to neighbours. You must comply with Council planning controls and not do anything which would result in a material change of use of the Premises.
- 2.5 If you leave the Premises unoccupied for longer than 28 days, you should inform the Landlord. If you fail to notify the Landlord that you have left the Premises unoccupied for longer than 28 days, the Landlord will be entitled to treat the Premises as abandoned.
- 2.6 You must comply with the terms of this excluded licence and make sure that people visiting you, including children, comply with the terms of this excluded licence. If you do not, you will be liable for any breach of this excluded licence committed by them.
- 2.7 On taking up occupancy you will be provided with a key to the Premises. You will be required to complete a 'Key Acceptance Form' which is located at Appendix 1 at the end of this agreement You will be responsible for the safe keeping of the keys and if they are lost or mislaid you will be responsible for the cost of replacing them and/or the cost of changing any locks.

3. Housing costs and charges

3.1 Rent Charge and other charges

The amount of the Rent Charge and other charges is as follows (2016/17):

Rent Charge:	£95.00 per week
Household Costs:	£20.00 per week
Total Rent:	£115.00 per week

3.2 You must pay the household costs element weekly in advance on a day to be agreed with your landlord.

3.4 Increase/Decrease in Rent Charge

3.4.1 The Landlord may at any time increase or decrease the Rent Charge by giving you notice in writing of the increase or decrease.

3.4.2 Any notice will be given not less than four weeks before the revised Rent Charge is to take effect.

3.4.3 The present policy is that a notice increasing the Rent Charge will normally be given:

a) Following improvements to the Premises or their surroundings carried out by the Landlord.

3.5 Payment of arrears

If you fall into arrears with your Rent Charge, any payment made by you to the Landlord, not including HB payments, will be accepted by the Landlord to meet the following obligations in order of priority (unless you and the Landlord agree otherwise, in writing, and in advance of payment.)

- **Firstly**, to meet the Rent Charge,
- **Secondly**, as a credit to you against future payment obligations under this excluded licence.

3.6 Help with paying your charges

3.6.1 If you are claiming benefit and your circumstances change you should inform the local authority department dealing with your benefit claim as soon as practicable.

3.6.2 If not on UC, any HB, by prior arrangement, will be paid direct to the landlord.

3.6.3 Housing Benefit payments paid by the local authority will be accepted as payment for the charges and the periods as notified by the local authority, when making payment or later.

3.6.4 If on UC, Housing Element and paid to tenant, any overpayment would be recovered directly from ongoing UC award. If paid to landlord via APA the overpayment is still recovered from the tenants ongoing UC

4. The Landlord's responsibilities for repairs

4.1 The Landlord will keep in good repair the structure and exterior of the Premises.

- 4.2 The Landlord will keep in good repair and working order, installations provided by them at the Premises for the supply of water, gas, electricity, heating and sanitation.
- 4.3 The Landlord will repair, maintain and replace furniture and equipment owned by the Landlord and used at the Premises, except where damage is caused deliberately or by the negligence or improper use by you or anyone visiting you.
- 4.4 The Landlord may carry out improvements or alterations to the Premises.

5. Your Responsibility for Repairs

- 5.1 You must report any disrepair as soon as practicable to the Landlord.
- 5.2 You must keep the interior of the Premises clean and in good decorative condition.
- 5.3 At the end of the excluded licence, the Premises must be left clean and in good decorative condition.
- 5.4 You or your invited visitors must not cause damage to the Premises or the common areas. If you or your invited visitors cause damage to the Premises, either on purpose or through neglect, the Landlord may carry out any necessary repairs and hold you responsible for the costs. This includes repairs for which the Landlord would otherwise be responsible.
- 5.5 If damage has been deliberately or recklessly caused to the Premises and you or your invited visitors are not responsible, you should normally report this damage to the Police. If you are in doubt about whether or not an incident or damage to the Premises is sufficiently serious to be reported to the Police, you should seek the Landlord's guidance.

5.6 Improvements and Alterations

- 5.6.1 You must not make improvements and/or alterations to the Premises unless you first obtain the Landlord's written permission.
- 5.6.2 If you carry out an improvement and/or alteration without the Landlord written permission you must restore the Premises to its previous condition within 28 days of being requested to do so by the Landlord. If the Landlord is of the view that you cannot safely carry out the re-instatement of the Premises, it may carry out the work and hold you responsible for the costs.
- 5.6.3 If you replace any fixtures, installations or fittings you must leave these at the Premises at the end of the excluded licence, unless the Landlord gives you permission to take them with you.

5.6.4 If any fixtures, installations or fittings that have been removed or altered by you have to be re-instated or replaced the end of the excluded licence, you will be liable for the cost.

5.7 Living in Your Home

5.7.1 You are responsible for your own behaviour and the behaviour of your invited visitors, when they are on the Premises, on surrounding land, in common areas or in the locality of the Premises.

5.7.2 When visitors who have in the past visited you or your household at the Premises with your consent, return to the Premises when you are not there and breach the terms of this excluded licence agreement, it will be presumed that they are returning at your invitation unless you show that you took proper steps to discourage them from returning to the Premises.

5.8 Criminal Behaviour (including Controlled Drugs)

You or your invited visitors must not:

- allow the Premises to be used for immoral or illegal purposes including the use or possession of controlled drugs;
- be convicted of using the Premises for immoral or illegal purposes including the possession of controlled drugs at the Premises;
- be convicted of an arrestable offence committed in the locality of the Premises;
- be convicted of the supply or attempted supply of controlled drugs at or from the Premises;
- be convicted of possession of controlled drugs at the Premises with the intention of supplying those drugs to another person at or from the Premises.

5.9 Nuisance including Noise Nuisance

5.9.1 You or your invited visitors must not cause a noise which may be heard outside the Premises between the hours of 11.00 pm and 7.30 am.

5.9.2 In addition you and your invited visitors must not do anything which causes a nuisance to, or is likely to cause a nuisance to, any person living in or visiting the locality of the Premises. A nuisance may be a nuisance even when it is committed in the locality of the Premises.

Examples of nuisance include:

- excessive noise which can be heard outside the Premises at any time
- loud music
- rubbish dumping
- offensive behaviour

- intimidating behaviour
- threatening behaviour
- causing foul smells or effluent to enter another's Premises

(This list is not a list of all types of nuisance that might arise but if any of the listed acts take place it will be treated as a nuisance. It will be for the Landlord to decide if and what action will be taken as a result.)

5.10 Harassment

5.10.1 You or your invited visitors must not threaten, harass, pester or do anything likely to interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause injury to, or offend:

- Any other resident living in the locality or visitors.
- Any person acting on behalf of the Landlord including independent contractors.
- Any person engaged in lawful activity in the locality of the Premises.

5.10.2 You will be in breach of if you threaten, harass, pester or does anything likely to interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause injury to, or offend any of the persons mentioned above at the Premises, at any other location or over the telephone.

5.10.3 You will also be in breach of your licence agreement if your invited visitors threaten, harass, pester or do anything likely to interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause injury to, or offend any of the persons mentioned above, at the Premises, at any other location or over the telephone, if they act with your encouragement or under your instruction.

Harassment includes harassment on grounds of:

- race
- gender
- sexual orientation
- religion
- skin colour
- disability

(This list is not a list of all types of harassment that might arise but if any of the listed acts take place it will be treated as harassment. It will be for the Landlord to decide if and what action will be taken as a result.)

5.11 Insurance

The Landlord will insure the structure of the Premises.

You are responsible and advised to take out contents insurance for your own personal belongings.

5.12 Use of Vehicles

- 5.12.1 You must not park your vehicle or vehicles or allow invited visitors' vehicles to be parked in such a way as to interfere with any other local resident's or their invited visitor's access to or exit from their property, including common entrance and exit routes.
- 5.12.2 You or your invited visitors must comply with any road markings in the locality concerning reserved parking for residents, disabled motorists or access for emergency vehicles.
- 5.12.3 Any vehicle parked in a communal parking area must be roadworthy, taxed and insured. You must produce proof of tax and insurance when requested to confirm this by the Landlord.
- 5.12.4 You must not carry out motor vehicle repairs at the Premises or in the locality of the Premises, or allow motor vehicle repairs to be carried out at the Premises or in the locality of the Premises, if this interferes with, or is likely to interfere with, the peace and comfort of other residents living in the locality, or causes damage to the Premises or common areas.
- 5.12.5 You are not allowed to park a vehicle of any description, other than an ordinary motor vehicle, at the Premises or on any common area, without Landlord's permission.

5.13 Pets

- 5.13.1 You must not keep any pets at the Premises unless you first obtain Landlord's written permission.
- 5.13.2 The Landlord will refuse you permission to keep a pet if it considers that the animal is not suitable to be housed or cannot be properly housed at the Premises or that it will cause a nuisance to others.
- 5.13.3 Animals owned by you or under your control will be treated as kept by you.
- 5.13.4 You must keep your pet under proper control at all times.
- 5.13.5 If a pet kept at the Premises causes a nuisance or is kept without the Landlord's permission, you must remove it within 28 days if the Landlord requests you to do so in writing.

5.14 External Areas

You must keep the external areas at the Premises clean, in good order and free from rubbish or other objects which might adversely affect the amenity of the locality.

5.15 Health and Safety

5.15.1 You must comply with the Health and Safety of the Premises and must not do anything which is likely to be a danger to you, other residents or neighbours.

5.15.2 You must not use alternative methods of cooking or heating in the Premises.

5.15.3 You must not bring onto the Premises or store at the Premises any materials that are explosive, inflammable, noxious, toxic or caustic.

5.16 Lodgers, Sub-Letting and Assignment

You must not take in lodgers, sublet the whole or part of the Premises or assign (give or sell) the excluded licence.

5.17 House Rules

You must comply with the Landlord's House Rules, which are outlined in the WIR Living Together Agreement. The House Rules may be amended via a consultation process between the Landlord and you.

Breaches of the House Rules will be breaches of this excluded licence.

6. Variation of this Agreement

Except for changes to the Rent Charge this excluded licence may only be varied with the written consent of both the Landlord and you.

7. Ending the Excluded Licence

7.1 How you may end this Excluded Licence

You may end this Excluded Licence by:

a) Giving notice to the Landlord

You may end the Excluded Licence by giving the Landlord notice in writing.

You must give the Landlord at least four weeks' notice that you wish to end the Excluded Licence.

OR

(b) Surrender ('giving up' your right to occupy the Premises)

You may only surrender the Excluded Licence with the Landlord's consent.

You must contact the Landlord stating that you want to surrender the Excluded Licence and obtain the Landlord's consent to surrender before taking any further action. You must agree a date for surrender with the Landlord (this date may be immediate if the Landlord agrees).

If you surrender the Excluded Licence with the Landlord's consent, you will have to return the keys on the day agreed for surrender and sign a Declaration of Surrender.

7.2 How the Landlord may end this Excluded Licence

7.2.1 If you abandon the Premises, the Landlord is entitled to end the excluded licence by serving Notice to Quit at the Premises.

7.2.2 The Landlord may also end the excluded licence by serving you with a written Notice to Quit specifying the reason why the Landlord wishes to end the licence.

7.2.3 The Landlord can serve you with Notice to Quit if:

- you breach any condition contained within this excluded licence, or
- the fixed term of this excluded licence has expired, or
- you no longer benefit from the support offered by the Landlord.

7.2.4 A Notice to Quit or any other written notice will be validly served if it is served on you personally, is posted through the letterbox at the Premises, is fixed to an external door of the Premises or is served using any other method recognised by law.

7.2.5 The Landlord will usually give 4 week's notice to terminate your excluded licence agreement but in serious circumstances the period of the Notice to Quit may be reduced.

7.3 Immediate Eviction

7.3.1 You may be immediately evicted in the event of serious breaches of this excluded licence agreement, including but not limited to the following examples:

- Serious violent or threatening behaviour which causes nuisance or annoyance to other's
- Malicious damage to the Premises or its contents
- Where you are arrested for serious illegal or criminal behaviour

7.3.2 In the event of immediate eviction you still have the right of appeal, but may still be excluded from the project while this is considered

7.4 Temporary Exclusion

- 7.4.1 Under the terms of this Excluded licence agreement you may be excluded temporarily from the Premises while an opportunity is given to resolve serious issues and serious breaches.
- 7.4.2 These circumstances may include serious nuisance, violence, harassment, damage to the Premises or its contents, or suspected illegal action. Further examples may be given in the House Rules.
- 7.4.3 In the event of temporary exclusion you have the right to appeal, but may still be excluded from the Premises while this is considered.

7.5 Alternative Accommodation

The Landlord may assist you to find alternative accommodation as far as practicable.

7.6 Moving Out

- 7.6.1 When you move out, you must return the keys of the Premises to the Landlord.
- 7.6.2 The Premises, together with any fixtures and fittings, should be left in a clean condition and in good decorative order when you leave. If you fail to comply with this requirement, the Landlord will be entitled to recover from you the costs of putting the Premises into a habitable condition.
- 7.6.3 You must remove all your property from the Premises when you leave.
- 7.6.4 The Landlord will be entitled to dispose of any property left at the Premises after you leave and as soon as it becomes entitled to possession. The Landlord does not have to consult you before disposing of property left at the Premises. The Landlord will be entitled to recover from you the costs of disposing of property not belonging to the Landlord and left at the Premises.
- 7.6.5 The Landlord cannot store property left at the Premises. By leaving property at the Premises when you leave, or when your entitlement to occupy the Premises - comes to an end, you accept that the Landlord is entitled to dispose of the property and recover the costs from you. The Landlord is entitled to presume that any property left at the Premises when you leave, or when your entitlement to occupy the Premises comes to an end, is yours and that you do not wish to keep it.

Excluded Licence Agreement Signature Form

I understand and agree to all the terms of this Excluded Licence Agreement

Signed (Excluded Licensee):

Signed (Landlord):

Print Name:

Print Name:

Date (in full):

Date (In full):

Appendix 2 Key Acceptance Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

1. I acknowledge receipt of the following:

Key to Main Building

Key to Room Door

2. I understand that if I lose any of these keys I will be charged for a replacement.

3. I also understand that these keys remain the property of the Landlord and must be given back when I leave the Premises.

Licensee's signature: _____

Date: _____

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

20 JULY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS OF THE WESTERN BAY REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 To provide the Committee with information about the performance and progress of the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service, including:

- Annual Report on PI Performance 2015/16 (**Appendix A**)
- Regulation 22 Quality of Care Review report 2015/16 (**Appendix B**)
- National Adoption Service Quarter 4 Year End Performance Report 2015/16 (**Appendix C**)

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

2.1 The report links to the following corporate priorities:

- Helping people to be more self-reliant;
- Smarter use of resources.

3. Background

3.1 Adoption has, and continues to receive, high levels of attention from both the UK and the Welsh Government. Members will be aware that the creation of a National Adoption Service is one of the key policy strands of the Welsh Government, as enacted in the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. This Act provides powers, under Part 9, for Ministers to direct local authorities to collaborate in relation to adoption services and to prevent any local authority from withdrawing from these collaborations in the future.

3.2 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015 came into force on 13th March 2015. The primary purpose of these Directions is to ensure effective joint arrangements are in place between local authorities in Wales for the delivery of adoption services

3.3 Schedule 1 of the Directions sets out which local authorities must collaborate with each other. For the Western Bay region the local authorities are Swansea, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot. Swansea host and manage the regional service on behalf of the partner agencies, this having been approved by Cabinets in all three local authorities in April 2014.

3.4 The Western Bay regional service is integrated into the National Adoption Service as one of the five identified regional collaboratives. The National Service is

underpinned by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015.

3.5 The broad aims of the joint adoption arrangements across Wales as specified in the Directions include:

- Consistent and high quality service;
- Keeping delay to a minimum;
- Widest choice possible of placement;
- Eliminating waiting lists for training and assessments;
- Improving the matching process;
- Streamlining adoption services improved liaison between adoption social workers;
- Keeping breakdowns to a minimum by providing adequate adoption support;
- Collaborative working between local authorities, voluntary agencies, health and education services.

3.6 The Management and oversight arrangements of the National Service consist of:

Governance Board

Includes representatives from each agency:

- Spokesperson and Deputy Spokesperson from WLGA for Health & Social Services
- Mayor or executive leader by the Lead Authority
- Independent Chairperson of the Advisory Group
- Representative on behalf of the voluntary agencies

3.6.1 The functions of the Governance Board include: strategic direction, approval of annual work programme, ensuring the views of stake holders are represented and the monitoring and oversight of performance, complaints, engagement with voluntary agencies, service user representatives, budget and financial, Welsh language and reporting to the Welsh Ministers.

3.6.2 It is confirmed that Councillor Peter Richards from Neath Port Talbot has accepted the elected member position on this group. He has a significant amount of knowledge regarding adoption and looked after children, having been a member of adoption panels for number years.

Advisory Group

3.6.3 Includes the following representatives from:

- each collaborative Head of Children's Service
- the Association of the Directors of Social Services Cymru
- the Association of Directors of Education in Wales
- the WLGA
- 3 from voluntary organisations
- Legal adviser from the lead local authority
- Health professional for Looked After Children
- Medical advisor to an adoption panel
- CAMHS

- Service User
- Social Research Centre

3.6.4 The functions of the Advisory Group include:

- Provision of professional advice and
- Support to the Governance Board
- Supporting the effective operation of the service
- Notifying the Welsh Minister of any issues

3.6.5 The City of Cardiff Council has been given the role of Lead Authority for the National Adoption Services and as host authority will work with key partners to run an all-Wales adoption website, develop a centre of excellence for adoption services and employ a Director of Operations for Wales.

Director of Operations and Central Team:

3.6.6 The National Adoption Service has appointed Suzanne Griffiths as Director of Operations, along with a Business and Performance Manager, Policy and Practice Officer and Administrative Assistant.

3.6.7 The functions of the Director of Operations and Central Team include:

- Production of an annual work programme to include priorities and targets
- Financial plans and budget responsibilities
- Monitoring and analysis of performance data
- Determine actions to address issues arising
- Improvements and developments of the service
- Submission of a 6 monthly and annual progress and financial report
- Analysis of reports from regional collaboratives
- Establish and maintain website
- Co-ordination of pre-approval training and adoption support services

3.6.8 In addition to the development of the National Service and the Central Team, a Wales Adoption Register has been developed which is hosted by the Central Team operating on the principle of keeping Welsh children in Wales.

4. Current situation/Proposal.

4.1 Western Bay Regional Adoption Service (WBAS) became fully operational from April 2015. Prior to this adoption services were delivered locally via the three local authorities.

4.2 The regional adoption service provides a range of services and interventions across the five key domains to those affected by adoption. Those being:

- Assessing and supporting prospective adopters
- Assessing non-agency (parent/care, formerly step parent adoptions)
- Birth record counselling and intermediary services (BRC &IS)
- Adoption support (assessments and support services to anyone affected by adoption)
- Twin tracking and family finding, which involves working with birth families of children in or following care proceedings and once a Placement Order has been granted by court in searching for an adoptive placement

4.3 The key achievements of the regional adoption service has been:-

- Reduction of the use of Interagency Placements and increase in placements within Western Bay providing a significant saving. For this last financial year, Bridgend had 15 placements in the region as opposed to 7 in the year 14/15.
- For inter-agency placements Bridgend made 24 for 14/15 and only 7 this year. Almost two thirds of all the children placed in 2015/16 were within WB.
- Reducing the number of children who wait longer than six months from Should Be Placed Decision (SBPD) to approved match. Reduction from 67% to 34%.
- Maintaining the number of children placed across the Western bay region totalling 93, despite there being a regional drop in the number of Placement Orders granted. Bridgend had an increase from 25 Placement Orders granted in 14/15 up to 31 in 15/16.
- An Increase in the number and range of prospective adopters approved up from 45 in 2014/15 to 53.
- Reduction in the number of children whose plan for adoption changed 21 in 2014/15 to 4 in 2015/16.
- Development and approval of a unified Adoption Allowance Policy.
- Creation of a central list and well organised adoption panel.
- Expansion of routine and basic adoption support groups for children and adopters

4.4 There are a number of challenges that the service will need to undertake in the coming year and these include:

- The performance reporting requires further development in light of new PIs and to ensure we are accurately reporting on all data sets. The introduction of local, national and regional performance indicators in adoption support will enable the capture of accurate data on all aspects of adoption support. This will be supported by the redesign of the adoption support IT module so that referrals can be accurately categorised, tracked and outcomes evaluated. In Bridgend this will be overseen and monitored by the Senior management WBAS link officer and management team
- Policies and procedures, whilst important have not been able to have the priority needed due to capacity and will be high on the agenda for completing in the coming year
- Performance in relation to life story work presents considerable challenge to achieve the required target set by NAS i.e. 75% of the number of children placed in the quarter where life journey material has been provided by the 2nd Adoption review. The service is working with the three local authorities to improve on this indicator which includes training child care social workers in Life Journey/story work. In Bridgend specific training has been provided to safeguarding staff to ensure we attain those targets.
- Adoption Support is a key focus and priority for the coming year and is high on the national agenda following research and analysis of adoption support provision across Wales. It is clear from this work that the types and level of adoption support provision across Wales varies considerably. The aim and focus of development in this area both nationally and regionally is to ensure that adoptive families receive timely and appropriate support. As part of the wider management agenda in WBAS we are developing an adoption support model that embeds a culture and skill base throughout the service as a whole and in particular, in the adoption support function where a sound therapeutic model of intervention underpins practice. Training on assessments and direct work is

currently taking place for staff and this will result in adoption support having a renewed and much needed management focus where the emphasis will be on delivering high quality assessment, interventions and support and reducing the reliance on external interventions.

- 4.5 The service plan reflects the key priorities for the coming year with the focus being on improving the number of children who have life story work provided at placement and developing the WBAS therapeutic adoption support model which are both national agenda priorities. Alongside this there will be work on engaging more fully with stakeholders, in particular service users in shaping service delivery and there are also plans for consultation events.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This report is concerned with performance information rather than policy or decision making therefore an equality impact assessment is not applicable.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising directly out of this report.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 That the corporate parenting committee notes the performance and review of the adoption service and its ability to meet the needs of those affected by adoption within the region.

Susan Cooper
Director of Social Services & Wellbeing
June 2016

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Background documents

None

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Western Bay
ADOPTION SERVICE
GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU
Bae'r Gorllewin



ANNUAL REPORT AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

For Period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

Annual Report on PI data for WBAS 2015/16

Introduction

This is the second annual report that has been presented to the Management Board for the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service (WBAS) in relation to performance and the first report presented to the local authority Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting Panels.

The service is now into its second year of collaborative/regional working and it has not been without its challenges. Notwithstanding this it is fair to say that overall we are doing extremely well both within the region and at a national level and we should be pleased with and proud of our achievements. There are some areas where performance has significantly improved and there are other areas where we need to focus attention and improve further. There is still a great deal of work to be developed and progressed within the service as a whole, including the development of adoption support services.

This report demonstrates the WBAS performance activity against the key national PI measures. It provides data for the region as a whole, along with comparative data across the three partner agencies, comparative data against the national targets/benchmarks and averages along with comparative data across the regions.

Section 1 – Progress update

The Management Board (MB) is now fully compliant with the Directions Powers Regulations, The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) 2015, with health and education representatives joining the MB from December 2015. There is a Terms of Reference in place which is included in the Partnership/Interagency Agreement. The MB provides the strategic direction and decision making in relation to the service. The Partnership/Interagency Agreement has now been finalised and is to be submitted to the respective partner local authority Cabinets in June 2016 for approval and subsequent signatures.



The key achievements:-

- Reduction of the use of Interagency Placements and increase in placements within Western Bay providing a significant saving. Almost two thirds of the children placed in 2015/16 were within WB.
- Reducing the number of children who wait longer than six months from Should Be Placed Decision (SBPD) to approved match. Reduction from 67% to 34%.
- Maintaining the number of children placed 93, despite there being a drop in the number of Placement Orders granted.
- Successful in placing a number of harder to place children & older children who had been Looked After for an extended length of time which is a positive and successful outcome for those children.
- Successful placement of a number of sibling groups, including two groups of three children.
- An Increase in the number and range of prospective adopters approved up from 45 in 2014/15 to 53.
- Improvement in the number of sibling groups placed within the region.
- Reduction in the number of children whose plan for adoption changed 21 in 2014/15 to 4 in 2015/16.
- Development and approval of a unified Adoption Allowance Policy.
- Creation of a central list and well organised adoption panel.
- Expansion of routine and basic adoption support groups for children and adopters

Challenges:-

- The performance reporting requires further development in light of new PIs and to ensure we are accurately reporting on all data sets. The introduction of local, national and regional performance indicators in adoption support will enable the capture of accurate data on all aspects of adoption support. This will be supported by the redesign of the adoption support IT module so that referrals can be accurately categorised, tracked and outcomes evaluated.
- Policies and procedures, whilst important have not been able to have the priority needed due to capacity and will be high on the agenda for completing in the coming year
- Performance in relation to life story work presents considerable challenge to achieve the required target set by NAS i.e. 75% of the number of children placed in the quarter where life journey material has been provided by the 2nd Adoption review. The service is working with



Western Bay

ADOPTION SERVICE

GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU

Bae'r Gorllewin

the three local authorities to improve on this indicator which includes training child care social workers in Life Journey/story work.

- Adoption Support is a key focus and priority for the coming year and is high on the national agenda following research and analysis of adoption support provision across Wales. It is clear from this work that the types and level of adoption support provision across Wales varies considerably. The aim and focus of development in this area both nationally and regionally is to ensure that adoptive families receive timely and appropriate support. As part of the wider management agenda in WBAS we are developing an adoption support model that embeds a culture and skill base throughout the service as a whole and in particular, in the adoption support function where a sound therapeutic model of intervention underpins practice. Training on assessments and direct work is currently taking place for staff and this will result in adoption support having a renewed and much needed management focus where the emphasis will be on delivering high quality assessment, interventions and support and reducing the reliance on external interventions.

The service plan reflects the key priorities for the coming year with the focus being on improving the number of children who have life story work provided at placement and developing the WBAS therapeutic adoption support model

Section 2 - Performance

The purpose of this section is to highlight some of the key performance areas for WBAS for the year 2015/16. The report is based on data that has been supplied to the National Adoption Service on a quarterly basis throughout the year and provides some comparison data with national performance and performance across regions.

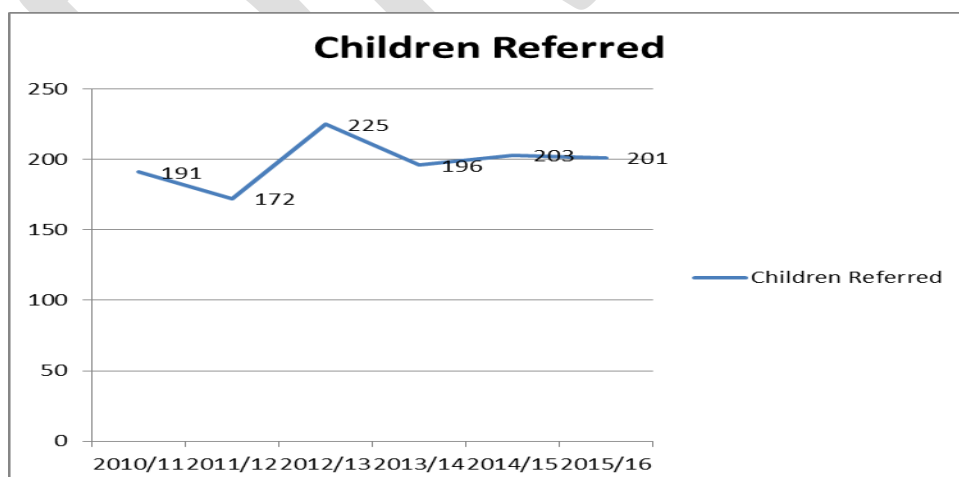
1. Children referred 2015/16 - 201

Within this area there is data available over six years to demonstrate pre and post collaborative working. It is evident that there is little change between 2010/11 activity and 2015/16 activity (an increase of 10 children in six years), save for a peak in 2012/13 which has not been repeated despite some anticipation to the contrary.

The contemporary data represents a slight decrease overall from 2014/15 where there were 203 children referred (1%). The numbers of children

referred from Swansea has significantly increased particularly in quarter four of 2015/16 (13 children) showing a 14% increase overall with more sibling groups being referred in this quarter. The previous four years showed a fairly static referral pattern from Swansea. NPT have seen a decrease in the number of referrals by 15 (36.5%) compared with 2014/15. Bridgend have seen a decrease of 4 (6%) compared to the previous year.

Children referred TOTAL	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	
2015/16	64	41	92	201
2014/15	68	56	79	203
2013/14	63	53	80	196
2012/13	58	88	79	225
2011/12	46	48	78	172
2010/11	42	48	101	191



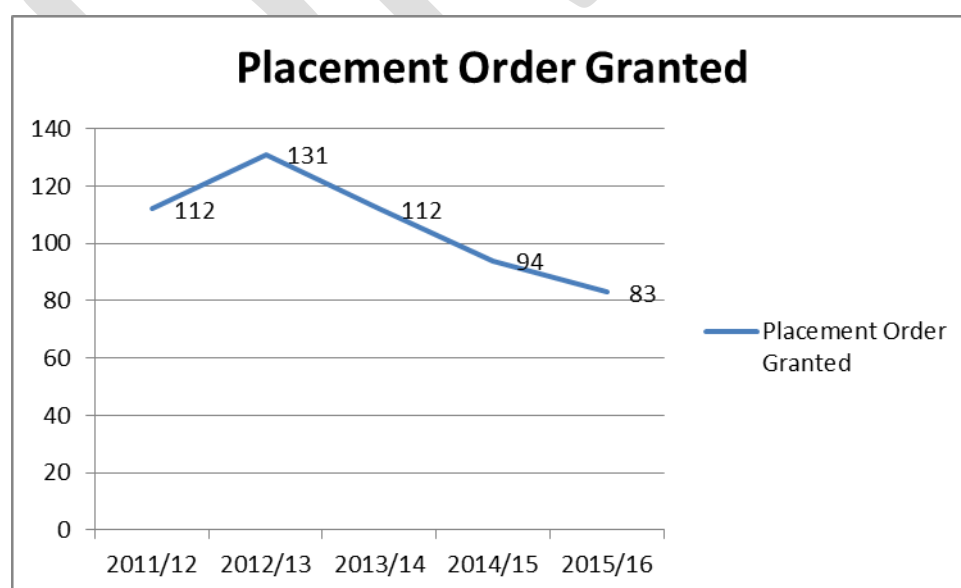
2. Placement Orders granted = 83

WBAS regional data

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	22	18	17	26	83

Comparing 2015/16 data with 2014/15 where there were 94 PO orders granted, there has been a 13% decrease in PO granted despite the number of children being referred remaining fairly static over the two years. However, in quarter four we have seen an increase in PO being granted compared with the previous quarters. The overall trend for WBAS reflects the national picture of a continued decrease in the number of PO granted by the courts.

POG	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	31	26	26	83
2014/15	25	36	33	94
2013/14	40	40	32	112
2012/13	23	51	57	131
2011/12	23	44	45	112



3. Children placed = 93

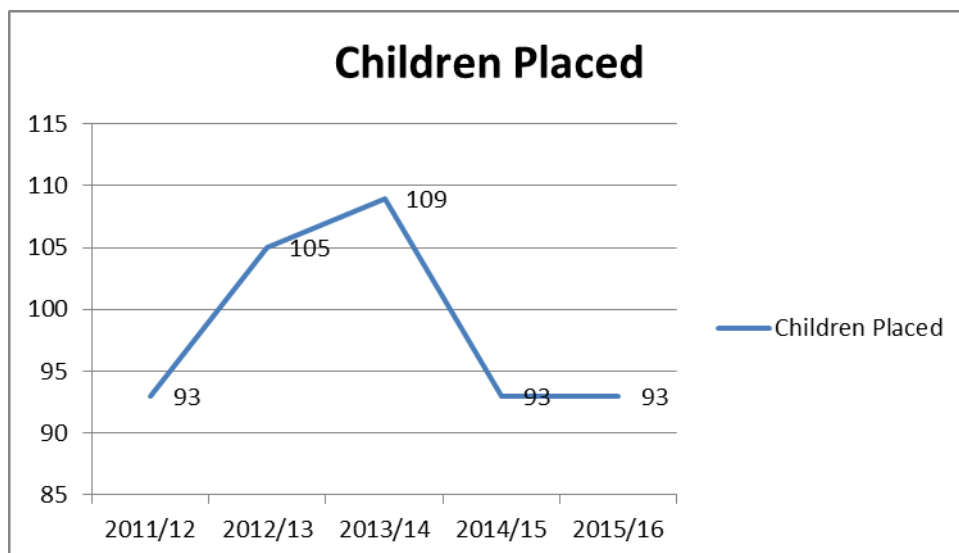
Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	20	25	21	27	93

Compared to 2014/15 data it is evident that there has been no noticeable change in the number of children being placed. However, as in the previous data set there has been a 13% reduction in placement orders, this performance is encouraging as there has not been a corresponding proportionate decrease in placements. There is evidence that children who have been waiting for longer periods with a PO are now being placed generating a positive performance in this regard.

At present there is no differentiation in how children are being placed who are subject to a placement order but where the adoption is achieved through a non-agency adoption route. Of the 93 children placed 3 children were placed via non-agency route.

Compared to other regions across Wales, WBAS have placed the highest number of children in the year, South East Wales (SE) having placed 80, Valley Vale & Cardiff (VVC) 69, North Wales (NW) 56 and Mid & West Wales (MWW) 30.

Children Placed	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	24	40	29	93
2014/15	28	28	37	93
2013/14	27	42	40	109
2012/13	21	51	33	105
2011/12	23	35	34	92



4. Average number of days to place children (LAC date to Placement) = 482 days

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	AVERAGE
2015/16	455 days	484 days	507 days	482 days	482 days
2014/15	446 days	407 days	443 days	449 days	436 days

Performance in this area might at first glance look disappointing in that the average number of days have increased from the previous year by approximately 10% and is below the target set of 395 days. The national average being 463 days and only one region MWW achieving the target for the year, Western Bay was the lowest performing in this area. The increase in length of time is due in part to court processes which are outside of the control of the service but also a number of children who have waited long periods of time and in the main fall into the harder to place categories. Having placed these children it is seen as a positive outcome and a significant achievement in identifying and securing placements for children with complex needs.

5. Average number of days to place children (from Should Be Placed decision to Placement = 301 days)

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	AVERAGE
2015/16	232 days	309 days	372 days	291 days	302 days
2014/15	240 days	290 days	335 days	379 days	311 days

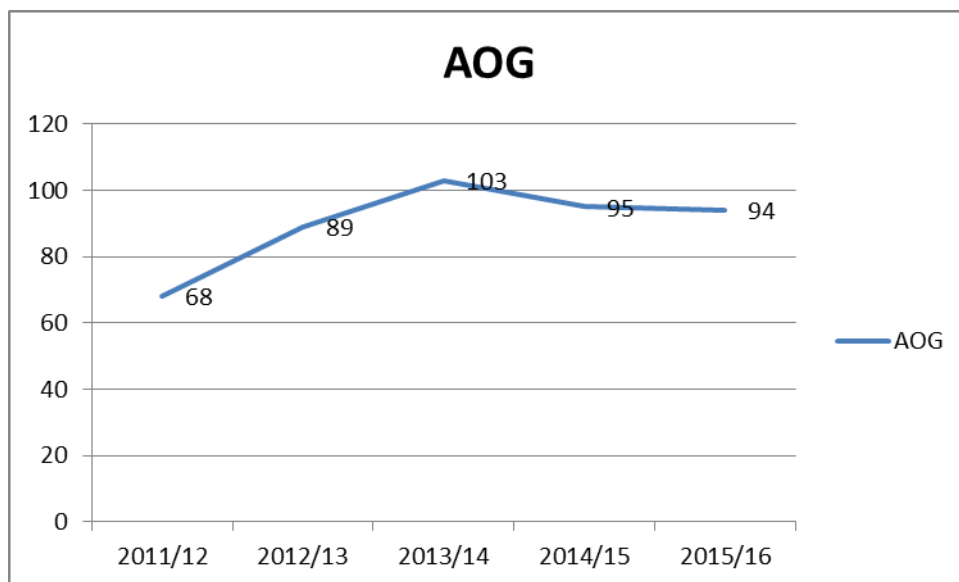
Compared to the previous year there has been a nominal decrease in the length of time it has taken from SBP to placement. However, this is still an encouraging figure in that despite a number of highly complex care proceedings where there have been delays in the granting of a placement order, the proactive response of the service is to mitigate any delays being incurred in achieving placements. It will be important to monitor this on a quarterly basis as the delays are often out of the LA or Adoption Service control.

Overall the national average has decreased from 342 days (11 months) 2014/15 to 291 days (6 months) 2015/16. WB is slightly higher than the national average of 291 days and second highest across the regions. With the highest being NW at 321 days and the lowest MWW at 225 days. Again some elements of the process are outside of the Adoption Service's control, for example care planning pre and during court proceedings.

6. Adoption orders granted (AOG) = 94

The last 3 years performance has varied little with just one less order being granted into 2015/16 compared to 14/15. What is noteworthy is that there are currently a large number of children in adoptive placements (72) where there are delays in achieving adoption orders due to either contested applications or complex adoption proceedings.

AOG's	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	24	36	34	94
2014/15	21	34	40	95
2013/14	17	51	35	103
2012/13	17	39	33	89
2011/12	15	20	33	68
2010/11	12	16	31	59



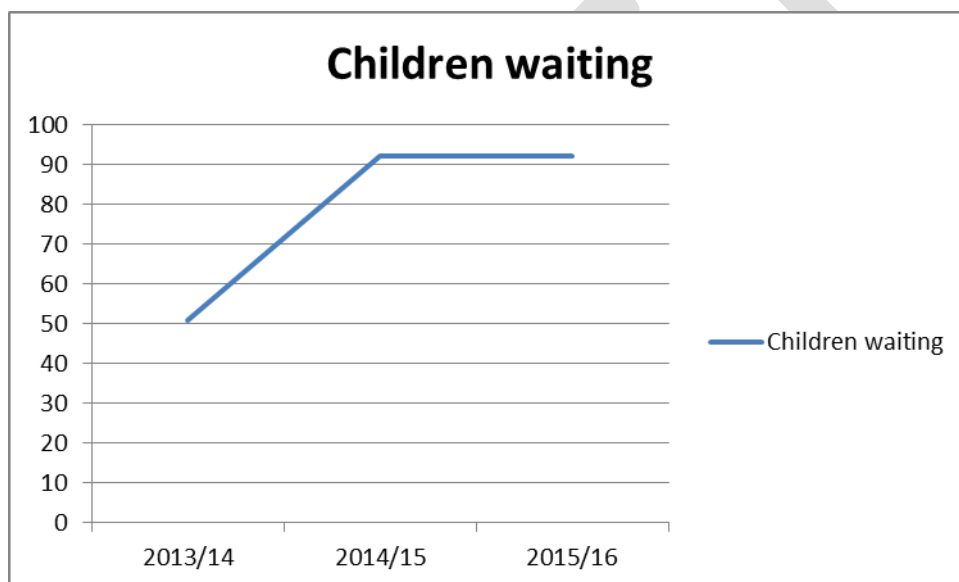
There is no comparative data across Wales within the PI framework for AOGs currently. This will be included for the 2016/17 indicators.

7. Children waiting = 92

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	End of year
2015/16	105	111	74	92	92
2014/15	101	94	100	92	92

This figure represents the number of children with a SBPD who have not yet been placed. Whilst the numbers are identical to the previous year the service is interrogating the reasons for not yet being placed. Of the 92 children, 32 had SBP decision only, 56 had a SBP and PO with a proportion of these having identified links and 4 had matches identified. Reporting on this particular data set has been challenging due to how the system records this information. There were discrepancies with the end figures which resulted in labour intensive interrogation and will require further work. The overall trend nationally is that this figure is decreasing.

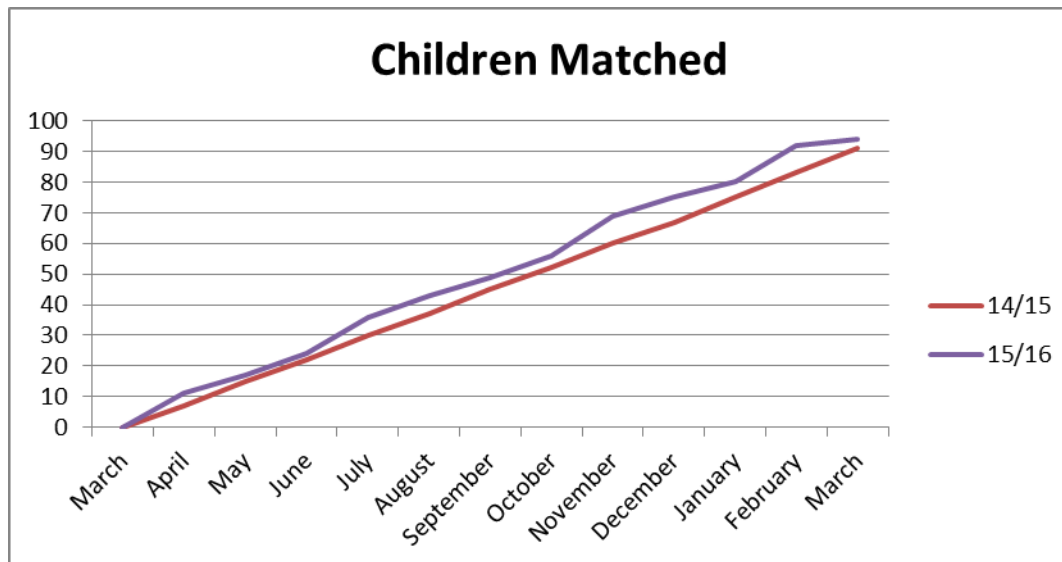
Children waiting	TOTAL
2015/16	92
2014/15	92
2013/14	51



8. Children matched = 94

Compared to the previous year there has been a small increase in the number of children matched. However this is a fluid picture and needs to be considered in the context of section 7 above and the excellent achievement of matching more children with adopters from within the region, as detailed in section 9.

Matched	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	25	39	30	94
2014/15	28	27	36	91



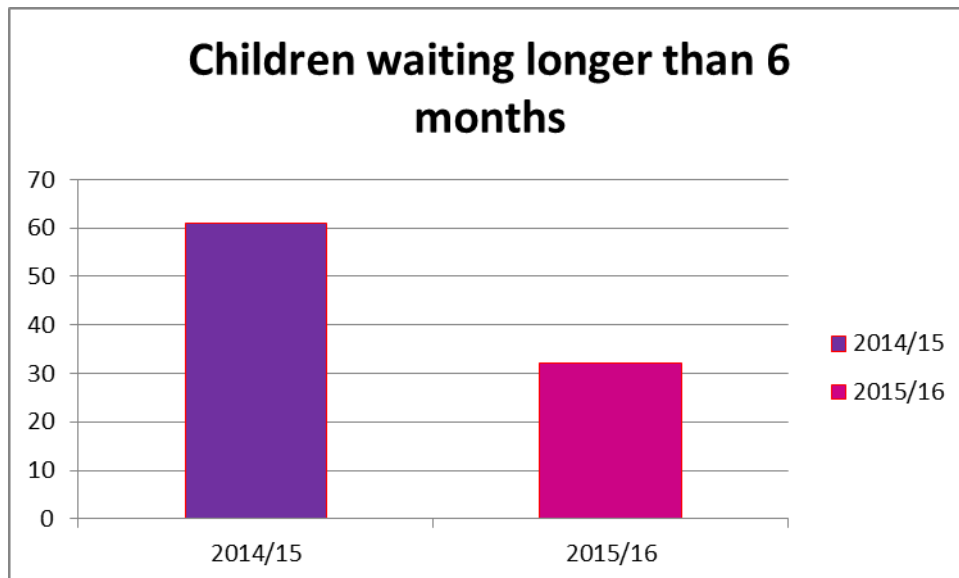
Compared to other regions across Wales WBAS matched the highest number of children in the year, SE matched 87, VVC 64, NW 52 and MWW 33.

9. Number of children matched who have waited longer than 6 months to progress from SBPD to agency decision to approved match.

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	12 (50%)	8 (32%)	8 (31%)	4 (21%)	32 (34%)

WBAs have performed particularly well in this measure and has significantly improved on this performance in 2015/16 compared with 67% in 2014/15 and has consistently reduced the number of children who wait longer than 6 months in each quarter. In quarter 2, 3 and 4 we achieved below the required national target set of 40%. The overall performance being 34% for the year and this can be seen as a successful outcome for children.

The national average achieved was 53%, the highest being SE and NW at 64% and 63% respectively, with VVC at 56% and MWW at 52%.

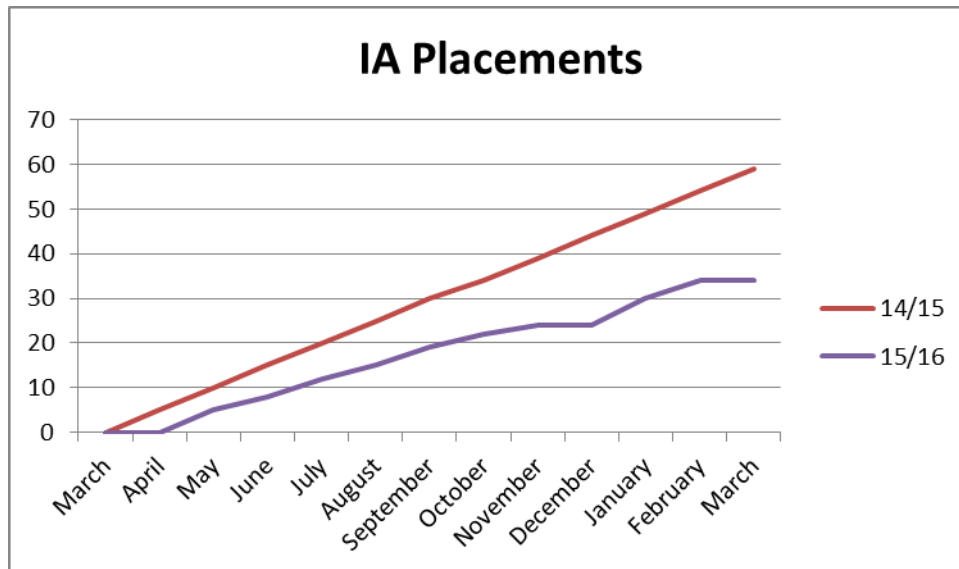


10. Number of Inter-Agency placements = 34

Of the 90 children placed with approved adopters in the period a little over 1/3 of the children were placed IA placements, this is a considerable improvement on the previous year which saw almost two thirds being IA placements. This will have a positive impact on the overall budget set aside for placements in WBAS.

As mentioned in section 3 the total number of children placed in the period totalled 93, of this number 3 children with placement Orders were placed via the non-agency adoption route with former foster carers.

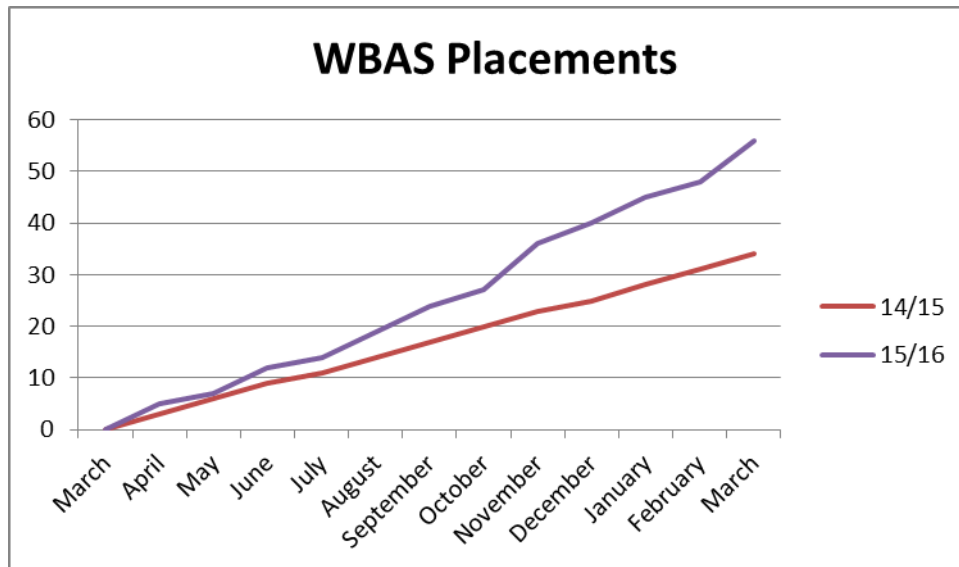
IAs	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	7	20	7	34(38%)
2014/15	24	20	15	59 (63%)
2013/14	21	27	20	68 (62%)
2012/13	16	29	26	71 (68%)
2011/12	14	23	30	67 (73%)



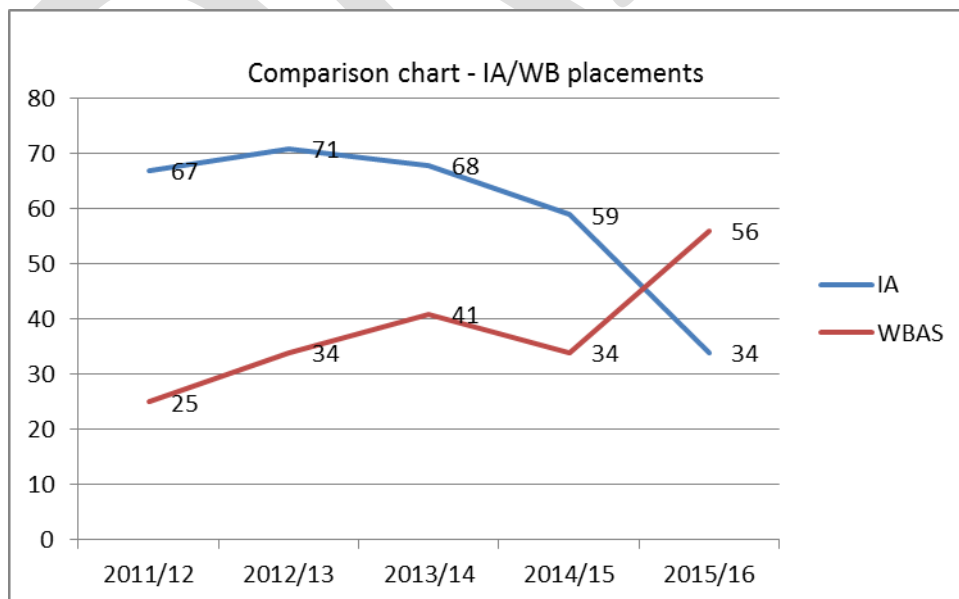
11. Number of WBAS placements = 56

As outlined in section 9 conversely there has been increase of 22 placements, from 34 in 2014/15 to 56 2015/16. This is an encouraging trend as can be seen by the line graph below. Within NAS there have been reservations about the pace and increase of the numbers of adopters being recruited. However within the region close liaison between the Family Finding and Recruitment & Assessment managers has enabled the steady production of adopters to reflect in the main, the numbers, ages, complexity of requirements for adoptive placements within the region.

WBAS	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	15	19	22	56 (62%)
2014/15	7	9	18	34 (36.5%)
2013/14	6	15	20	41 (38%)
2012/13	5	22	7	34 (32%)
2011/12	9	12	4	25 (27%)



The comparison chart below demonstrates the reversal in the trend for IA placements and WBAS placements over a five year period.



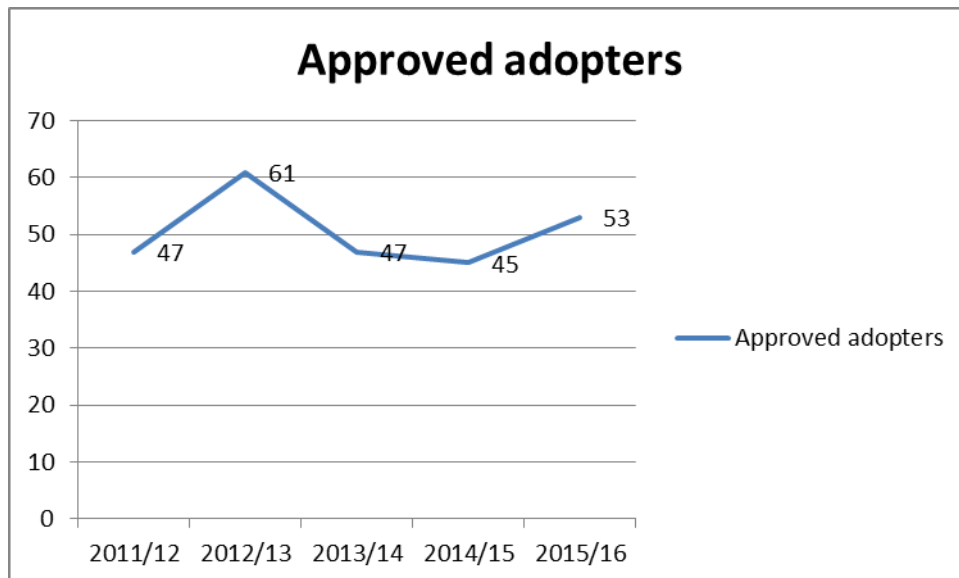
12. Number of adopter approvals = 53

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	18	16	15	4	53
2014/15	6	12	19	8	45

WBAS were on track to achieve more than the national target of a 25% increase in the number of adopter approvals. However in the last quarter a number of factors impacted on this final figure. Priority was given to matches and placements of children necessitating approvals of adopters towards the latter part of the quarter to be either postponed or moved to an emergency panel which was held on 30/03/2016. Unfortunately cases presented to panel so late in the financial year are not recorded in the statistics until the following period as the measure is the ADM decision not the panel recommendation. WBAS achieved 15.6% increase giving 53 placements compared to 45 the previous year. It should be noted however, that this target was revised later in the year when data on PO reduction became known. We have also commenced counting the number of placements being generated and this equates to 65 placements. Comparing the number of placements generated within the region and the number of children being placed with our own adopters is evidenced in sections 9 and 10.

The five year comparison is demonstrated in the table below and shows that there was a peak in performance three years prior to regionalisation and a dip in performance the year prior to the region becoming operational. The trend is positive in that it is going upwards.

Year	Total
2015/16	53
2014/15	45
2013/14	53
2012/13	61
2011/12	47



WB is the second highest achieving region in this respect with VVC approving 109, SE 51, NW38 and MWW 23.

13. Average time to approve adopters = 313 days

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	AVERAGE
2013/14					190 days
2014/15	232 days	305 days	255 days	310 days	275 days
2015/16	308days	320days	326days	264days	313days

The figures above are impacted upon by the number of approvals in each quarter. WB average is a little disappointing for this year 313 days (10.4 months) compared to last year 275 days (9.1 months). However, in the period 15/16 a number of assessments were completed which had been ongoing for some considerable time and inherited by the adoption service from the local area adoption teams. There have been some delays in achieving assessments within the national target timeframe and these have been impacted on by a number of factors for example, bereavements within the applicants family, complex medical issues requiring additional activity by the medical advisors in order to produce timely medical reports and some complications around DBS outcomes.

WB is measuring both the date of enquiry to the assessment commencing and approval being ratified which assists in identifying internal factors that might cause delay for example system errors, staff skill or management oversight. It is noted that the measurement for NAS is the length of time of initial enquiry to approval and this does not take into account that many adopters need time to reflect on the written and verbal information provided to them when they enquire before an assessment commences.

The national average length of time is 262 days (8.6 months) which is above the target set of 243 days (8 months). WB had the second highest average, the highest being SE 326 days (10.8 months) the lowest being VVC at 200 days (6.6 months).

14. Numbers of initial adopter enquires - 177

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	41	59	34	42	177
2014/15	44	35	26	33	138

There has been a significant increase in the number of enquiries in 2015/16, attributed to the improved website which adopters comment on, media coverage regarding NAS and regionalisation and a number of events that WBAS were involved in during the period.

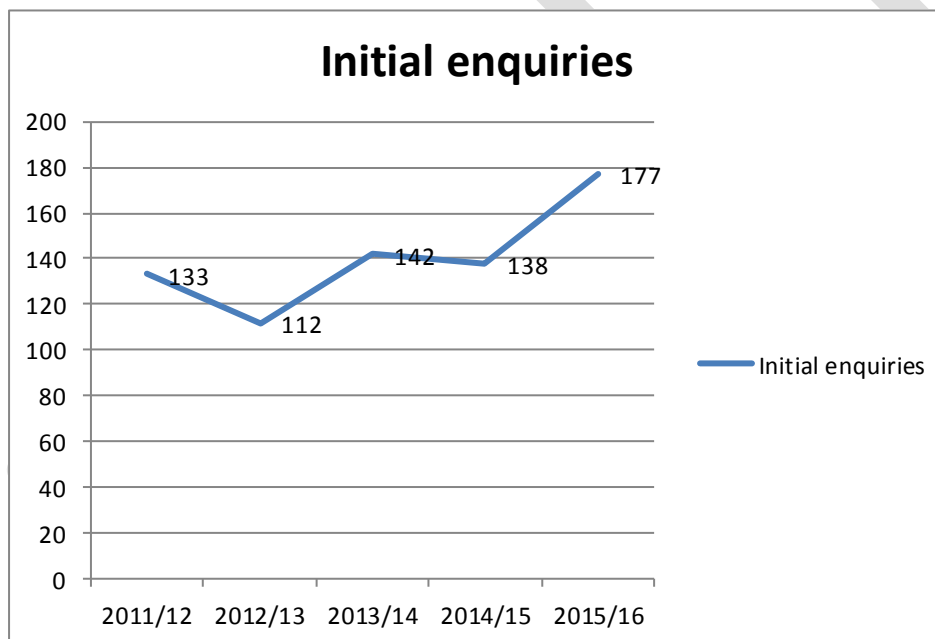
It also noteworthy to point out that WB maintained its recruitment of adopters in the latter part of the year where it is apparent other agencies were indicating to enquirers that they were not in a position to undertake assessments.

The increase in enquiries has enabled the recruitment and assessment function to carefully screen applicants and to prioritise those who might be able to offer placements to children in WB where there have been additional needs, such as, children unable to remain in the WB region due to connections with all three locality areas.

Even with the increase in enquiries WB have maintained quality screening and this can be evidenced by there being no disruptions in WB adoptive placements during the year.

Comparison data in the table below demonstrates that the number of enquiries received has continued to rise over the last five years with a dip in 2012/13.

Year	Total
2015/16	177
2014/15	138
2013/14	142
2012/13	112
2011/12	133



The trend nationally is that there is an increase the number of enquiries with 3% more than 2014/15. However, quarter 4 numbers dropped slightly by 6%. In comparison with other regions WBAS have received the second highest number of enquires with VVC receiving 202.

WBAS is also doing well in relation to the number of enquiries which receive a response within 5 working days, improving on quarter 1 performance of 76% to 100% in the last two quarters.

15. Life Journey Material

Number of Children

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	12	15	10	9	46

Percentage of children

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	60%	56%	48%	60%	55%

The national target for this performance measure is 75% of children who receive life journey material by the 2nd adoption review. Performance in the region did not meet this required target for the year. Q1&4 60% was achieved but the performance dipped in Q 2&3 to 56% and 48% the average over the year being 55%. This is an improvement on 2014/15 where performance was 43%. (quarterly figures not available for 2014/15). This low performance is reflected nationally and in other regions with only one region MWW achieving the target set. Of the remaining regions, WBAS demonstrated the next highest performance.

This has been a matter of lengthy discussion with the LAs through the LA PO/WBAS interface meetings and measures are being put in place to address this. IROs in each LA have been advised they are to cover this matter in adoption reviews and to ensure it is being undertaken and captured as part of the process in order to report on. The region have introduced a quality assurance mechanism for panel where panel are monitoring that life journey work has been undertaken and material is available for adopters at the point of matching/placement. This is being fed back to the LAs to ensure where materials are not available this is being addressed. The importance of all children having life journey work undertaken prior to placement and materials being available to the adopters at point of placement is being addressed through the delivery of training to childcare teams on Life Journey work. NPT have developed an audit tool which is being considered within the PO group for use across the region.

16. Percentage of Birth Parents of children referred to the adoption agency who are offered a service

Performance in this area is 100% which meets the national target. All the regions achieved between 91% and 100%.

17. Percentage of Birth Parents of children referred to the adoption agency Birth Parents who took up a service

The national target for this performance measure is 50% and WB's average performance was below this at 27.6%. There were 134 birth parents referred with 39 taking up a service. This performance requires improvement and closer working with locality teams. A variety of methods have been used to engage birth parents which WBAS will look to develop further.

Nationally the target was not met though there was an increase from 18% in 2014/15 to 24% in 2015/16. MWW and NW respectively were the highest performing in this area with SE having the lowest the lowest performance.

Date of report **6th May 2016**
Updated **24th May 2016**

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NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE

Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd

REVIEW OF SERVICE AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

For Period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016



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Appendix

Western Bay Adoption Service Review of Service / Annual Report 2015/16

1. Introduction

The requirement to provide an annual review of the Adoption Service is set out in Regulation 22 of the Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007 and Section 15 2c of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015. The aim of this report is to bring into one document a presentation and analysis of the activity of each of the three local authority adoption agencies, operating as a regional service, Western Bay Adoption Service. The report will be used for:

- The Review of Service (Regulation 22 report).
- Given the broad content of this report it will be used for informing senior managers, cabinets and scrutiny committees.

This report is in respect of the period 01.04.15 to 31.03.16. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information presented is an accurate record of the activity and quality of the Adoption Service.

2. Background

In February 2013 the document “Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action” the Welsh Government makes it clear and explicit what it expects and if necessary will require that some services, including adoption, will be provided nationally. In April 2013, the Deputy First Minister for Social Service issued a written statement in which it was acknowledged the progress made to date by the Expert Advisory Group in reaching consensus and delivery, through the Association of Directors of Social Services and the Welsh Local Government Association, of a functional model for a National Adoption Service.

Further detail proposed five regional collaborative regions, configured on existing and emerging networks. This specification related to the proposed Western Bay Regional Adoption Service consisting of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea with Swansea local authority acting as the Host for the delivery of all regional responsibilities and functions.

Irrespective of the Welsh Government’s willingness to legislate for regional collaboration the Western Bay partners have recognised that there are some specific advantages in developing a regional adoption service. By far the most compelling

advantage will be the ability to flex resource to address any and all of the statutory requirements placed on Adoption Agencies in a timely manner. In addition the ability to utilise a pooled resource to undertake multiple tasks simultaneously will inevitably impact on reducing any unnecessary delay in the process and improve performance in each of the statutory areas. More critically this will also impact positively on the child's journey, shortening the time spent in temporary placements. Potential adopters will also experience a more robust and timely process that will keep them engaged and committed to the Western Bay Adoption Service, therefore reducing the possibility of losing them to a competing agency. Consideration will need to be given to the needs of the service user as to which services should be delivered on a regional and local basis. This specification is, therefore founded on the premise that current performance cannot afford to slip and must improve where possible

In February 2015 all three adoption teams moved to a venue provided by Neath Port Talbot, at Port Talbot Civic Offices. This venue is largely central to the region and provides ease of access to all staff employed to operate the service. In addition, the offices have close proximity to bus and train stations as well as ample local car parking giving ease of access to service users who wish to undertake visits to the offices.

Although co-location commenced in February 2014, the reality remained that delivery of adoption continued on a local basis given the brevity of time before the commencement of the financial year. As such, the service became 'operational' in its truest sense on 01.04.16.

3. Current Position

Since being operational, Western Bay has weathered the inevitable impact of significant change. The greatest resource available to the service is staff and enabling the three original local authority teams to adapt quickly and adeptly to deliver on both local and national objectives has been a significant focus. The service model and management arrangements (Appendix A) has facilitated this to some extent but the staff buy-in and engagement has been essential to enable the delivery of strategic objectives in what has been an evolving organisation.

Despite the challenges, in the first year there have been some encouraging results and considerable strides towards achieving improvements in all areas. There is much work to be done however, and although early days the initial signs are demonstrating delivery through economies of scale has proved beneficial. In order to report to each member agency however, there remains a need to collate and measure, in particular for children, performance for each of the local authority areas. That said, to enable a comparison on previous years, there has been a need at

times to use the aggregated data from the three local authorities in order to measure and review the service.

In noting areas of improvement, it goes without saying that there are areas where additional focus is needed. In the main, 2015/16 saw most effort placed on increasing the number of adopters being approved and reducing delays for children; placing children in shorter time scales. We achieved on both these broad objectives which was in line with the directional steer from the National Adoption Service and our own service plan (Appendix B). However, adoption support, with all its various facets has not been given as much attention and will be the focus for 2016/17.

Alongside the creation of the Western Bay Adoption Service, there has been a keen aim to play a leading role within the National Adoption Service and the Operational Team Managers, the Business Support Manager and the Regional Manager have active roles in the 4 working groups, thus progressing key priorities for 2015/16. Western Bay has taken the lead on two key areas, the creation of a family finding process as well as the review of recruitment and assessment of adopters.

4. Staffing

The service is divided into a 'functional' model (Appendix A), with three distinct operational teams, and one Business Support team namely

- (1) Recruitment and Assessment
- (2) Twin Tracking and Family Finding and
- (3) Adoption Support.
- (4) Business Support Team

The teams within the model are made up of workers from each of the three local authorities. Prior to co-locating into Western Bay as a Regional Service, staff 'opted' to enter specific teams based on preference, skills or interests. Seniors Practitioners and Managers were appointed to the roles following competitive semi-formal interviews, based evidencing skills and preferences for specific roles.

The model has within it a flexible approach that enables the movement of the very skilled and experienced staff and resources to whichever team or function needs resources at a given time. This in turn enables staff to maintain their skills across all aspects of adoption or can enable the development of skills for members who are less confident in some areas. This flexible and proactive approach can be used for either short or longer term solutions to workload pressures and has been utilised to some extent in the first year of operation, as detailed later in the report.

The functional model is supported by a Regional Manager and a Business Support Team.

The Regional Manager, Val Jones provides strategic direction to the service, based on both the aims of the National Adoption Service and the member local authorities' priorities. Employed by the host agency, Swansea, the Regional Manager has accountability on a day to day basis to the Host Chief Social Services Officer and to the Management Board. The Management Board consists of a Chairperson currently the Director from NPT, representatives from all three local authorities' at Head of Service level, health representatives (a Strategic senior Manager, Dean Packman and Medical Advisor ABMU – Dr Peter Barnes), an educational representative (Ms Deb Hutchinson) and a representative from the voluntary sector (Ann Bell of Adoption UK) thus compliant with the Directions Powers.

Within this role, the Regional Manager meets on a regular basis with counterparts from the National Adoption Service to ensure adherence to and input into the National Adoption Service Annual Priorities. Holding fortnightly management meetings, monthly supervision of the three managers and providing regular staff meetings, enables the manager to cascade the vision for the service both regionally and nationally to all staff and enables staff to provide feedback to the Regional Manager on priorities, achievements and directions to the Management Board and to the central team of the National Adoption Service.

The manager of the Business Support Function, Tracy Willis, has been in post since December 2015. The previous post holder commenced in March 2015 but left in September 2015. Interim arrangements were put in place by the host agency, with a senior Business Support Manager providing interim cover while the permanent post was advertised and interviews held.

The Business Support manager role is central to the day to day functioning of the service and to the collation of data for the various monthly, quarterly and annual reporting. In addition, this post ensures the administration of the service is prompt, reliable and enabling the three operational teams in delivering aspects of the adoption service.

The Business Support team has been significantly depleted over the majority of the first year of operation due to a number of staff either not joining the service on co-location or leaving during the first year. In all, 5 members of staff have left this team, resulting in a significant amount of effort to recruit for the vacant posts. At the time of completing the report, the team holds one vacancy with recruitment underway.

The team which concentrates largely on children where adoption is being considered (Twin Tracking) or where there is a plan for adoption (Family Finding) is managed by Di Chancer and supported by two senior practitioner posts. There are a further seven social work posts in the team, all full time save for one member who works 4 days.

This team provides a number of key functions to each of the local authority member agencies and in the main is at the interface between the three local authorities and the adoption service.

Largely divided into two key areas, the team works with the children where adoption is being considered or where a plan has been made for adoption. Firstly, the role of twin tracking which ensures that during care proceedings, the local authority has the input for the adoption service advising on the feasibility and viability of adoption, time tabling, care planning and preparation of children. Where the local authority concludes that they intend to recommend adoption to the Agency Decision Maker, the manager or either of the Senior Practitioners will provide the role of Agency Advisor. Secondly, where the court has concluded that adoption is the primary plan for the child, the case is allocated to one of the 6 family finders who begin the searches for suitable adoptive families, working with the childcare social worker and the worker for the adopters, they facilitate the exploration of the suitability of the links and co-ordinate the case being presented to the adoption panel. Thereafter, supporting the transition of the child to the adoptive home and monitoring through to the granting of the adoption order.

The Twin Tracking and Family Finding team has been largely stable with one senior practitioner leaving in December 2015 to explore other career options and one member of the social work cohort leaving to take up a role as an independent reviewing officer (IRO). Recruiting to the post of social worker was successful. The recruitment to the role of Senior Practitioner has not been without its challenges, with no suitable candidates available at the first round of adverts. However, a very successful interim arrangement is in place with one highly experienced social worker acting up in this role until the post is filled. The post is again out to advert.

The Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters is managed by Karen Williams, and is supported by one senior practitioner and 7 social workers. Within the team, 4 of the social workers are full time and three work for 4 days each. In addition to the recruitment, screening, assessment and support of adopters, this team also undertake the assessment of non-agency applications. This has been a very stable team in the first year of operation, with one member flexing into the adoption support team to boost skills in this area. This post is being covered in the interim by a secondment of a frontline social worker with adoption experience.

The management of the Adoption Panel sits within this team manager's role, and has enabled the careful time tabling and planning of assessments to ensure priority is given to Children and matches but that impact on adopter assessments is not compromised.

Adoption Support, as outlined in the introduction will be the focus in the coming year and this is based on not only the national agenda but also the evolving regional service. In the first year of operation, the Adoption Support Team has had a very

difficult journey. The team manager, shortly after co-location resigned to progress a career in training. The team establishment is 1 manager, 1 senior and 3.5 full time equivalents, the latter being two full time social workers and 3 part time (see Annex A). As an interim measure, the senior practitioner assumed an acting up role until the end of December 2015, participating in all management decision making and management meetings. This provided a degree of stability to the team and much needed continuity given this individual had previously worked alongside the departing manager as her deputy. However, throughout the year morale was understandably low and a further two, highly experienced members resigned; one to take up the option of early retirement and the other to pursue her already established independent social work agency.

In September 2015 interim arrangements were made, utilising the flexing model inherent in the structure and one member of Recruitment and Assessment flexed across into the full time role. This has proved to be a highly successful example of the flexible model and that worker has opted to remain in this post on a permanent basis. Through an innovative approach, working closely with voluntary partners, a secondment opportunity was realised and the part time vacancy was filled by a secondment from After Adoption.

In February 2016, the management of Adoption Support was taken on by Karen Williams. This is part of a wider management agenda of developing an adoption support model that embeds a culture and skill base throughout the service as a whole and in particular, adoption support where a sound therapeutic model of intervention underpins practice. Training on assessments and direct work followed shortly after, with adoption support having a renewed and much needed management focus.

The culture within the service as a whole has been slowly improving throughout the year. The initial challenges faced by co-locating, flexible and agile working, changing teams, managers and adapting to regional working inevitably impacted adversely on culture and morale. The sheer pace, frequency and depth of change in such a short period of time tested the staff and management considerably. However, over the year there have been significant improvements, aided by a common purpose, reflecting on achievements and celebrating successes. Opportunities for staff to share views have been through function or team meetings as well as in the service meetings but no formal consultation has taken place to date.

Towards the latter part of the year, staff across the service reported a lack of formal training opportunities, despite there being access to each local authority training provision. Further exploration of this revealed a general lack of targeted adoption related training. This was particularly acute in adoption support where the emphasis will be on delivering high quality assessment, interventions and support and reducing the reliance on external interventions. The views of staff and the audit of skills and

training needs added impetus to the already developing training plan (see Annex C). this plan started to be rolled out in the latter part of 2015/16 but will take shape more fully in 2016/17.

5. Adoption Panel Membership / Advisors and Training

The adoption panels in all three local authority areas were running well prior to regionalisation. A consultation and training activity session with panel members took place in the October before co-location to explore the new requirements on regions and on panels. This included the concept of a central list, locations of panels and the management arrangements of panel. What was evident was that there were considerable differences in panel expenses, administration and there were strong views expressed by panel members of not wanting to lose existing good practice.

Considering the views of social workers presenting cases to panel, the sheer size of the region and the need to slowly evolve panel, it was decided to retain the three locations where panels were run; Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea. This would cut down on travel time for social workers presenting cases, panel members' travel and would utilise already booked venues. However, the central list was established with all new members being recruited, and many of the existing members being encouraged to sit on panels that were not their usual one. This has been an evolving process but has been hugely successful.

A new Chair for the Western Bay Adoption Service was appointed in December 2015 following competitive interviews. Ruth Peggrem commenced by working closely with the Panel Advisor, Karen Williams to create a panel protocol which outlined how the central panel would operate, albeit in three locations. This immediately had the impact of ensuring a cohesive approach to panel delivery, ensuring that irrespective of which panel venue a worker presented to, the approach would be identical. The process was largely a hybrid of Bridgend and Swansea processes and has been implemented without issue.

Aligning panel fees and expenses was a priority to ensure panel members were not disadvantaged if they attended a panel in a different local authority area to the one they were used to attending. Again, panel members accepted readily the alignment which followed exploration of what other regions were paying and ensuring a competitive rate for Western Bay.

New panel members have been recruited throughout the year due to there being a number of vacancies inherited by Western Bay from the existing panels. In addition to recruitment, panel has lost a number of members who were either at the end of their tenure or who have had other pressures, such as work which has not enabled them to be as active as they would have liked. Recruitment is an on-going activity

with a section on the Western Bay Website, inviting interested applicants to contact the service.

Western Bay Adoption Service is served by two Medical Advisors, Dr. Janet Harris and Dr. Peter Barnes. Both are long standing and highly valued panel members, with Dr Harris formerly being on Bridgend Panel and Dr Barnes on both Neath Port Talbot and Swansea panels. As such, we have been fortunate enough to retain the services of both Medical Advisors. There have been some challenges in relation to planning cases for presentation to panel in that the preference has been to ensure the Medical Advisor that undertook any medical report is the one present at panel to advise on any medical issues. This has not always been possible, for example if the Medical Advisor is on leave or if there would be delay in progressing a case. However, these issues have been minimal and where there is a need to present a case to an alternative panel, the Medical Advisor has been informed and invited to attend.

Panel appraisals have not been carried out in the first year, despite an intention to do so. The sheer volume of work, improving how panels run and brevity of time has meant this has been a challenge to achieve in this year. However, the panel appraisal documentation has been reviewed by the panel advisor and improved to be fit for purpose. It has been shared with the panel chair and panel members for comment. Also, panel appraisal documentation was shared widely with the National Adoption Service for others to use as a basis for their appraisals. Panel members were consulted about how appraisals could be undertaken and it was felt that a selection of group and individual appraisals would be welcomed by panel members. Appraisals for panel members are planned for 2016/17.

Panel training has, likewise been lacking in 2015/16 along with the staff training. However, numerous opportunities have been taken to provide panel members with updates on changes in legislation, practice issues, performance and developments. This is not an alternative for training, but has been essential to equip panel with an understanding for the challenges and progress of the regional service. Training is planned for 2016/17 and was placed on the training needs analysis, completed at the end of the year. The training proposed follows collation throughout the year of issues panel wished to be covered. It has been agreed that, given the changes and new membership, the focus on the formal training will be 'back to basics' thus looking at panel members' roles and responsibilities together with their quality assurance role.

A panel membership chart is included in Appendix D. In addition to the panel members, Western Bay Panel has been fortunate to retain the services of Independent Social Worker Artie Meakin as the advisor on Inter Country Adoption.

6. Adoption Panel Activity/Workload Management

Panel operated for three out of the four weeks of a month, utilising the existing panel time table for each of the three local authorities. Prior to co-locating, an analysis of the number of cases to be presented (allowing for an increase in approvals and matches) was undertaken. It was evident that there was sufficient capacity within the existing frequency and duration of panels to accommodate up to a 30% increase in work. However, as one panel, namely Bridgend was only a half day panel; it was felt that any increase would necessitate this panel to run as full days if needed.

In the main, panels run on the first Monday of the month in Swansea, the second Wednesday in Bridgend and the third Tuesday in Neath Port Talbot. This allows flexibility for panel members who have other commitments to attend on days that are convenient for them, replicates to some extent already established patterns for the three local authorities and enables the panels to be spread out over the month, thus ensuring no case is delayed in that they can be moved to a panel within a week or so of the original panel proposed if needed.

Where extra panel capacity is needed, there is scope to extend the Bridgend panel to a full day or run extra panels in the fourth week of the month. Both of these options have been used in 2015/16 to ensure delays through quick or a sudden increase in cases can be accommodated.

As can be seen in Table 1, there were 35 pre-planned and 2 extra panels held in the year. Only 2 panels were cancelled in the year due to insufficient cases to present. Panels have continued even where there were one or two cases, to ensure no delay. The aim of avoiding delay has been evident throughout the year with panel members readily making themselves available to sit on panels and to convene the extra 2 panels that were needed due to increased work. Only one panel was cancelled due to quorate issues, this could not be foreseen and was unavoidable as a number of panel members were sick at short notice and other members were therefore unable to step in at the last minute and have time to read the pack. However, an extra panel was reconvened one week later, therefore minimising the potential for delay and this panel was made up of members for the central list, evidencing the ability to be responsive and proactive as needed.

Number of Panels held

	Period 2015/16
Number of Planned Panels held	35
Number of extra, replacement or emergency panels	2
Number of Panels cancelled due to lack of quoracy	1
Number of Panels cancelled for other reasons*	2

Table 1 – Number of Panels held

Panel members have been involved in one consultation event since co-location; this was in relation to the running of panel, timings etc. and not regarding the service as a whole. There are plans to include panel member consultations as part of the review of service for the coming year.

Panel is made up of a range of members, from all walks of life and includes adopters, adoptees, independent members, social workers and representatives from health and education. There is a low representation of men on panel, with just 4 male members and there is a desire to actively recruit more men to attend panel.

7. Advertising and Marketing

Marketing in Western Bay is not vested in a marketing officer but has been seen as the responsibility of the Recruitment and Assessment Manager and the Business Support Manager as it fits more comfortably within their specific roles. Becoming a regional service meant particular attention needed to be given to the design of the logo and brand of the region. To enable this, focus was initially on the redesign of the Western Bay Adoption Service Website. This was completed as a collective effort by the Marketing Officer from one of the local authorities, an external design and marketing company and the Recruitment and Assessment Manager under the oversight of the Regional Manager. The content and colours were designed to be harmonious with the National Adoption Service as was the Western Bay Logo and 'brand'. A number of visual designs were created by the marketing agency and shared with staff who actively participated in agreeing the final design for the logo. The themes and colour scheme has been carried out into letter headed paper, information sheets, and documents thus providing a regional identity.

The Website has the capacity to be updated, added to and changed to suit the emerging needs of the service, trends in adoption and to raise awareness of any

issues or events that the service feel necessary. The Website has been cited by a number of enquirers as the route to locating Western Bay as an adoption service, although actively consulting on this is not consistent. Tied in with the Website the service has capacity to run both Facebook and Twitter accounts but although both have been set up they have been underutilised due in part to the transient management situation in Business Support. 2016/17 will see this change with the appointment of the new manager and a desire to use more social media.

In the main, Western Bay Adoption Service has been involved in low key advertising in the first year of service. This is due, in part, to the excellent reputation of the three member agencies and the already high number of enquiries received historically. The aggregated data from the three local authority regions indicates that in 2014/15 there were just 138 enquiries where as in 2015/16 this rose to 177. The increase in enquiries has helped with efforts to 'change the culture' of those enquiring to encourage them to consider the types of children waiting for placements both regionally and nationally. This has been achieved without depletion in approvals and has led to more children within the region, including two sibling groups of three and harder to place children being placed locally as the scope and skill base of adopters has increased.

8. Children

Western Bay Adoption Service continues to provide information and data to each of the three local authority members as children remain the responsibility of the local authority. That said, the data collected demonstrates performance that is encouraging despite a number of external factors, not least the reduction in placement orders in the year. Despite the fairly consistent picture on referrals, there has been a decrease in the delay experienced by children in adoption, an increase in placing complex children and those within larger sibling groups.

During 2015/16 the number of children being referred for twin tracking was down by just 2 children on the previous year (Table 2) to 201.

Number of Children Referred for Twin Tracking

Number of children referred to adoption for twin tracking	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
2014/15	68	56	79	203
2015/16	64	43	94	201

Table 2 - Number of Children Referred for Twin Tracking

The issue of Placement Orders and legal issues is discussed later in the report (Section 10). However, of the children where adoption is the plan, 90 were placed with approved adopters in the year, a slight reduction on the previous year of 93 (Table 3). However, of the children placed, more were harder to place children, those in sibling groups and those where there had been considerable delays in achieving a placement.

Number of Children with Placed for Adoption

Number of children placed for adoption	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
2014/15	28	28	37	93
2015/16	22	39	29	90

Table 3 - Number of Children Placed for Adoption

In addition to the 90 children placed there were 3 children with placement orders who had been waiting considerable periods who were adopted by former foster carers through the non-agency route, bringing our total of children placed to 93.

One of the benefits of regionalisation has been much closer working arrangements with the three individual local authorities. In addition, bringing adopter recruitment into one service and close working between the family finding and recruitment and assessment teams has had the impact of significantly reversing the trend of where children are placed. As can be seen in Table 4 and almost opposite result has been evidenced on the previous year. Of the 90 children placed with approved adopters in the previous year almost 2/3 were placed out of the region, whereas now almost 2/3 are placed within the region. This has been achieved only where it has been safe and appropriate to do so. Whilst there is still a use for and reliance on external

placements, mainly provided through voluntary agencies, 2015/16 saw an increase of local placements as can be seen in Table 4.

Location of children Placed for Adoption

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
Placed in Western Bay region in 2015/16	15	19	22	56
Placed in Western Bay region in 2014/15	7	9	18	34
Placed outside of Western Bay Region 2015/16	7	20	7	34
Total Placed outside of Western Bay Region 2014/15	24	20	7	51

Table 4 – Location of Children placed for adoption

The majority of the children being placed for adoption are under 5 years of age, with a significant proportion being under one. Nationally there is a drive to recruit adopters for older children and sibling groups, with Western Bay also supporting this premise to a large extent. However, we have evidenced in the year that within this region, it has been vitally important to also maintain the steady stream of approvals for children under two. In total, 52 children were one year old or under at the time of placement, which is over half of the children placed in the year.

Ages of children Placed for Adoption

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
0-1	13	19	19	52
2-3	4	8	4	16
4-5	4	7	5	16
6-7	1	4	1	6
Over 7	1	0	0	1
Total	22	38	28	90

Table 5 – Ages of Children Placed for Adoption

9. Matches

There is a strong and dedicated family finding team who work proactively in securing links which may lead to matches for the children where adoption is the plan. The children placed in the period have included a number of highly complex children where there have been considerable delays in securing the right adoptive placement. The reasons for the delays have included the child having additional needs, being part of sibling groups, or older children. However, it has been evident that the time taken to place children from the time of the 'Should be Placed' decision has reduced slightly. This is however an encouraging figure that belies factors outside of the control of the adoption service, such as complex and delayed care proceedings and late challenges to any agreed care plans by birth parents. The management team have been encouraged by the improvement in this area but aware that close monitoring of performance on a quarterly basis is needed to enable feedback to the three local authority areas and the National Adoption Service in terms of performance. Despite the improvements in placing siblings with adopters from within the region, additional work is needed in this area. A total of 16 sibling groups were placed in the period, 6 within the region and 10 externally (Table 6). This is however seen as a move in the right direction and reflects the progress being made within the recruitment of adopters, matching of children and supporting the placements.

Number of Sibling Groups Placed for Adoption

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
Placed in Western Bay region	0	2	4	6
Placed outside of Western Bay Region	2	6	2	10

Table 6 – Number of Sibling Groups Placed for Adoption

One aspect of matching and placing children that continues to need monitoring is the number of children matched and placed but where there is yet to be an adoption order. Largely speaking this is outside of the control of the adoption service but supporting the placement continues to be a role of the allocated family finder. At the time of reporting the figure was 72 children where orders are yet to be achieved (Table 7). There are a number of reasons for this position including recent placements, or where it is too early to apply for an adoption order, there are

increased or emerging support needs so it is not appropriate to apply for an adoption order at this stage, or where an application has been made but there is a contested and as such any adoption order is delayed.

Matches and Placements but not yet Adopted

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
Number of children matched but not yet placed at 31.3.16	0	0	1	4
Number of children in placement but where adoption order has not yet been granted	17	30	25	72

Table 7 - Matches and Placements but not yet Adopted

The length of time it has taken for children to be placed from the making of a 'should be placed' decision has significantly improved in the last year. The previous year saw 67% of children taking longer than 6 months however, in 2015/16 this figure had reduced to 34%, a marked improvement and evidence of timely and proactive family finding as soon as a placement order is granted.

10. Legal issues /Placement Orders/Placements

Whilst adoption is being promoted, this is in the context of decreasing placement orders. Western Bay has available to it data for the last 5 years and it is noteworthy that since 2012/13 where the aggregated regional data indicates that there were 131 placement orders granted, this picture has reduced year on year with just 83 being granted in 2015/16 (table 8), this reflects the national trend of less placement orders being granted.. That said, the number of referrals being made to the service has not changed significantly. As such this is a figure that requires close monitoring on a quarterly and annual basis.

Number of Placement Orders granted

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
Number of Placement Orders granted 2014/15	25	36	33	94
Number of placement orders granted 2015/16	31	26	26	83

Table 8- Number of Placement Orders granted

Although this is the first year for Western Bay Adoption Service being fully operational, it has been possible to look at data collected over previous years from each local authority and aggregation of that data has enabled the management team to consider if there have been any trends. Whilst it is fair to say that there has been a reduction in the number of placement orders both nationally and regionally, recent activity in the region may indicate this is not a continuing trend. Close monitoring of this will continue through both monthly and quarterly reporting mechanisms.

11. Disruptions & Breakdowns of Placement

Within Western Bay in the reporting period there have been two placement disruptions and two placement breakdowns involving 4 children. The two placement breakdowns were already at the latter stages when the region formed but have been included for accuracy. In each of the incidents, there has been a careful consideration of the impacts of this disruption and the lessons learnt from it.

Placement 1.

The breakdown occurred shortly following the granting of the adoption order. The child was placed with adopters outside of the agency. There were increased pressures on the placement prior to and post adoption order, with the child placed exhibiting behaviours associated with anxiety and insecurity. The escalation in the child's behaviour proved difficult for, in particular one of the adoptive parents to manage with the other parent managing intermittently. The couple had a birth son already and as the child's behaviours escalated, with targeting of the birth son the adoptive parents indicated they could no longer manage.

Placement 2

Siblings were placed with adopters outside of the region, provided by another agency. Shortly following placement it became evident that the prospective adopters were struggling to bond with the children and the placement came to an end. What has been apparent is that, although the adopters indicated in their assessment and through matching that they wished to be matched with older children, the reality of this brought up their desire to have much younger children.

Placement 3

The child was placed with adopters outside of the region and shortly after adoption order was granted the placement broke down. There were known to be adoption support needs throughout the placement with the child's behaviour showing signs of an attachment difficulty. Post adoption order the challenges in the placement escalated with both adoptive parents feeling unable to continue. Later exploration of the matching and placing process identified key practice and process issues that are being explored and addressed within Western Bay as a region.

Disruptions

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
Number of children matched but where, following panel and prior to placement the match does not proceed.	0	0	0	0
Number of children placed or adopted but where the placement disrupts/breaks down.	2	2	0	4

Table 9 - Disruptions

12. Adopters

Western Bay Adoption Service has been in the fortunate position to be attracting an increased number of prospective adopters who have enquired from both word of mouth and through accessing the Website. At the start of the period, a number of enquiries were forwarded by the National Adoption Service, but this has not been sustained and it is thought that the links to the Website have addressed this.

In the year, very little specific recruitment activity was undertaken. However, engaging in National Adoption Week was felt to be a good opportunity to explore what impact recruitment may have. As such, a stall was set up in a busy shopping area in Swansea, manned by a number of adoption staff. In addition a radio advert was commissioned and ran for the duration of the campaign, played on popular local radio covering the whole region. The impact of the recruitment activity was poor with no noticeable increase in enquiries. That said, research indicates that it is often months later that someone might apply to adopt. There has been no indication from the feedback from adopters that enquiries were as a result of the two recruitment activities undertaken.

A number of research papers and the findings of Western Bay Adoption Service supports the view that many of the applicants applying to adopt do so as they wish to have a child and cannot conceive naturally. However, despite there being a need for adopters in the region of very young children, considerable effort has been made to help raise awareness amongst applicants of the need for adopters to consider older children, sibling groups and harder to place children. The impact in the region has been encouraging with more adopters being approved for siblings and two families being approved for three.

Progressing enquiries and assessments has been a significant focus in the reporting period. Unfortunately the average time to progress assessments increased but this was due in part to a number of complex and long standing assessments that transferred to Western Bay which were only part completed.

The quality of assessments has been a specific focus and these have improved over the year, with panel commenting on this. The use of peer reading, fortnightly team meetings (initially, now monthly) a staff development day where quality, evidence based assessments and analysis was covered at length have all contributed to driving up standards. Regular team meetings where practice issues are discussed reinforce the learning in the first year of operation and good examples of complex issues are discussed in these meetings, thus further developing the learning opportunity of team members.

In 2015/16 there was an increase in approvals from 45 to 53 being approved generating a potential 63 placements (Table 10). Although initially the service was on target to achieve an increase of more than 25% (National Adoption Service target set), only 15.6% increase was realised. This was in part due to a number of complex cases that took longer to be assessed, a number withdrawing following their assessment but prior to panel (due to pregnancy, bereavement or house moves/economic changes). The average time also increased in the last quarter impacting adversely on the overall figures for the year. Addressing this will be a significant focus in 2016/17.

Number of adopter enquiries and approvals 2015/2016

	2014/15	2015/16
Number of adopter enquiries	138	177
Number of adopter approvals	45	53
Number of Placements Generated	Not collated	63
Number of unsuccessful applications	Not collated	0

Table 10 - Number of adopter enquiries and approvals

For the first time it has been important to also collate the types of households who come forward and how many placements have been generated (Table 10). This has enabled closer monitoring of the demographic of adopters attracted to Western Bay in order for us to, when needed target unrepresented groups. Analysis of the types of placements generated (Table 11) has enabled greater clarity of placement capacity. For example, it was noteworthy that just three former foster carers were approved to adopt children in their care, a much lower figure than anticipated.

Types of Adoptive Placements Approved

Number of adopters approved for one child	43
Number of adopters approved for siblings	10
Number of adopters approved for children over 4	4
Number of adopters who were former foster carers	3

Table 11 – Types of Adoptive Placements Approved

The pre-approval training offered to adopters consists of three full days provided by Mary Jones, run on a bi-monthly basis centrally in the region. In addition, two members of the recruitment and assessment team facilitate the fourth day which includes a session by Dr Peter Barnes, Medical Advisor, adopters who have gone through the process recently, staff talking about contact and adoption support and where possible birth relatives. Feedback is collated from each adoptive applicant on the training and report positively about the experience.

The second time adopters training is run three or four times a year, depending on need. If there are insufficient members to participate places can be purchased from other regions or from the Association of Fostering and Adoption AfA, formerly BAAF Cymru.

In line with the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014, greater emphasis is being placed on assessing and evaluating the support networks available to adoptive families. Part of this includes introducing family group meetings where support needs and scenarios are discussed with family present to explore and examine what emotional and practical support will be available to the adopters post placement.

13. Adoption Support

The structure of the Western Bay Adoption Service provides for the range of adoption support activities to be delivered, in the main by the Adoption Support Team. This team has largely the responsibility for the assessment of adoption support, provision of interventions to individuals and families, direct work with children around their life story and contact, birth records counselling and intermediary services. Letterbox contact has been anchored within this team but a decision was taken in September 2015 to distribute this across the three teams given the pressures on Adoption Support Team and in light of a number of representations indicating that the model in place was not meeting needs and adopters in particular wished to have a named person to manage their letterbox contact.

As outlined previously in this report, there have been considerable issues in the first year in relation to adoption support. The lack of permanent management, vacancies and loss of staff has impacted adversely on morale. Despite this, staff in the team remained committed and eager to deliver on and improve services.

Measuring performance in relation to the range of adoption support has been highly problematic. There have been no set performance indicators relating to adoption support and the implementation of the IT system for the service did not build in any mechanisms to filter or evaluate demand on the service. All referrals for example, irrespective of need were categorised as post adoption support assessments. In the latter part of the year this has been rectified, but not in sufficient time to be able to

run meaningful statistics on last year's performance. This is a priority for the coming year.

Staff and team development has been high on the agenda in the last two months of the year. A staff audit on training and skills identified considerable need for a range of training and support in order to deliver on the therapeutic model of service delivery proposed. Training started on direct work with children, providing staff with a toolkit of resources and comprehensive training to use the materials. Advanced attachment and parenting with PACE have been identified as priority basic training needed for the team as well as more specialist training to be rolled out over the coming year.

Within the team there has been a heavy reliance on externally provided therapeutic interventions such as Theraplay, play therapy and DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy). In addition to these formal approaches, there has been a reliance on therapists to provide less specialist interventions such as direct work with children on transitions and life story work. These have been provided on a spot purchase basis rather than through any service level agreement. The rationale for this has been multi-faceted and in part will be addressed through the implementation of the whole service therapeutic model and the upskilling of the adoption support team.

The first year as a regional service has seen the development of a range of support groups operating across the region. These have been based on both existing activities and on creating new services. Currently the adopter and toddler groups run in both the east and the west of the region, facilitated by members of the adoption support team. These are highly effective and are well attended.

Efforts to set up a birth parent support group have been without success. In the absence of a dedicated resource to achieve this, some collaborative arrangements have been made with a neighbouring regional service to enable families local to them to attend this group. As with other areas of development, 2016/17 will see particular developments to support and engage with birth families.

Across the region, the provision of an adopter support group has built on existing provisions. In the main these sessions include guest speakers such as Adoption UK, health visitors and workers talking about using life story books and engaging in letterbox. There has been a mixed take up of these groups but those who do attend have reported that they find them helpful and informative.

14. Development of Adoption Service

The first year of Western Bay Adoption Service has seen a focus on both the recruitment of adopters and reducing delays for children where adoption is the plan. The service has delivered on both these broad objectives. However, further developments are needed to refine activities to ensure continued improvements,

such as reducing the time taken to assess and approve adopters, increasing the number of children where life journey materials are provided by the second review if not sooner and ensuring delays for children are maintained at the current level, if not improved upon.

Adoption support has been an under resourced aspect of the Western Bay Service and consequently the coming year there will be specific focus on this aspect of the service. The vision is to create a therapeutic model across the service, training not only adoption support staff but representatives of the other two operational teams in order to deliver a high quality and responsive model of intervention. A robust and comprehensive training plan has been developed which commits significant expenditure in the next twelve months on basic and advanced training modules. The training aims to equip staff to undertake robust, evidenced based and analytical assessments where an identified need is accurately assessed and matched by the appropriate level and timeliness of provision.

The introduction of national and regional performance indicators in adoption support will enable the capture of accurate data on all aspects of adoption support. This will be supported by the redesign of the adoption support IT module so that referrals can be accurately categorised, tracked and outcomes evaluated.

Policies and procedures, whilst important have not been able to have the priority needed and will be high on the agenda for completing in the coming year.

15. Policies and Procedures

The first year of operation has seen great strides in delivering a service that meets objectives set both locally and nationally. While there have been numerous examples of regionalising the paperwork, processes and systems, the development of general policies has been limited due to capacity. Considerable work is needed to address this in the coming year.

There have been examples where Western Bay has taken a lead nationally such as the development of a national family finding procedure and a review of the recruitment and assessment of adopters. Participating in both these initiatives enabled the respective managers to reflect on local practice and make changes as needed.

The development of an Adoption Allowance Policy has been a significant achievement in 2015/16. Based largely on the Bridgend model and adapted to reflect the additional subtleties of regional working, such as the different levels of allowances paid, the policy is being implemented across all three local authorities.

16. CSSIW

Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend adoption agencies were last inspected in 2012 and Swansea the year after. In 2015/16 there was no inspection but members of the management team attended a workshop regarding the implementation of a new inspection process. Within this event it was announced that all regional services were to complete their Self-Assessment Form by the end of February 2016, which was achieved.

17. Local Monitoring and Governance

The Management Board is fully compliant with the Directions Powers Regulations, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) 2015, with health and education representatives having now joined the Board. There are terms of reference in place which is included in the Partnership/Interagency Agreement.

Monitoring and governance of the service is the responsibility of the Management Board, which meets every two months and interrogates data provided on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Strategic decisions are shared with the board for approval whereas, in the main, operational decisions are overseen by the Regional Manager who is supervised by the Host authority Chief Social Services Officer. The service is measured on both the service plan and the national performance indicators through regular reports which present the achievements of the service compared to previous years and where data is available, with other regions across Wales.

An annual report is presented to Scrutiny Committees in all three local authorities. Periodically, reports are submitted and shared with Cabinet, Scrutiny Panels and Corporate Parenting Cabinets/Committees. These include reports such as, the adoption allowance policy, the end of year performance report and partnership arrangements.

In addition the regional adoption service has a management by exception route to the Western Bay Programme Team/Leadership Group if there is ever a need to resolve issues at a regional strategic level.

Performance indicators are reported to the National Adoption Central team on a quarterly basis, this information is provided to the Advisory Group and the Governance Board of the National Adoption Service.

18. Consultations

There has not been robust and formal consultation process in the first year of operation. However, consultations have taken place with panel members, adopters accessing adoption support and with staff on the creation of the Western Bay Logo and periodically through service meetings. In addition to these events, Western Bay jointly engaged in consultation with Adoption UK and with the National Adoption Service, in both events inviting adopters to participate in sharing their views, thus shaping the services both locally and nationally.

19. Compliments, comments, complaints and representations

Compliments and complaints received by the Western Bay Service are dealt with at the informal stage by the service and registered with the relevant local authority within the region. It has been agreed by the Complaints Officers in the partner agencies that complaints at the formal stage will be dealt with by each local authority responsible for the child or if it relates to a staff member or the service they have provided their employing authority. Where a complaint relates to more than one local authority a joint investigation will be undertaken with one local authority agreeing to take the lead. The regional team aims to deliver a responsive, proactive and customer focussed service wherever possible. During the first year and transition into working on a regional collaborative basis it was likely that the number of complaints would perhaps be higher given the adjustments both service users and staff would experience. We aim to use complaints proactively as a means to learn from errors and likewise use the compliments we receive to replicate practice, improving service delivery or developments.

Compliments:

There have been 7 compliments during the period covered

From Adopters

- “Raised a concern with NAS and Western Bay Adoption and I must say their responses have been full, open and reassuring. Many thanks.”
- “Many thanks to all. Also to the ladies I have spoken to on the telephone.”
- “A massive thank you for everything you have done for us and having faith in us to adopt X. She is an amazing little girl who we love to bits and will do everything to make her life the best. Please say thank you to D&G for their help also.”
- “You've been with us every step of the adoption journey. We are very grateful for your support and thank you very much.”

- “Just wanted to say a massive thank you for everything. You have made the whole process easy and understandable. X is just totally amazing. We spend all day laughing and smiling and that is thanks to you and the amazing job you have done finding her. We really can't thank you enough.”

From Professional Colleagues

- I was really impressed by the social worker reports - really clear and comprehensive, but also human - the warmth of the work that had gone on with the couples was evident. And it contributed to me feeling privileged to have become, at least in a small way, part of the team!
- Compliment passed on to Family Finding -Manager via EDT in email. "Police Constable X. began by telling me that he has adopted a little girl with the support of your team. He told me his back ground (which I know you will be aware of) and how he and his wife decided to adopt. He told me this has been the most rewarding and satisfying experience of his life. He told me that it was (is?) not without some emotional difficulties but with the support of your team – and you in particular ☐ – it has made him happy beyond his wildest dreams. He was positively beaming when speaking of how you had helped him, his wife and (now) daughter. If social work intervention can be measured by empowering people and helping them to achieve positive lives I rate this in the Gold medal spot! Glad to pass on great news.

Complaints:

There have been five complaints received by the service all but one were dealt with at the informal stage. There was one case dealt with at stage 2 by the relevant local authority with involvement by Western Bay Adoption staff. This complaint related to late provision of life story work and as such, is not compressively reported in this review of service as it predated the co-location of Western Bay as a regional service.

What is apparent is that the newly emerging Western Bay Adoption Service struggled initially with cohesive communication. Certainly all of the complaints have a communication aspect and this related to either a lack of clarity around processes, personnel or accountability and as such it is anticipated that there would be a reduction in these moving forward. Certainly the latter half of the initial year indicates this to be the case.

Of the 5 that were received, 4 were dealt with at an informal stage and were resolved satisfactorily. The majority were in relation to in the main letterbox/contact/ adoption support. It is evident that the model we initially intended using to operate the letterbox system was not as responsive and proactive as recipients had previously experienced. Therefore, in terms of learning, the views of those making

representations have been considered and a redesigned and implementation of the letterbox system is underway. In addition, as indicated elsewhere in the report the issues around adoption support (and the late provision of life story/journey material) are being addressed through the work that is underway in the design and implementation of a therapeutic model for the service as a whole and on focussed activity around the performance indicators.

20. Agenda for Change/Future Challenges

One of the understated but effective achievements for the first year was the formation of the Western Bay Adoption Service. The sheer size of the task, though often taxing has been largely successful. Therefore, as well as the specific agenda for change and future challenges, for Western Bay Adoption Service it will be important to bed in the excellent ground work, building on the strengths of the service. The coming year will be an opportunity to refine what works well and focus on tackling new priorities.

For the first year of operation the Service created a regional plan based on the 8 key points of the National Adoption Service and the key priorities for change. The priorities for NAS and for the region included reducing delays for children and increasing the number of adopters approved. This was achieved therefore, the coming year will see consolidation of these achievements as well as a particular focus on adoption support.

In respect of adopters, the aim in the coming year is to increase our pool of adopters again, this year it will be in line with the NAS target. A particular focus in the region will be to address the length of time taken to assess and approve adopters, aiming to reduce this to within the NAS targets. This will be a particular challenge as the service has had a number of staff challenges and this may impact on timescales. Whilst the last year has seen a broad range of adopters available in the region, thus meeting many children's needs including the placement of older children, sibling groups and more complex children, the service has not needed to undertake specific targeted recruitment. In the coming year this will continue to be closely monitored to ensure any emerging local or national trend is translated into recruitment and assessment activity.

In respect of children, whilst the numbers of children being placed remained relatively static, the achievement of reducing delays remains a priority. In addition the coming year will be focus on improving the preparation of children and the

receipt of life journey materials. This will involve close working with the three local authority areas to improve awareness and compliance.

General planned improvements have been outlined in section 14, but the main focus next year will be on the creation of a therapeutic model for the service as a whole and a robust overhaul of the assessment and delivery of adoption support. To achieve these general and specific aims, there are many component parts but the broad aims include:

- Developing a skilled, trained and well supported adoption support team who can proactively deliver adoption support which has improved assessments of need, earlier and more robust support interventions and a reduction on the reliance of external provisions.
- Involvement of a wide range of service user's and other stakeholders in the design, creation, delivery and review of a proactive and responsive adoption support service.
- Expand the use of preventative services, such as improved adopter assessments, provision of a wider range of support groups and activities.
- Improve the communication and advertising of adoption support in the region.
- The introduction of local and national performance indicators in all aspects of adoption support. This will require additional and effective IT and data capture systems.
- Build on existing educational links to increase the interface between education colleagues and adoption support workers.
- Continue to work collaboratively with partner agencies to deliver services, such as 'Talk Adoption.
- Develop the relationship with colleagues in CAMHS with an aim of accessing the expertise and interventions available more consistently.
- Continue to have a strong presence within the NAS working groups, continuing to work on the creation of a two stage adoption recruitment model, expanding adoption support developments and improving adoption nationally.
- Improve the engagement with birth parents, looking at ways to encourage take up of adoption support both pre and post placement of their child for adoption.
- Work collaboratively with the three local authorities to improve the information available to the service, most notably the CARB.
- Working with the three local authorities, advise, guide and support the improvement in the preparation of children for adoption and improve the quality and quantity of life journey materials provided to children.

There is a robust and comprehensive training program in place which is being rolled out in the coming year for staff across the service. This will include routine and basic training as well as a comprehensive suite of specialist training aimed at improving

the adoption experience of all those engaged with the Western Bay Adoption Service. This training includes;

- Toolkit Training – the provision of a toolkit of materials and assessment/ intervention methodologies for working directly with children both on their own and with adoptive parents.
- Theraplay training for a significant number of staff across the service.
- PACE training at a basic and advanced level.
- Advanced Attachment training.
- Non Violent Resistance training.
- Task Centred intervention approaches.
- Solution Focused Intervention approaches.
- Motivational Interviewing Techniques.
- DDP level 1.
- Evidenced Based Assessments.

The training program is aimed at ensuring sufficient staff in all three functions are trained to a high standard which will improve all aspects of service user experience. This will include the assessment of adopters, the matching and placement of children and the delivery of low level and complex adoption support.

21. Conclusion

The focus in 2015/16 has been on the placement of children, avoiding delays and on the recruitment and assessment of adopters. Western Bay has largely delivered on these two broad aims, with particular success in terms of:

- Reducing the reliance on interagency placements.
- Increasing local placements.
- Reducing the number of children waiting 6 months or more from ‘Should be Placed’ decision to an approved match.
- Successful placement of a number of harder to place children, older children and sibling groups, including two groups of three children.
- Increasing the number and range of adopters available.
- Development of a coherent and unified adoption allowance policy.
- Creation of a central list and well organised adoption panel.
- Expansion of routine and basic adoption support groups for children and adopters.

There has been recognition that the coming year will need to focus more on adoption support, which is both a local and national agenda priority. This will commence with

training and a review of the IT arrangements for adoption support and will include revising the assessment process and intervention plans. Engaging more fully with stakeholders, in particular service users in the shape of and delivery of services will be an integral part of the development of adoption support in 2016/17.

Appendices

Appendix

A. Staffing Structure / functional model

B. Service Plan 2015/16

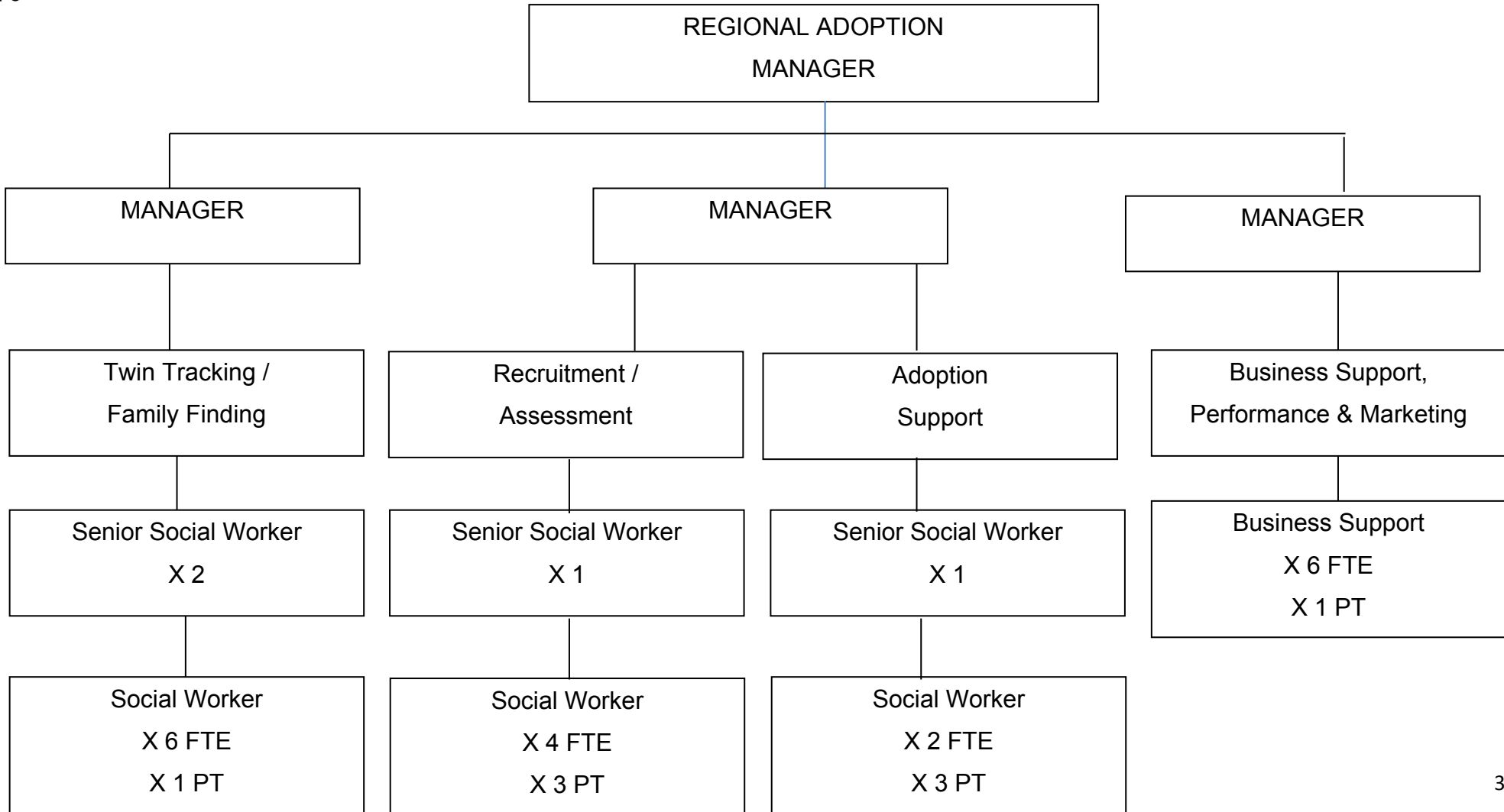
C. Panel Membership Chart

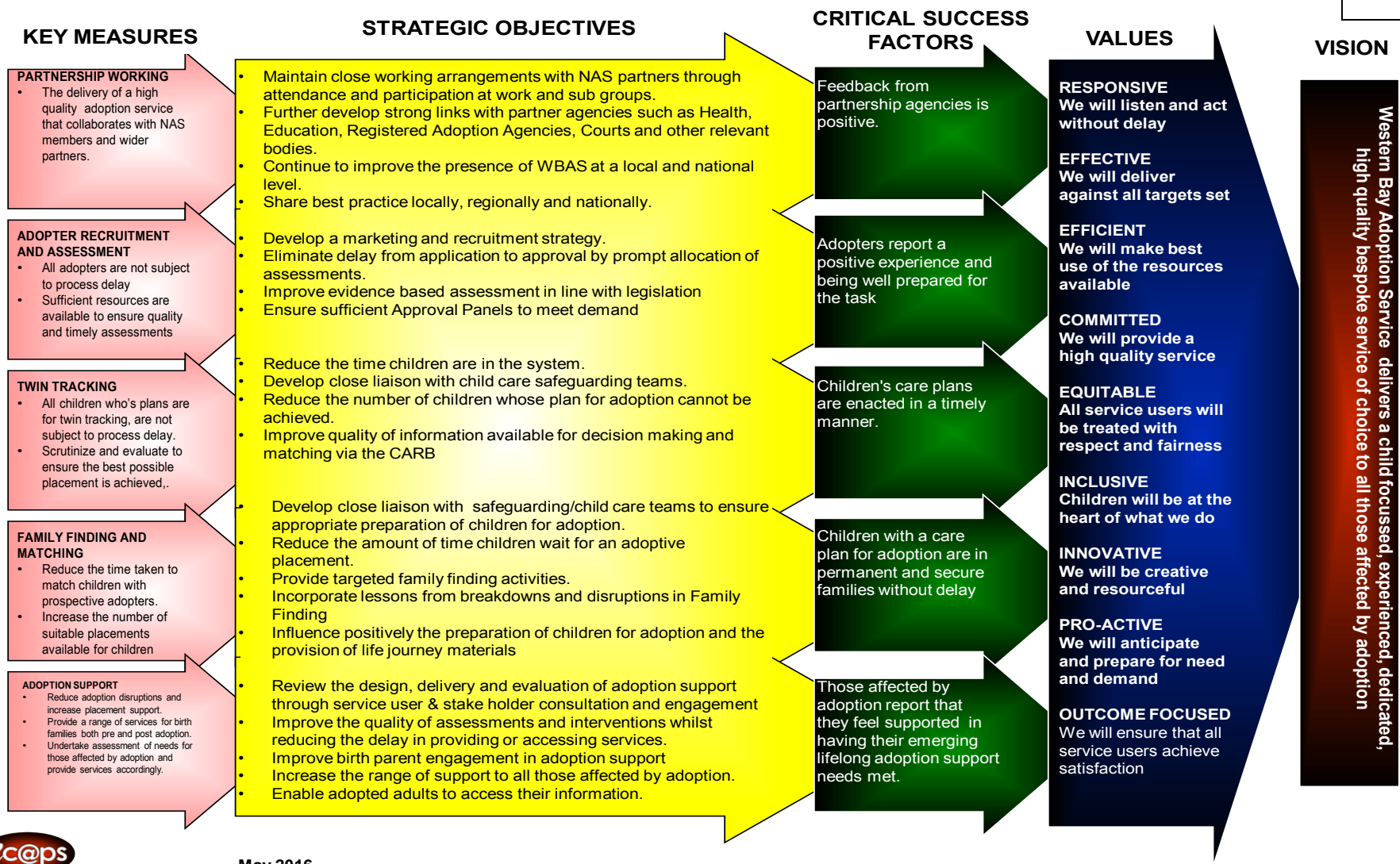
Date completed: 3rd June 2016

Authors: Val Jones, Regional Adoption Manager
Karen Williams, Adoption Manager, Recruitment /Assessment & Adoption Support

APPENDIX A

WESTERN BAY ADOPTION SERVICE





May 2016

APPENDIX C**Western Bay Adoption Service Central List**

WBAS runs one panel which is chaired by an Independent Chair. The panel is conducted in three venues spread across the region ensuring ease of access for adopters, presenting social workers and panel members.

	Name	Role on Panel	Comments
	Ruth Peggrem	Chair	
1	Dr Peter Barnes	Medical Advisor	
2	Dr Janet Harris	Medical Advisor	
3	Cllr Jan Curtis	Independent Member	
4	Cllr Peter Richards	Independent Member	
5	Dodie Thomas	Social Work Member	
6	Wendy Kreppel	Independent Member	
7	Leslie MacGregor	Independent Member	Adoptee
8	Deborah Hutchinson	Independent Member	Education
9	Rita Heady	Independent Member	
10	Julie Barker	Independent Member	Special Needs
11	Debbie Doogue	Social Work Member	
12	Samantha Jones	Independent Member	Education
13	Teresa Griffiths	Independent Member	
14	Helen Lewis	Independent Member	Adopter
15	Rachel Jones	Social Work Member	
16	Joanne Antony	Independent Member	
17	Dave Lawson	Independent Member	Adoptee
18	Davina Ennis	Social Work Member	
19	Carly Crocker	Social Work Member	
20	Ian Ambrose	Independent Member	Adopter
21	Sarah Young	Social Work Member	
22	Sarah Webb	Social Work Member	
23	Nicky Sneezum	Independent Member	Education
24	Jodie Williams	Social Work Member	
25	Sharon James	Social Work Member	

Panel members for 2015/16

National Adoption Service for Wales

Quarter 4 Year End Performance Report 2015-16



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd

This report contains all the indicators currently available on the Aspireview performance measurement system plus data on Placement orders and Adoption Support which is being collected separately. It also contains some details about children and adopters who were on the Wales Adoption Register at the end of March 2016. For section the format is:

- Quarter 4 and year end performance for 2015-16 for each Region and VAA and the All Wales number, average and/or %;
- Aggregate data for the seven quarters since April 2014; and
- Year to date position, compared to the 2014-15 figures and any relevant targets.

Glossary

MWAS: Mid & West Wales Adoption Service

WB: Western Bay Adoption Service

NWAS: North Wales Adoption Service

B: Barnardo's Cymru

SEWAS: South East Wales Adoption Service

St D: St David's Children Society.

VVC: Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Service

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Overview by Director of Operations

Children continue to be placed more quickly. The average length of time between a child becoming looked after and being placed for adoption was 15.2 months (463 days) in 2015/16. This shows promising continued improvement from an average of 16.6¹ months last year with all regions reducing their average over the year. There is variation quarter to quarter over the year with regions reporting challenges linked to the court process, assessment and matching for longer averages. It is a considerable achievement that this is now at the shortest time since 2002/3, the earliest records we can access.

The number of children who waited more than 6 months to be matched with a family reduced by 30% in 2015/16 to 174 children. This is 53% of children matched compared to 67% last year.

Fewer children who have an adoption plan had this plan changed; just 25 children compared to 78 in 14/15 and 180 the previous year, a reduction of 68%. NAS surpassed its target to reduce this by 50%.

326 children were placed for adoption in 2015/16. This is 16% fewer than the 386 children placed during 2014/15. The number of placement orders made by the courts in Wales fell by 20% in 2014/15 and continued at a lower level during 15/16. NAS data suggests that the number of placement orders made in Wales fell by a further 6% during 15/16 but this will not be verified until Welsh Government publishes its data on placement orders later in the year. **Of the children placed 48 were placed with the two Wales based VAA's;** this is a similar level to last year before although the proportionate usage of each agency changed.

The number of children waiting for an adoption placement has continued to fall. The number of children with a 'should be placed' decision who are not yet placed fell by a further 11% this year to 288 children. This represents an overall reduction in children waiting of 24% since April 2014. There is a link between the reduction in children with an adoption plan and fewer children waiting but the reduction also reflects the fact that children are being placed more quickly and that in some areas children with very complex needs who had been waiting long periods of time have now been successfully placed. Whilst 20% (57 children) did not yet have a placement order and 11% (31 children) had been matched but not yet moved into their adoptive home, the remaining 69% or 200 of these children had a Placement Order and were waiting to be matched; it is these children that adoption services should have a bigger impact on.

The number of children on the Wales Adoption Register with no or limited potential for a match has been consistently low. At the end of the year 38 children of the 54 children for whom there was active searching had no or limited potential for a match with the adopters available. This varies on a day to day basis and has been consistently 30-35 children. Of the children where there was no likely match 50% were part of a sibling group and 42% had significant needs.

¹ The published figure last year was 16.4 months but revisions to last year's data made by agencies this year has changed this to 16.6 months

Levels of disruption remain low; a similar number of matches did not proceed to placement or broke down before the order was granted as last year, 3% and 4% respectively. The reported number of looked after children known to have been previously adopted has reduced from 34 in 2014-15 to 8 in 2015-16.

Performance in relation to the provision of 'life journey' materials has improved. This is in place for 49% of children when it should be, compared to 23% in 2014/15..

The new indicator in relation to adoption support plans shows promising performance. It indicates that for all new placements there has been an assessment of the need for adoption support services and where there is a resulting plan this was discussed with the adopter.

320 adopters were approved in 2015/16. This is an increase of 9% on the level approved last year. This is an acceptable increase given the reduction in placement orders being made which led us to revise our recruitment target and strategies during the year. **At the end of the year there were more adopters on the Wales Adoption Register than children;** 110 adopters looking for a match of 173 registered. Of those adopters with no potential match, 90% were looking for a single child and 34% a child under 2 years.

There has been a further improvement in the average length of time it takes for adopter to be approved. On average adopters in wales are approved within 8.6 months, improvement in this has gathered pace as the year progressed and has been sustained in the later part of the year.

There was a 3% increase in number of enquiries about adoption and a 1% increase in the proportion of prospective adopters having an initial, visit or attending an information evening. There were 1,197 enquiries during the year, 36 more than the previous year. **97% of these enquiries received a response within 5 working days.**

The proportion of adopters not proceeding beyond an initial enquiry remains at around one third. On a quarter by quarter basis this shows significant variations and there are also variations between agencies. The review of these in a VAA and two regions has shown that suggested that drop off rates were primarily about personal choice by adopters rather than processes but the current context, namely fewer children with increasingly complexity available, is having an impact on adopters' choices. We have changed our recruitment strategy in the light of this changing context.

The service to birth parents has begun to improve but further work is needed in relation to take up. 661 birth parents were referred to adoption services 97% of which were offered a service. The proportion of birth parents taking this up has improved from 18% to 24% this year.

Children Waiting



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

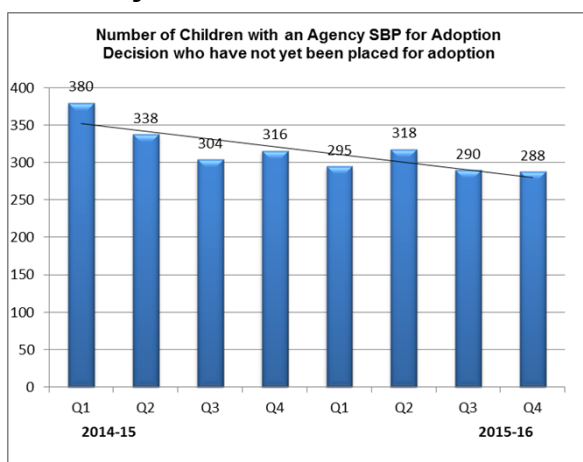
- 9% decrease (n=28) in number of children waiting at the end of the year
- Trend since April 2014 is downwards, with a 24% reduction since April 2014



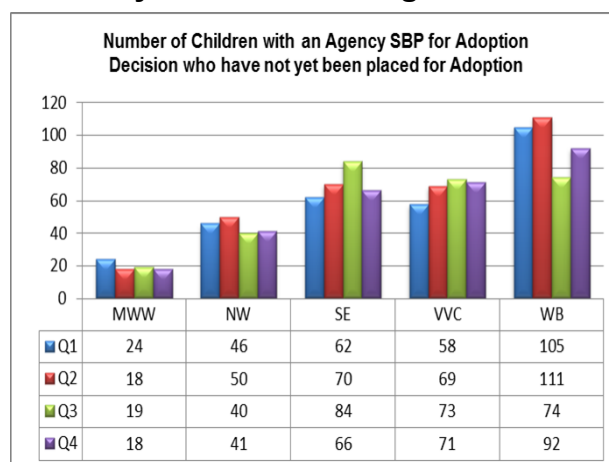
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- 1% decrease (n=2)

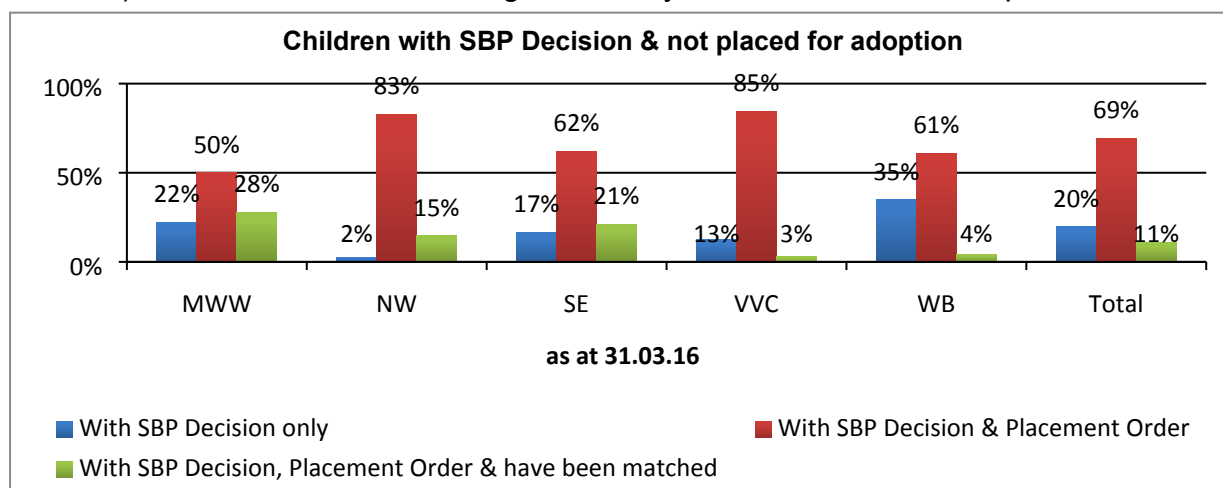
Quarterly breakdown - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



The following graph shows the breakdown of those children with a SBP decision. Of these 69% or 200 children had a Placement Order and were waiting to be matched; 20% (57 children) did not yet have a placement order and the remaining 11% (31 children) had been matched although had not yet moved into their adoptive home..



Story behind the Data

North Wales – 11 children without identified links. 23 children on hold for potential links. 6 matched in introductions. 1 child waiting placement order.

Western Bay – increase in Q4 of placement orders granted.

Children placed for Adoption

Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

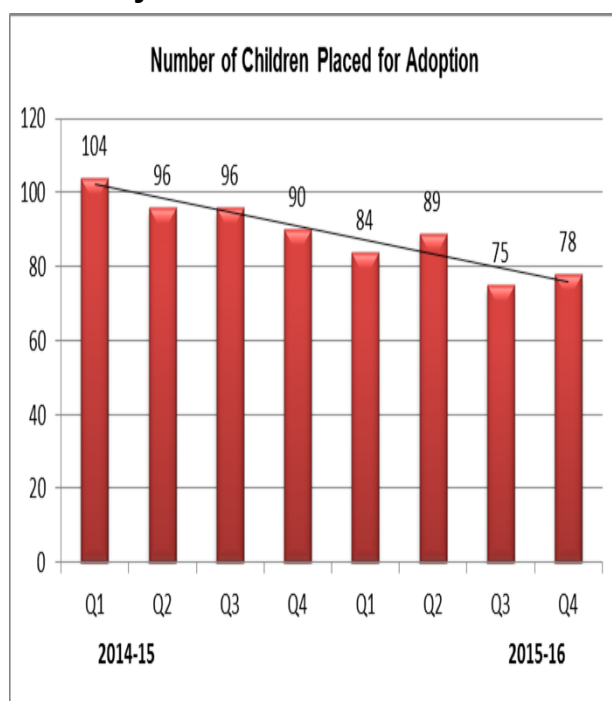
- 326 children placed for adoption during 2015-16
- 16% decrease in number of children placed for adoption
- Of the 326 children placed for adoption, 48 were placed with adopters provided by Barnardo's (n=3) and St David's (n=45)

Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

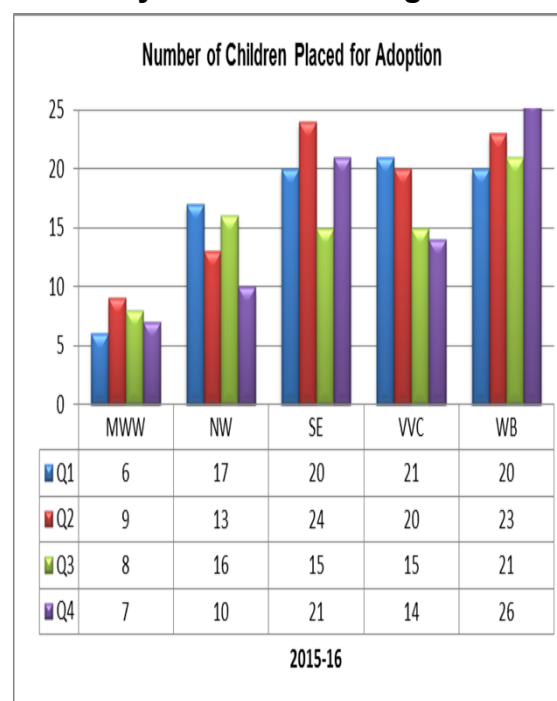
- 3% decrease from quarter 3 to quarter 4

The number of placement orders made by the courts in Wales fell by 20% in 2014/15 and continued at a lower level during 15/16. This determines the number of children available for placement. NAS data suggests that the number of placement orders made in Wales fell by a further 6% during 15/16 but this will not be verified until Welsh Government publishes its data on placement orders later in the year.

Quarterly breakdown - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



Story behind the Data

Mid & West Wales – 1 child – potential link did not proceed and 1 child – introductions made but did not proceed to a placement.

Barnardo's – 2 of the placements made did not continue

Time taken for a child to be placed for adoption

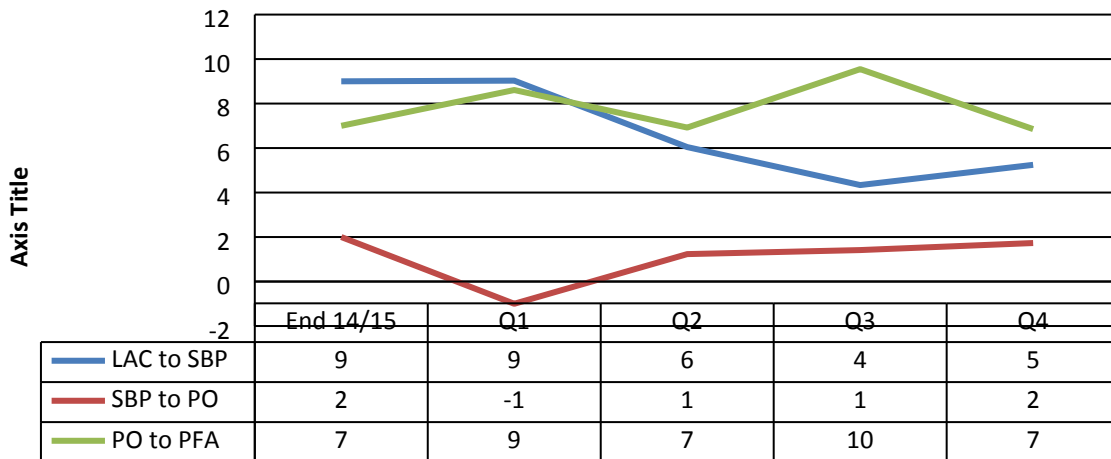


The table shows average time in months from the three key decision making points to the date a child is placed for adoption i.e. the most recent episode of becoming looked after / the 'Should be Placed' for adoption decision / the granting of the Placement Order.

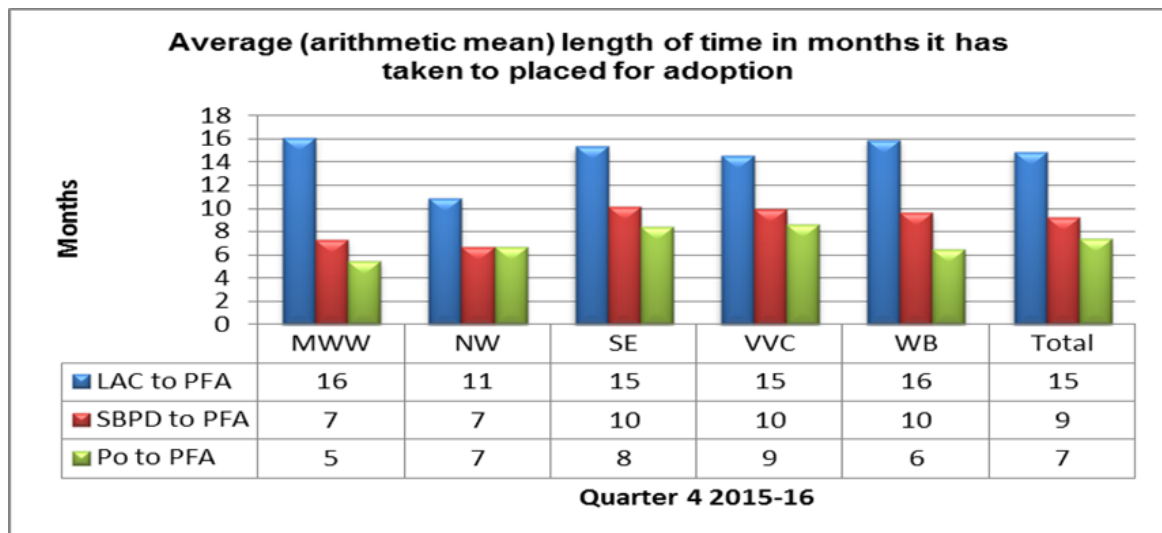
With the exception of Should Be Placed Decision to being placed for adoption which is often determined by court processes there is improvement during 2015/16.

- Becoming 'looked after' to being placed for adoption has reduced by 3 months during the year;
- There has been a decrease of 3 months from the granting of the Placement Order to being placed for adoption during the year.

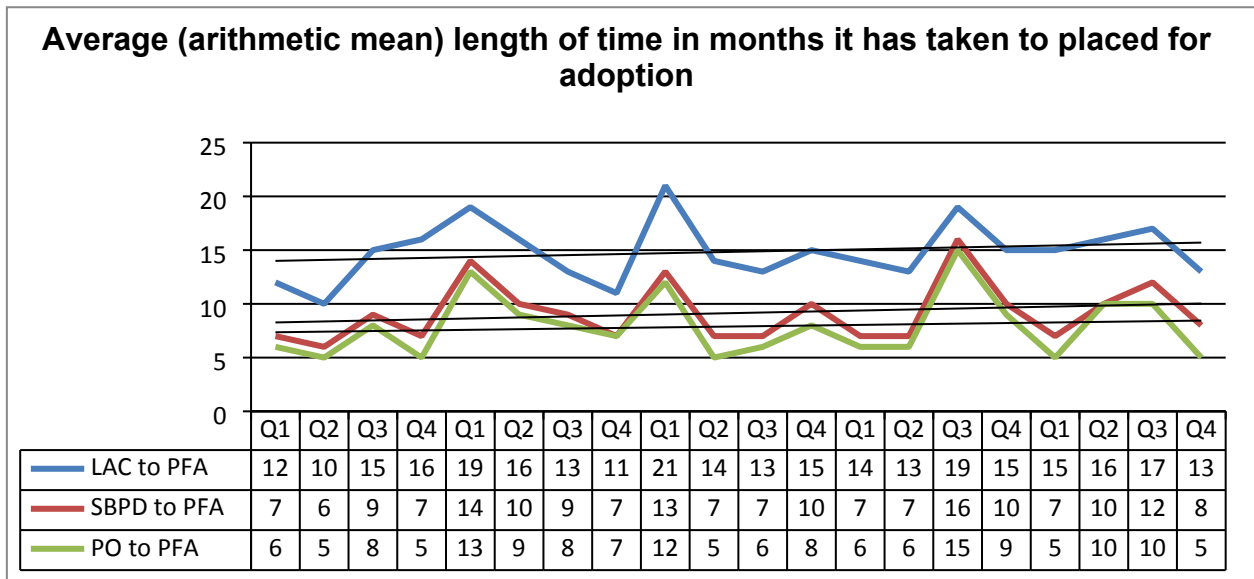
Averages - All Wales



Averages by region



Regional averages by quarter



Time taken between LAC and Placement for Adoption



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

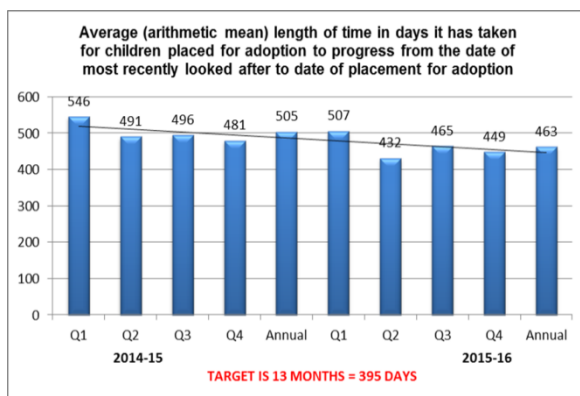
- Average decreased from 16.6² months (505 days) to 15.2 months (463 days)
- The average number of days has fallen by 38% since 2002-03 and is at the lowest level since this time.



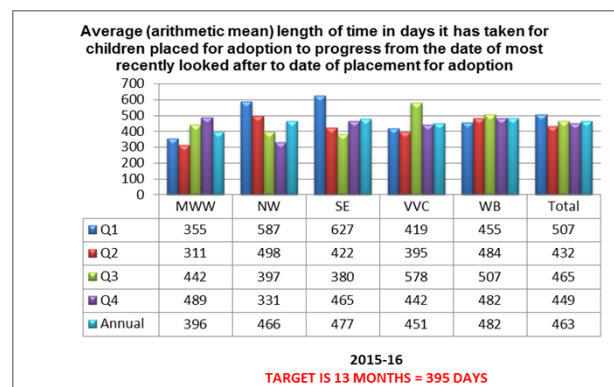
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- Average in quarter 4 was 14.8 months (449 days), a drop from 15.3 months in quarter 3
- North Wales achieved the target in quarter 4 and Mid & West Wales achieved the target in their whole year average.

Quarterly breakdown - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



² The published figure last year was 16.4 months but revisions to last year's data made by agencies this year has changed this to 16.6 months

Story behind the Data

Mid & West Wales – 1 child – delay in care proceedings due to failed rehabilitation; 2 children – family finding – one family withdrew.

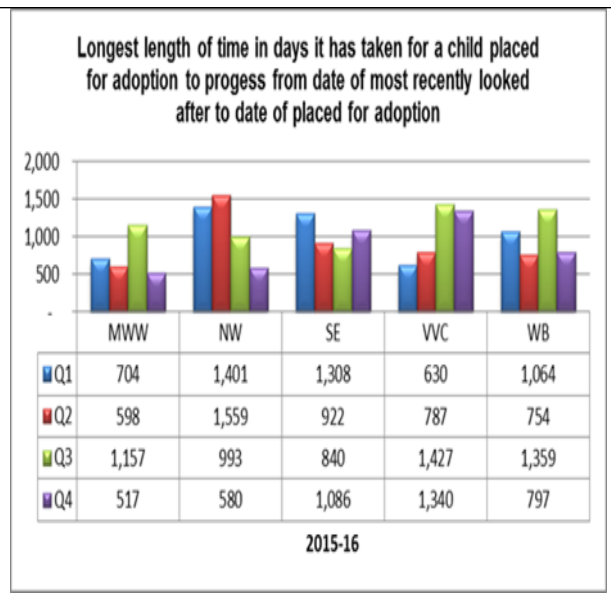
North Wales – delay – child matched but birth parents appealed placement order, therefore, unable to place.

Longest times taken – individual instances

In quarter 4 it shows a variance from 17 to 44 months

Mid & West Wales – 517 days – difficulties engaging birth mother.

Vale, Valleys & Cardiff – longest child – delays due to attachment assessment, match identified in October 15 but unable to proceed until therapeutic assessment completed and support needs identified.



Time taken between SBPA and Placement for Adoption

This is the second indicator that calculates the average time taken for a child to be placed for adoption, taking the measure from the time when the local authority formally decides that adoption is the plan for a child.



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

Average decreased from 11 months (342 days) to 9.6 months (291 days)



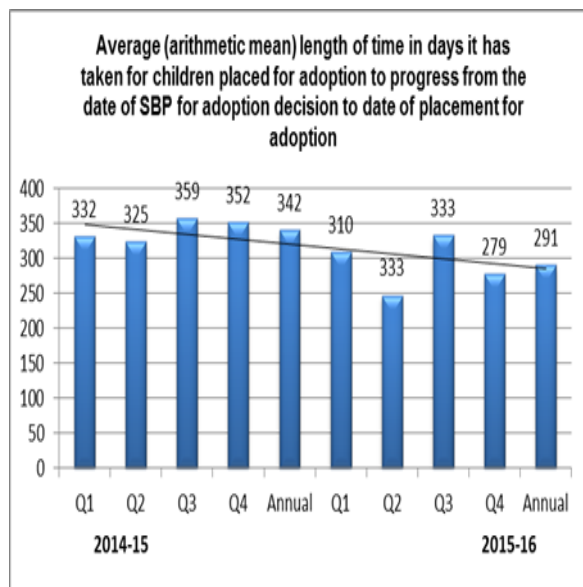
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- Average in quarter 4 was 9.6 months (293 days), a decrease from 11 months (333 days) in quarter 3
- There is variance between regions in quarter 4, ranging from 7 to 10 months,
- Trend line since April 2014 is downwards.

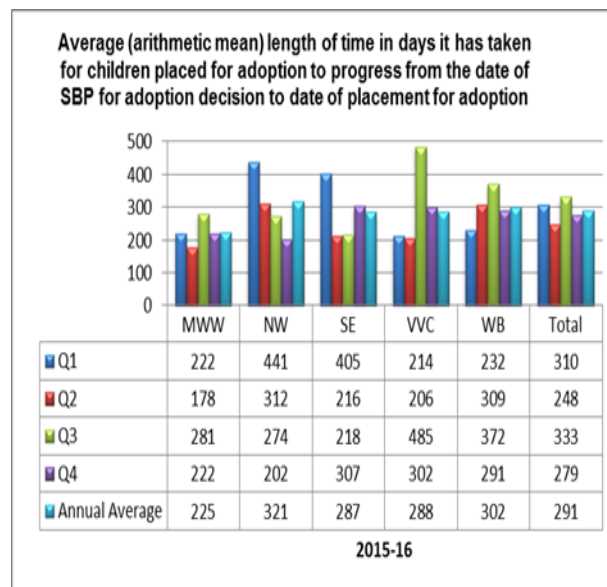
For this indicator and the previous one (see page 7) some elements of the process may be outside of the Adoption Service's control, for example, care planning pre and during court proceedings.

Should be placed for adoption decision to placement

Quarterly breakdown - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



Story behind the Data

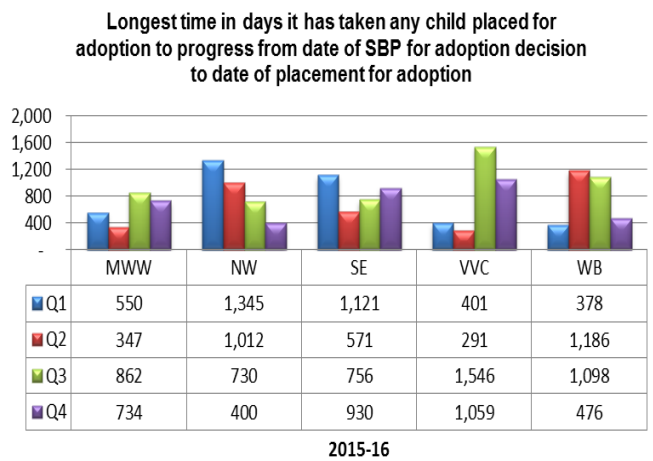
North Wales – child's first placement disrupted with a second placement found approximately 210 days later but overall 400 days shown as should be placed decision date does not alter.

Western Bay – a number of young children with no specific needs were placed in quarter 4.

Longest times taken – individual instances

In quarter 4 there was variance from 13 to 35 months.

Sometimes longer times are due to a harder to place child; finding a suitable family is good news.



Time Taken between Placement Order and Placement for Adoption



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- Average has remained at 7 months (201 days)



Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- Average length of time for children to progress from date of placement order to date of placement for adoption in quarter 4 was 7 months, a decrease from 10 months at quarter 3
- Performance between the regions varies from 5.5 months to 8.5 months.

Placement Orders

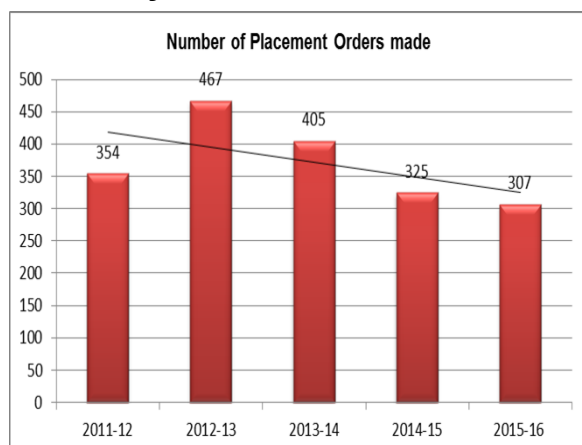
Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- 6% decrease in number of placement orders reported to NAS as granted (from 325 to 307)

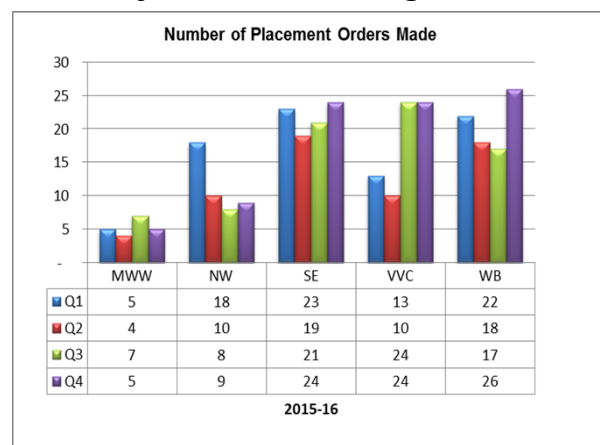
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- 14% decrease in number of placement orders made (from 77 to 88)
- The trend line from 2011-12 to 2015-16 is downwards

Last five years - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



As noted earlier the number of placement orders made by the courts in Wales fell by 20% in 2014/15 and continued at a lower level during 15/16. NAS data suggests that the number of placement orders made in Wales fell by a further 6% during 15/16 but this will not be verified until Welsh Government publishes its data on placement orders later in the year.

Children Matched

Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16



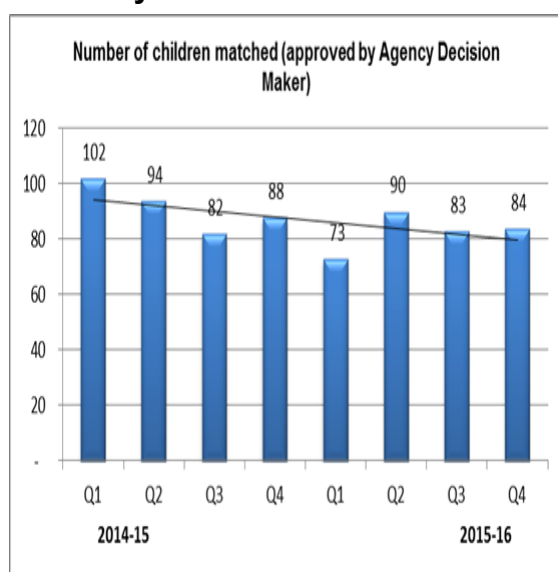
As a consequence of fewer placement orders being made, there were 10% fewer children matched (from 366 to 330)



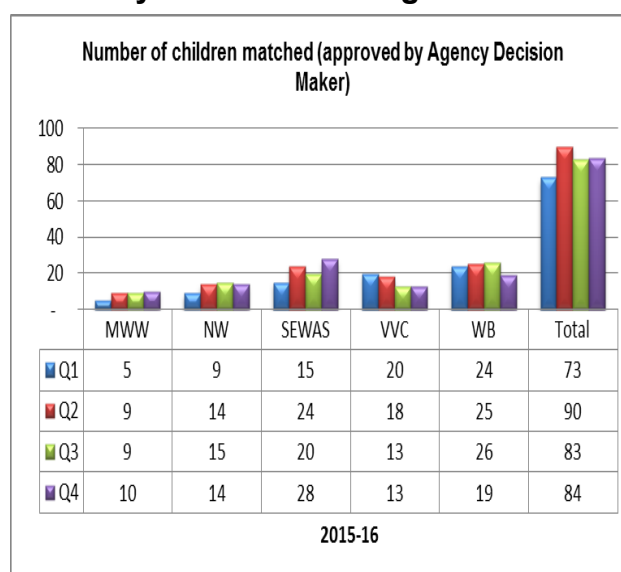
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- There was an increase of 1% although the trend line is downwards.

Quarterly breakdown - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



Children Matched waiting longer than 6 months

Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16



- Number of children waiting longer than 6 months has reduced by 30% (247 to 174)
- Year end performance for 2015-16 is 53%

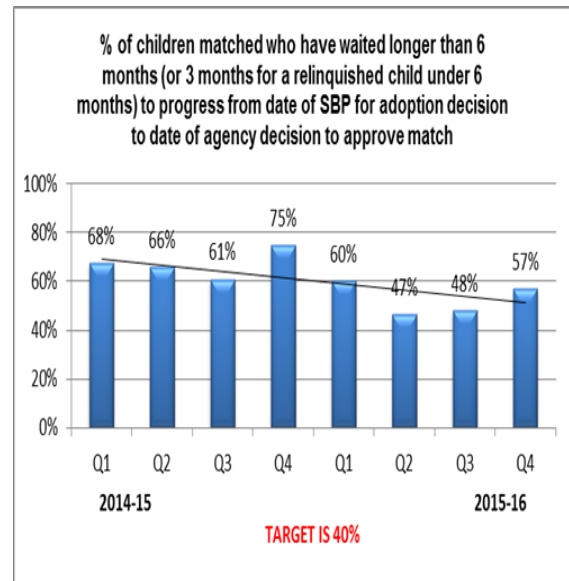
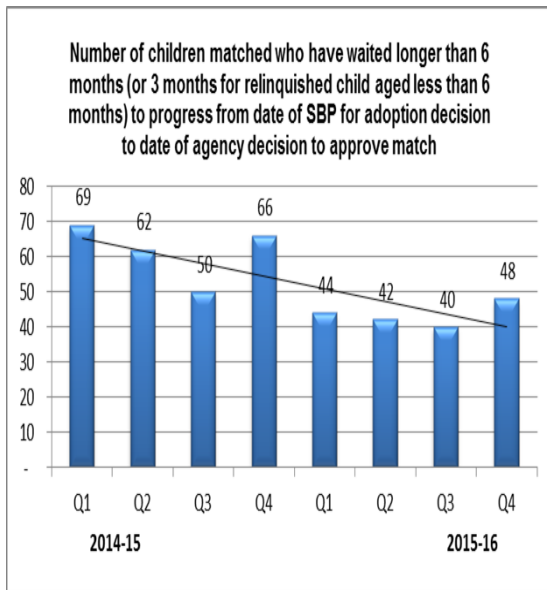
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4



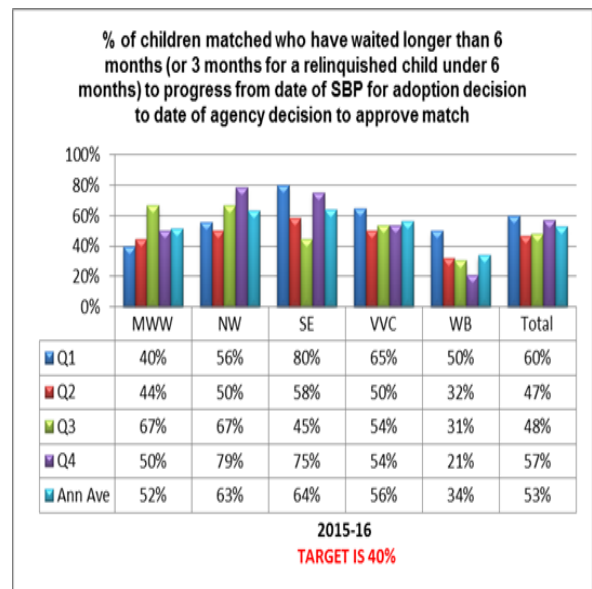
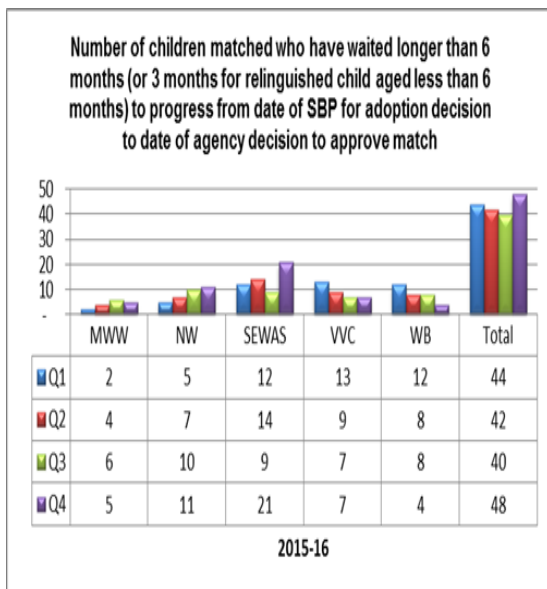
48 children waited longer than 6 months during quarter 4

- 42% reduction since April 2014 but all Wales average increased to 57% in quarter 4
- WB have again achieved target of 40% in quarter 4

National level - Number and percentage of children matched who waited longer than 6 months (3 if a relinquished children under 6 months)



Regional level - Number and percentage of children matched who waited longer than 6 months (3 if a relinquished children under 6 months)



Story behind the Data

Mid & West Wales: 2 children – delay in placement order being granted. 2 children – joint placement sought, one potential link via WAR did not proceed causing delay.

Vale, Valley & Cardiff – 1. Placement with foster carer, foster carer assessed; 2. Sibling group – difficult to find placement; 3. Child placed with siblings - time allowed for assessment of adopter; 4. Legal challenge from mother led to delay

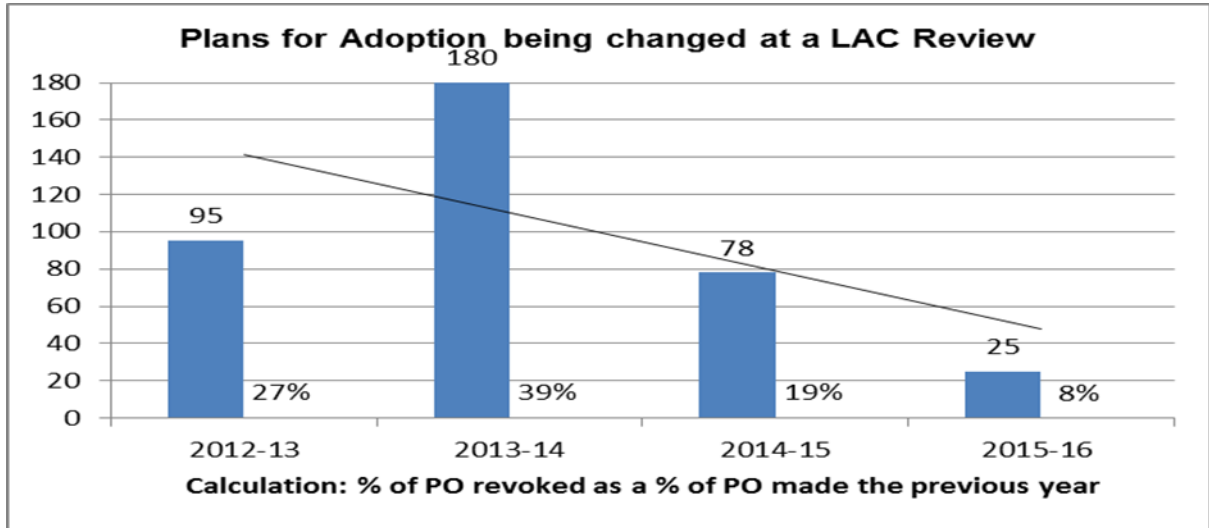
Western Bay – robust family finding process obtains interagency fee agreement at an early stage.

Plans for Adoption being changed

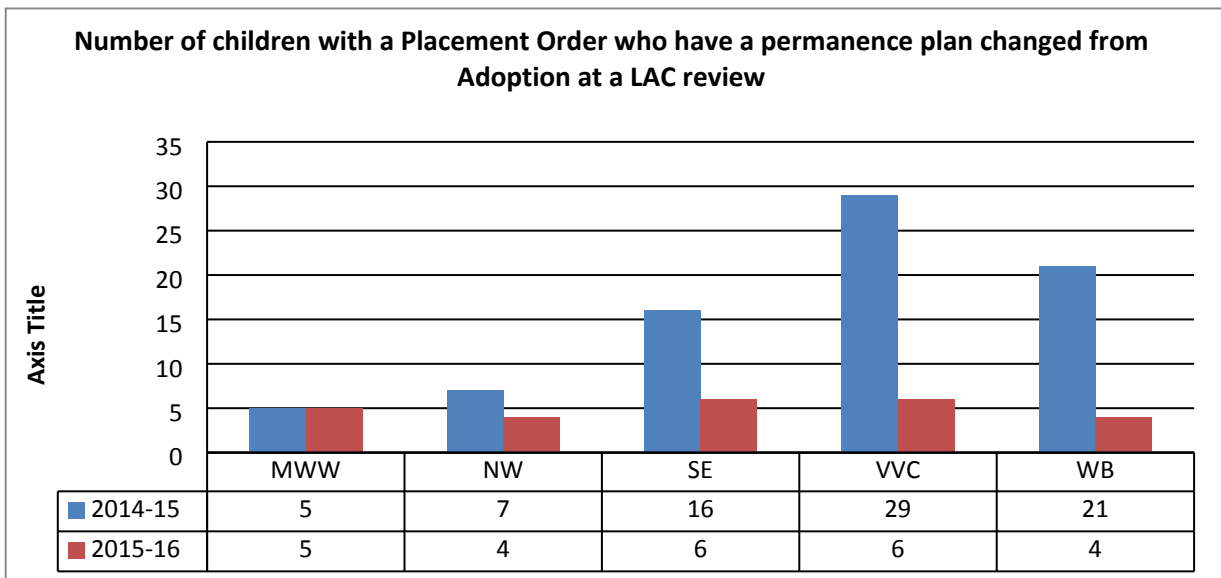
Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16



Numbers of plans for adoption being changed has reduced by 68% (78 to 25)



Regional level – number and percentage of children who have a permanence plan changed at a LAC review



Story behind the data

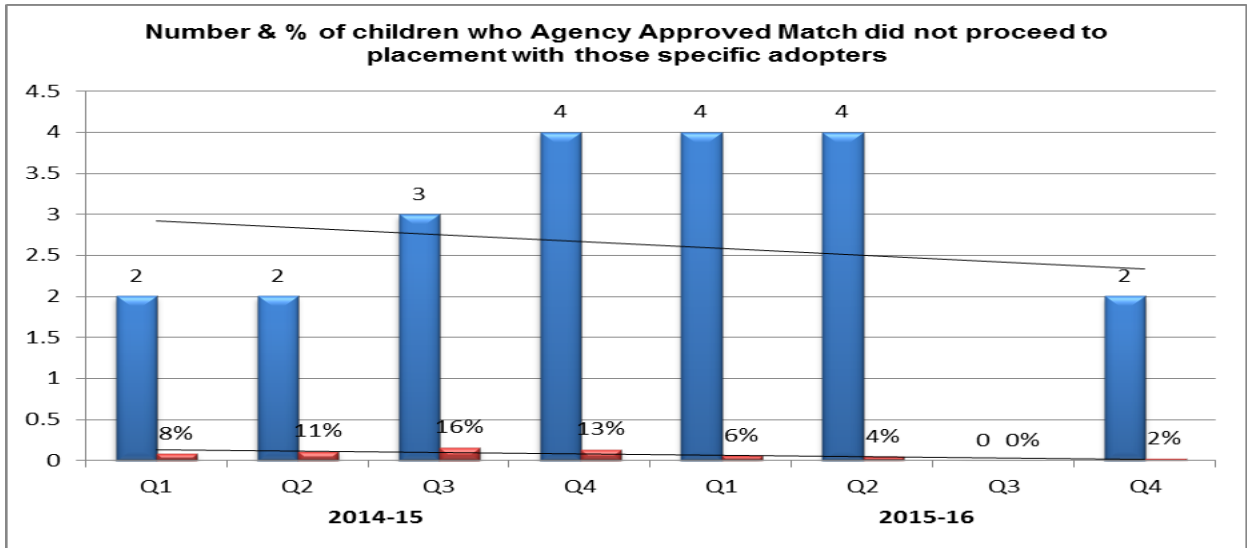
North Wales – 1 sibling group.

Adoption Disruption – placements not proceeding

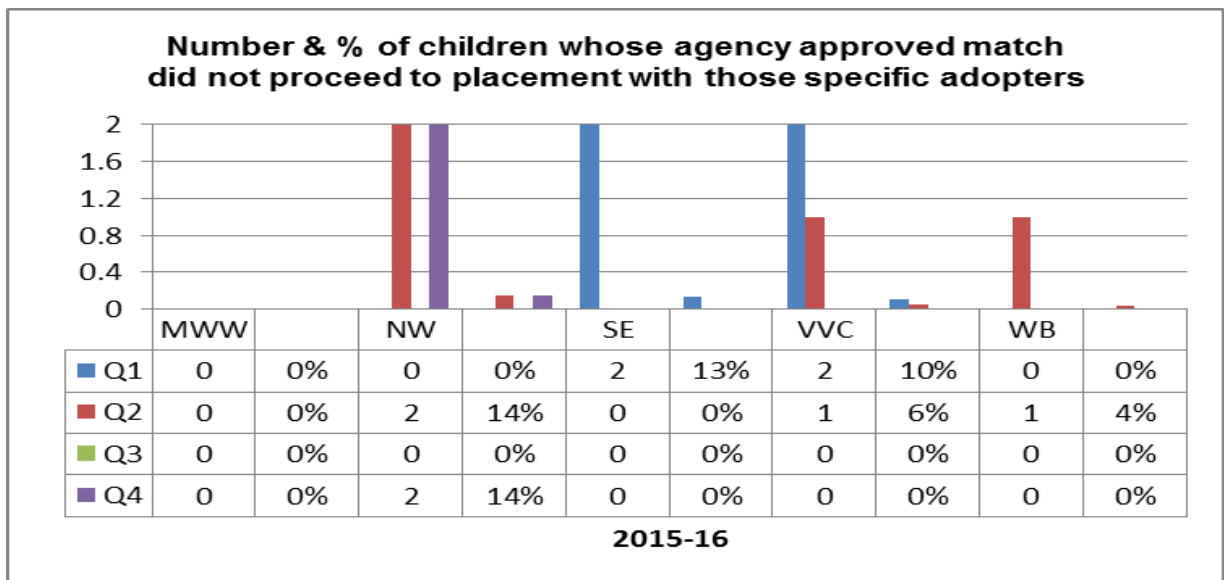


Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- Reduction from 12% to 3% of placements did not proceed
- Number has reduced by 1 (11 to 10 children) or 9%
- Trend-line for actual numbers and % is down.



Regional level – number and percentage of children whose match did not proceed



Adoption Disruption - Post Placement



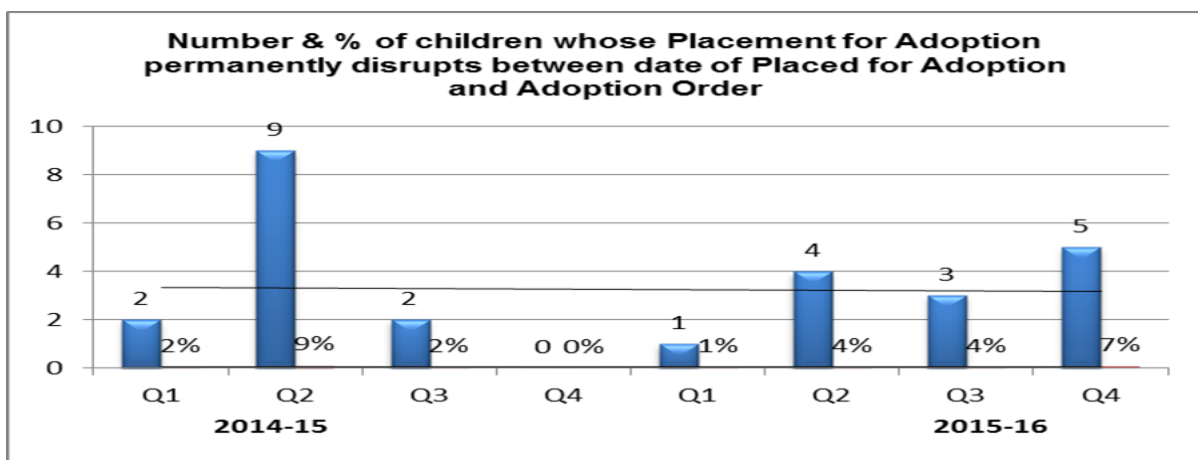
Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- Number of disruptions was 13 in both years which represents 3% and 4% respectively. Trend-line is static
- The reported number of looked after children who were known to have been previously adopted has reduced from 34 to 8.

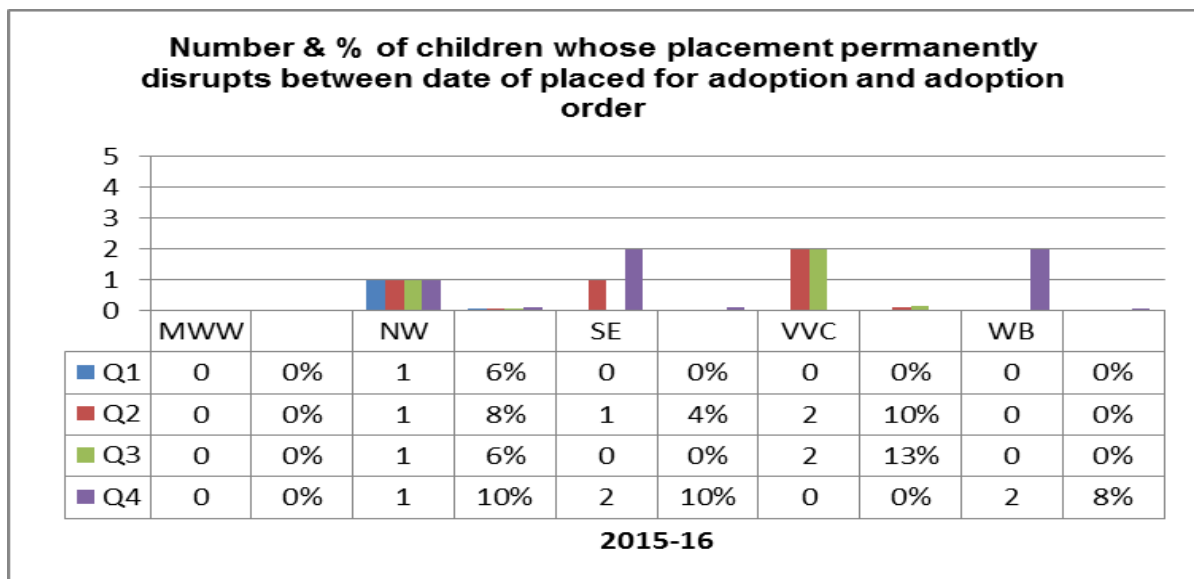


Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- Numbers of disruptions increased from 3 to 5



Regional level – number and percentage of children whose placement disrupted before the order was granted



Story behind the data

Western Bay – children placed outside of Western Bay adopters.

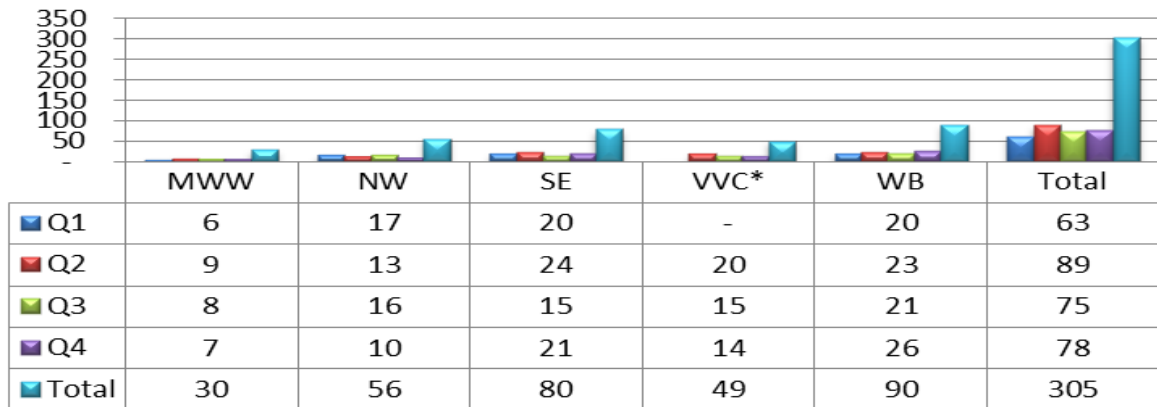
Adoption Support



Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

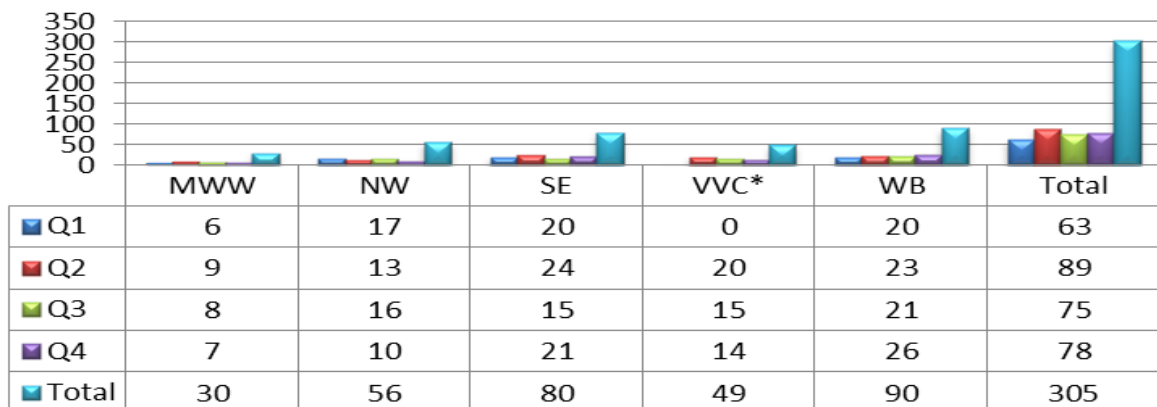
- Quarter 4 data shows 100% achievement for those children with an adoption support plan has been discussed with the adopters.

Number of Children placed for Adoption who have had an assessment for adoption support



*VVC data not available for quarter 1

Number of children placed for adoption whose plan for adoption support has been discussed with the adopters



*VVC data not available for quarter 1

Life Journey Material



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

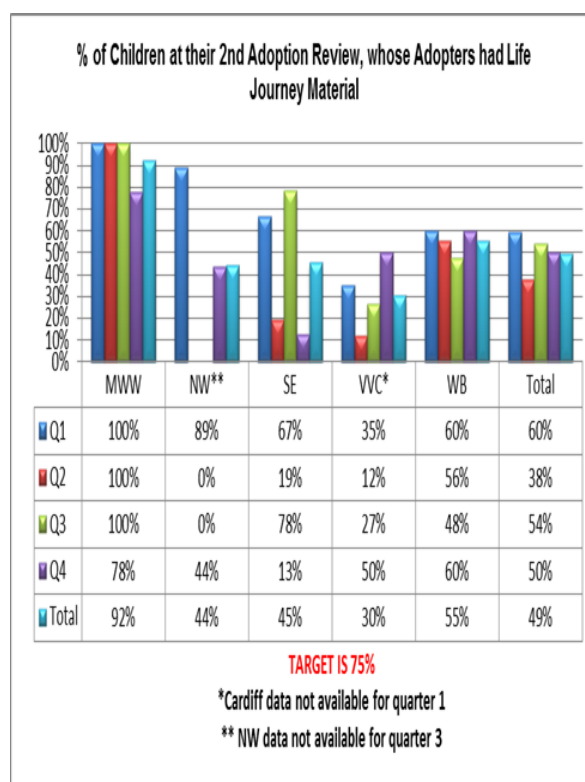
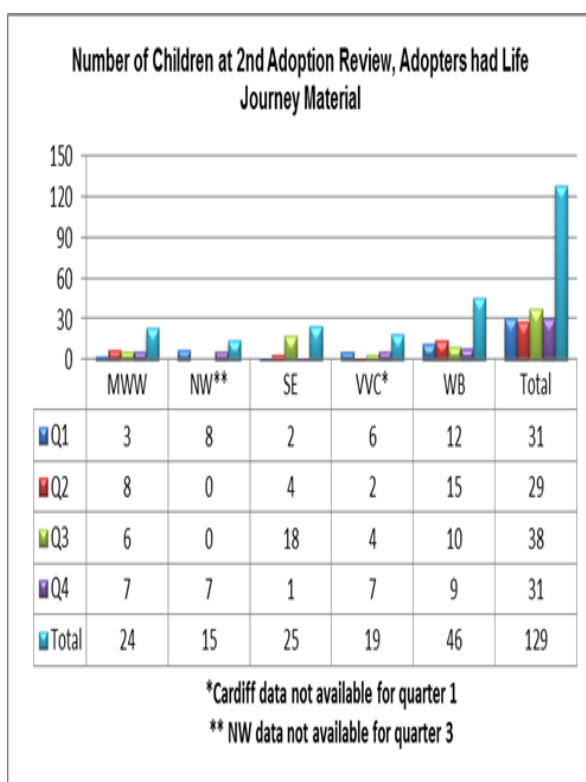
- The percentage of children receiving life journey materials by the required time has improved to 49% at year-end compared to 24% last year



Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- Performance has declined slightly from quarter 3 to quarter 4, from 54% to 50%
- Target is 75%
- Mid and West Wales achieved the target in quarter 4.

Numbers and Percentages – children receiving life journey materials by the 2nd adoption review



Story behind the data

Mid & West Wales – 1 child – delay due to awaiting photographs from birth parents.

North Wales – plus 7 in progress – social worker prefers to provide after the adoption order.

Initial Enquiries to Adopt

Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16



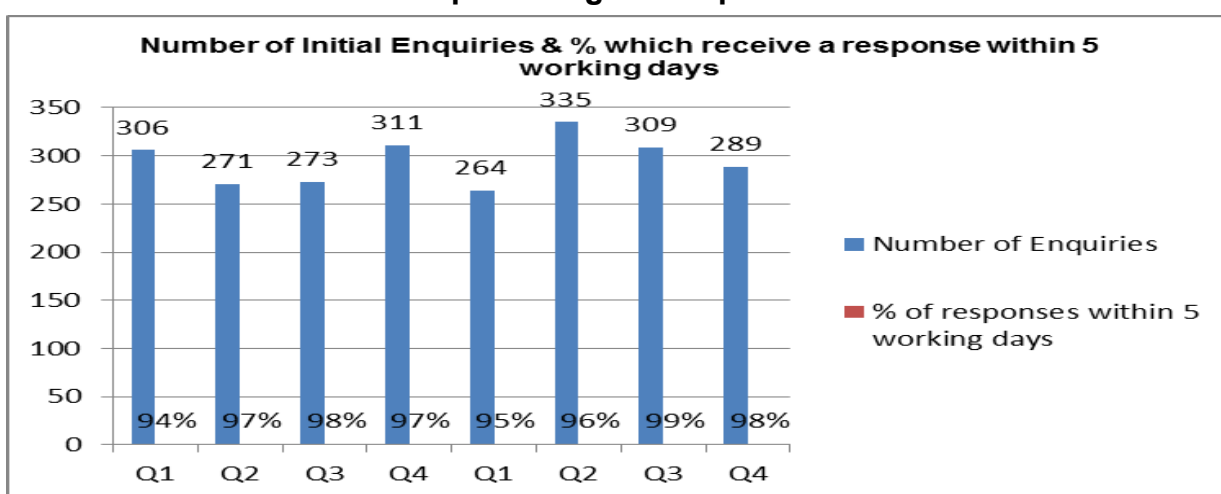
- 3% increase in number of enquiries (from 1,161 to 1,197)
- Increase from 97% to 98% of enquiries responded to within 5 working days

Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

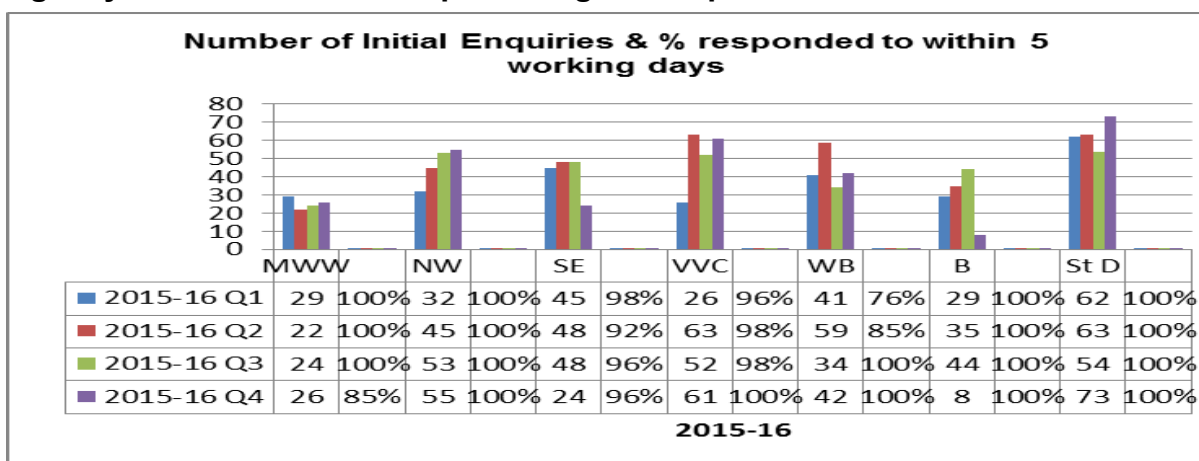


- Quarter 4 numbers have dropped slightly by 6% to 289
- Total of 1,197 enquiries for 2015-16
- For quarter 4 performance is 98% with 5 enquiries not being responded to within the 5 working days.

National Level – number and percentage of enquiries



Agency Level – number and percentage of enquiries



Story behind the data

Western Bay – With 178 enquiries this year, a total of 40 up on the previous year. Performance is extremely good and there is an average of 44/45 enquiries per quarter. Despite WBAS target of to make contact within 7 days, a significant number of adopters were unable to accommodate.

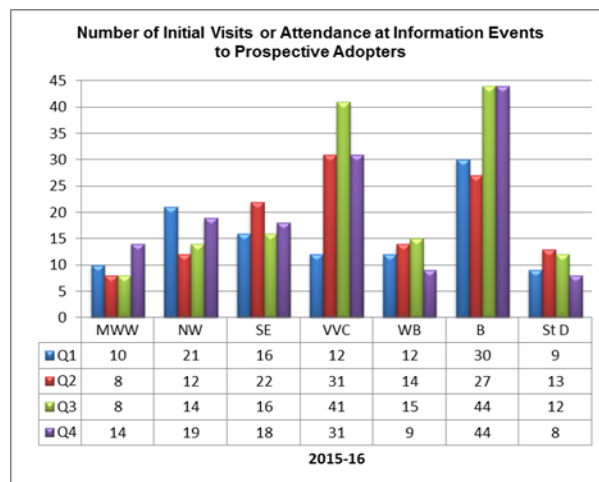
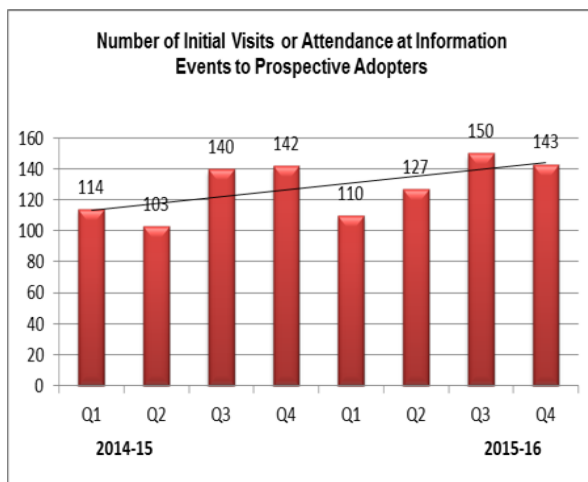
Initial Visits or Attendance at Information Events to Prospective Adopters

Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16



6% increase (from 499 to 530) although there is quarterly variation

National and agency level – adopter attendance at information / initial follow ups



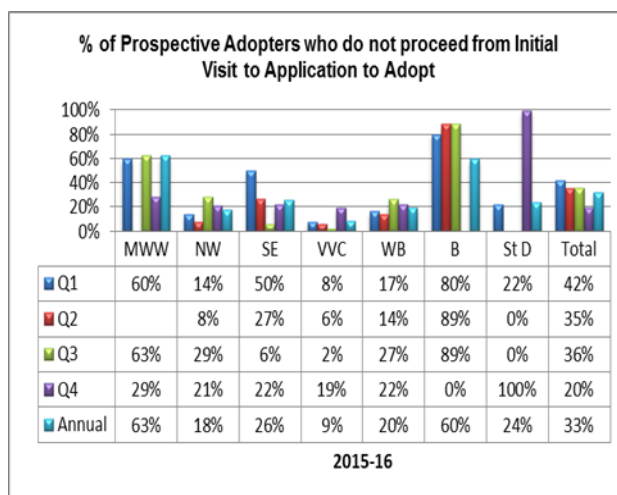
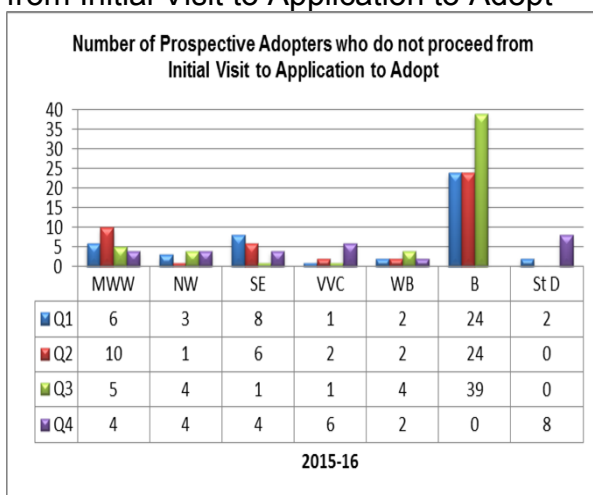
Number of Prospective Adopters who do not proceed from Initial Visit to Application to Adopt



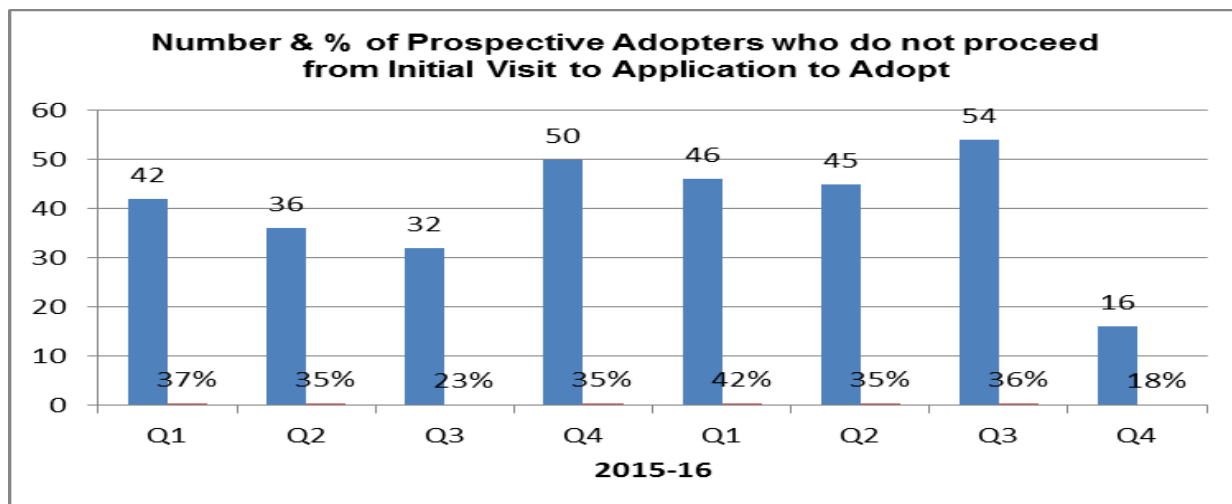
Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- Average over the year is 33% - a similar proportion to last year

Agency level data for 2015-16 - number of Prospective Adopters who do not proceed from Initial Visit to Application to Adopt



There are quarterly variations over the year.



Story behind the data

Mid & West Wales – 1 individual – agreed not suitable; 1 – too many challenges and uncertainties; and 1 – change of mind.

North Wales – adopters did not feel it was the right time to start the process.

Western Bay – 2 withdrew at the end of the assessment for specific reasons both were being assessed for a specific child.

Approval of Adopters



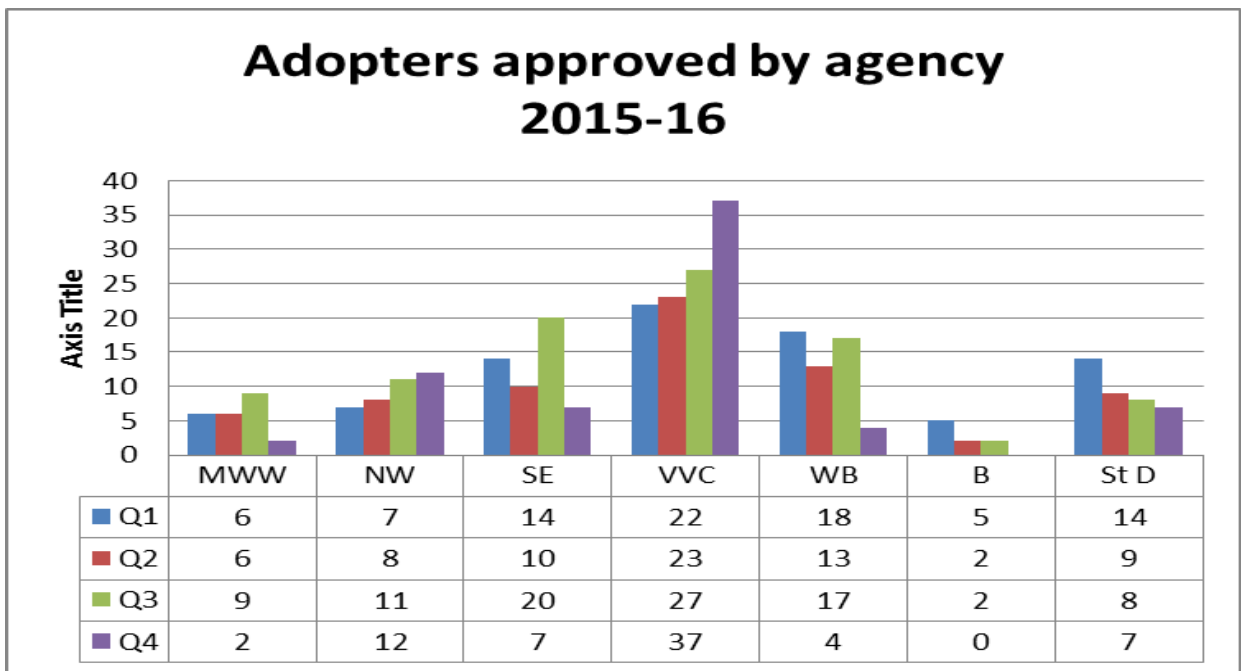
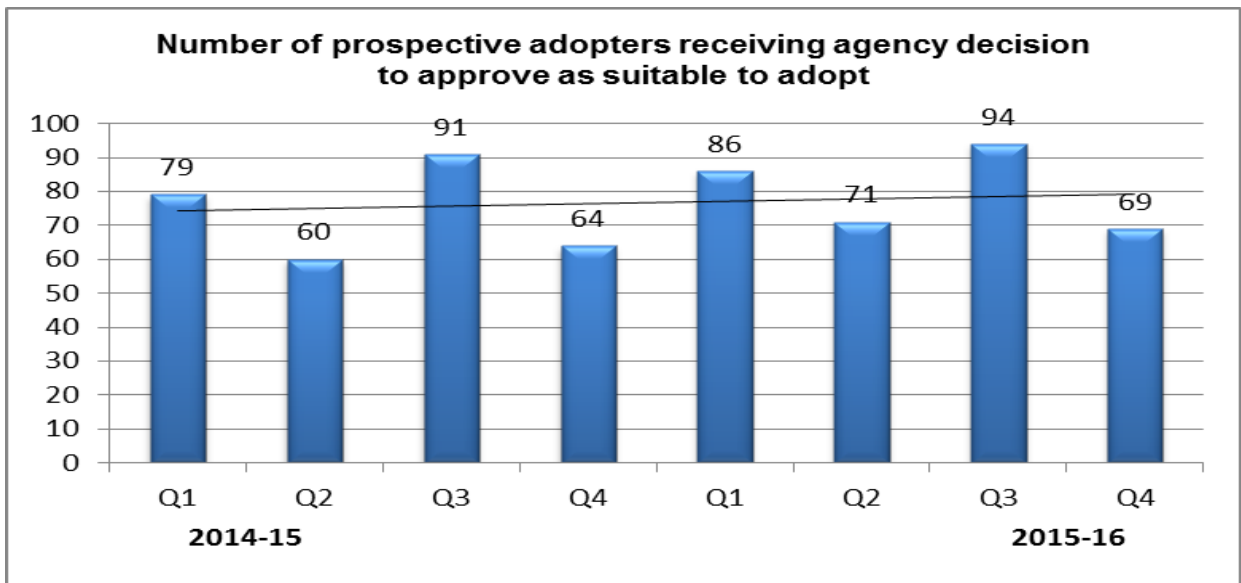
Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- 9% increase of adopters approved making a total of 320 approvals. This is commensurate with the changing context and we revised our target mid-year due to this.



Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- 27% decrease between quarters 3 and 4



Time taken between Initial Enquiry to date Adopters Approved

😊 Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

- Average has improved from 9.4 months (280 days) to 8.6 months (262 days) although not within the target of 8 months (243 days)
- Mid and West Wales and Vale, Valleys & Cardiff achieved target

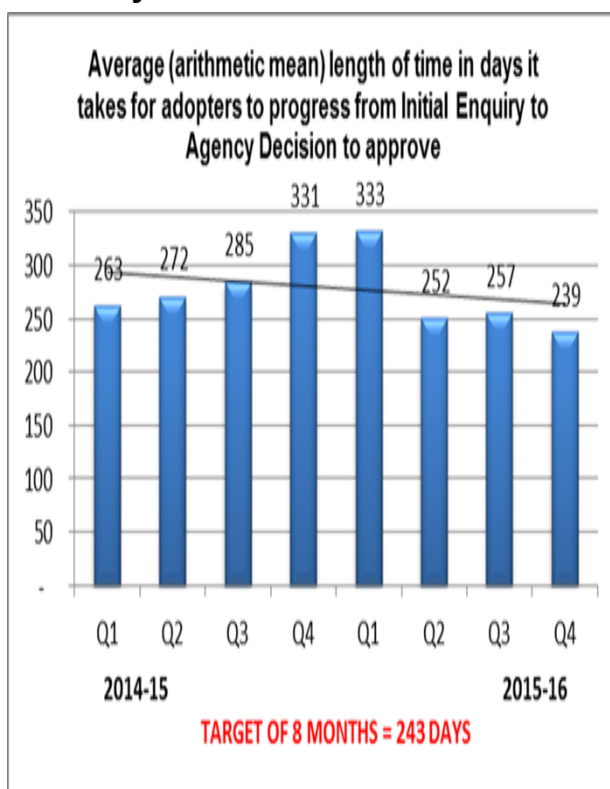
(Please note – data has been revised and the final average for 2014-15 is 9.5 months (289 days))

😊 Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

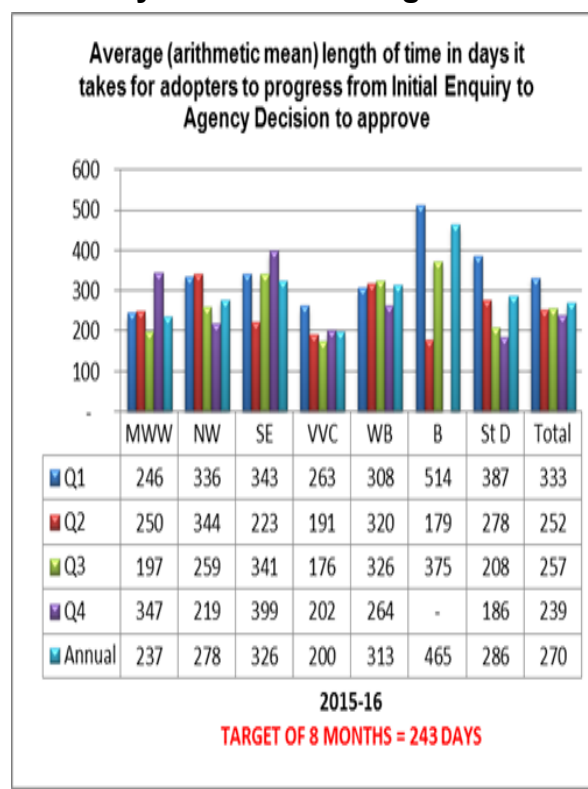
- Average for quarter 4 is 7.9 months, an improvement on 8.5 months in quarter 3
- North Wales, Vale, Valleys & Cardiff and St David's achieved target

Time taken to approve adopters

Quarterly breakdown - All Wales



Quarterly breakdown - Regional



Story behind the data

Mid & West Wales – 1 couple –went on hold due to personal reasons.

Western Bay – over the year our number of adopters has increased. The approval of adopters at the end of March will not be ratified until April, so do not count in this quarter / year's figures. This anomaly will resolve itself in the next quarter.

Birth Parents – referred and offered a service



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

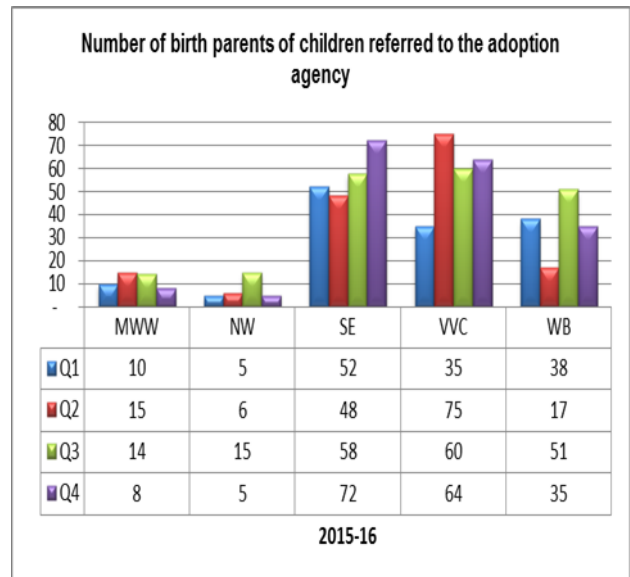
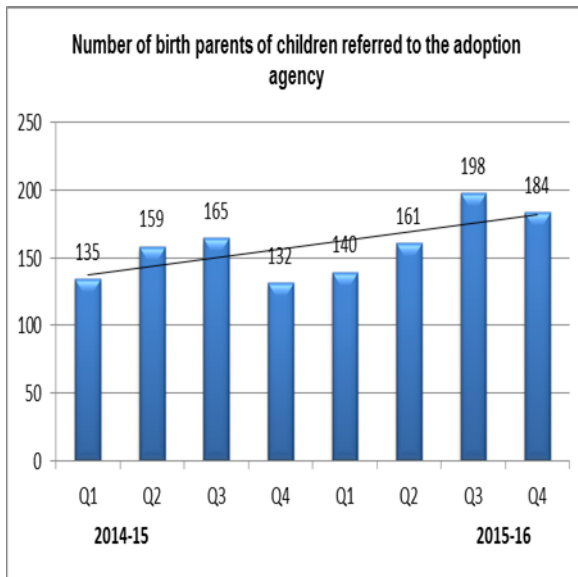
- 16% increase in number of birth parents referred (from 591 to 683)
- Increase from 83% to 97% of birth parents offered a service



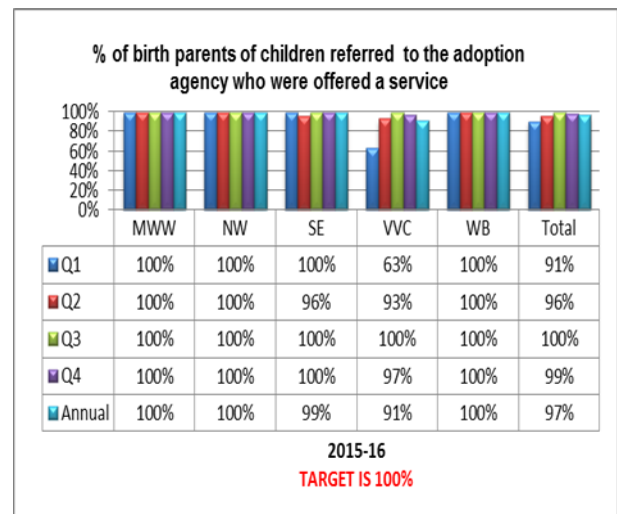
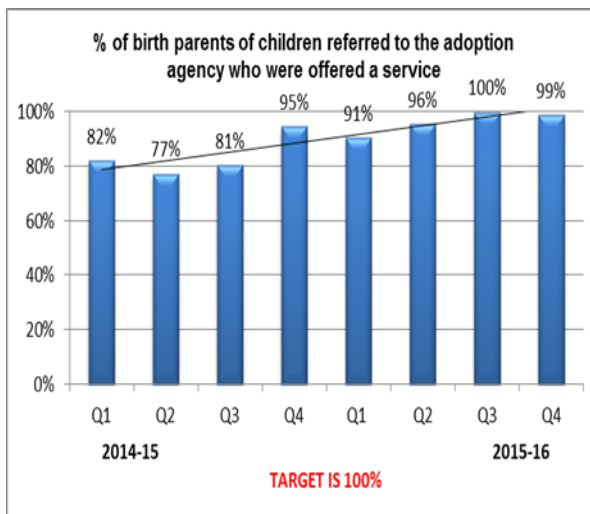
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- 11% decrease in number of birth parents referred (from 198 to 177)
- N.B. indicator definition does not include those that take up of service at a later point in the process
- Slight drop in take up – from 100% to 99%

Birth Parents Referred – national and regional data



Birth Parents offered a service – national and regional data



Birth Parent who take up a Service



Variation from 2014-15 to 2015-16

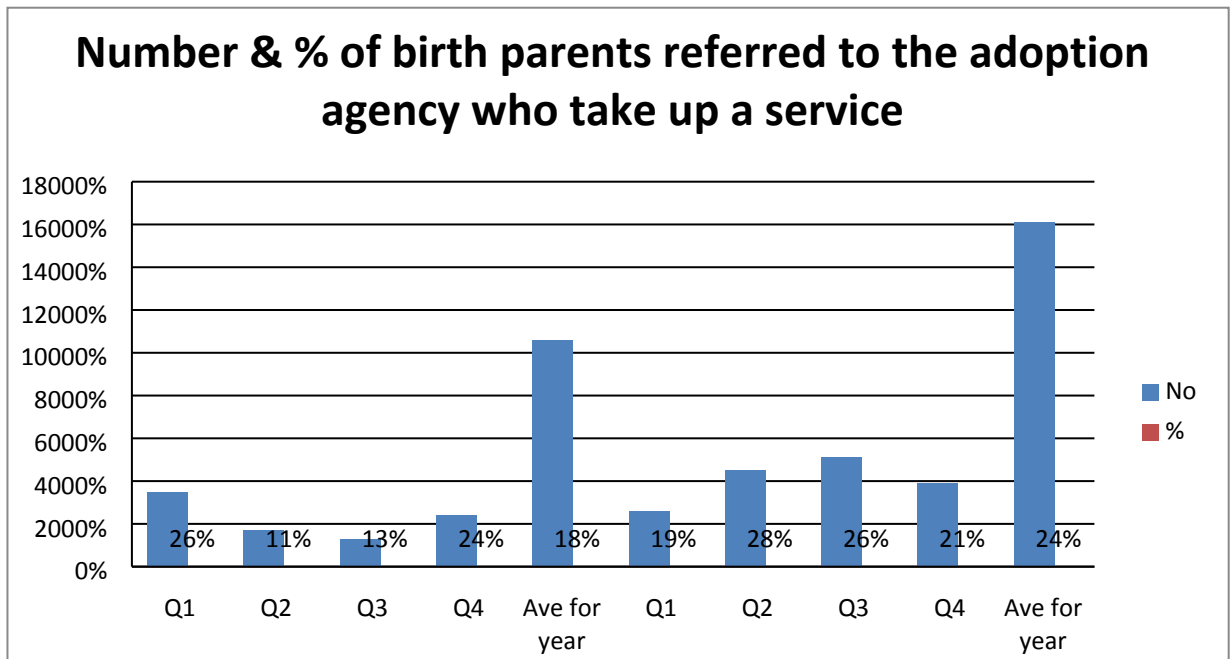
- Increase from 18% to 24% of birth parents offered a service although still not reached target of 50%



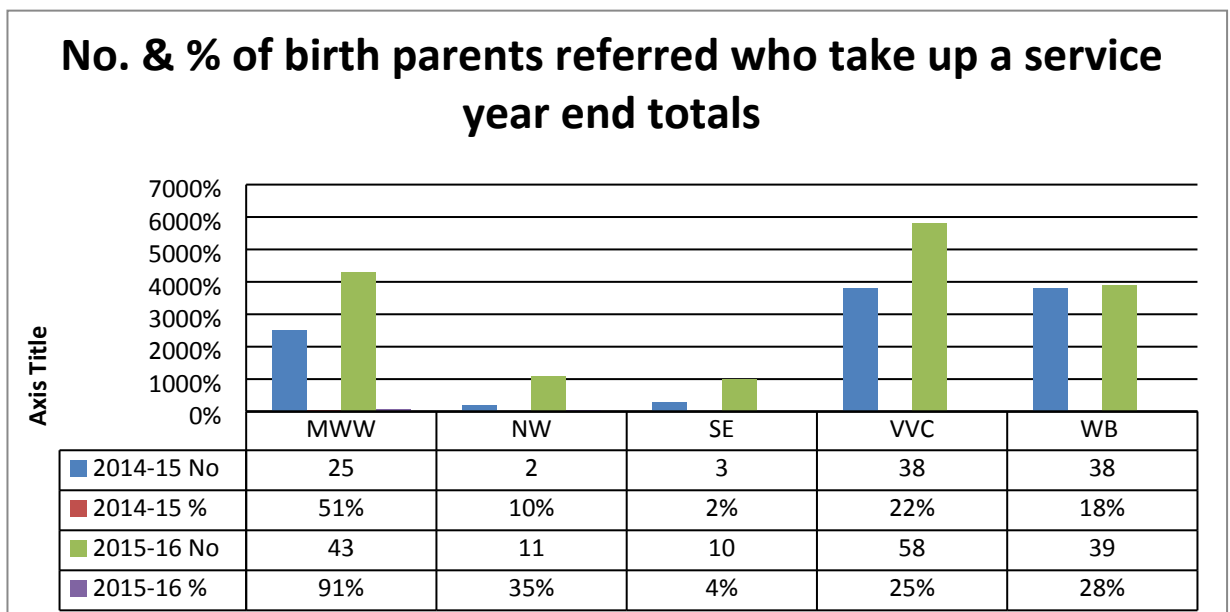
Variation from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4

- Slight drop – from 26% to 21%

National data – number and percentage of birth parents who take up a service



Regional data – number and percentage of birth parents who take up a service



Wales Adoption Register as at 01.04.16

