



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.



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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



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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.

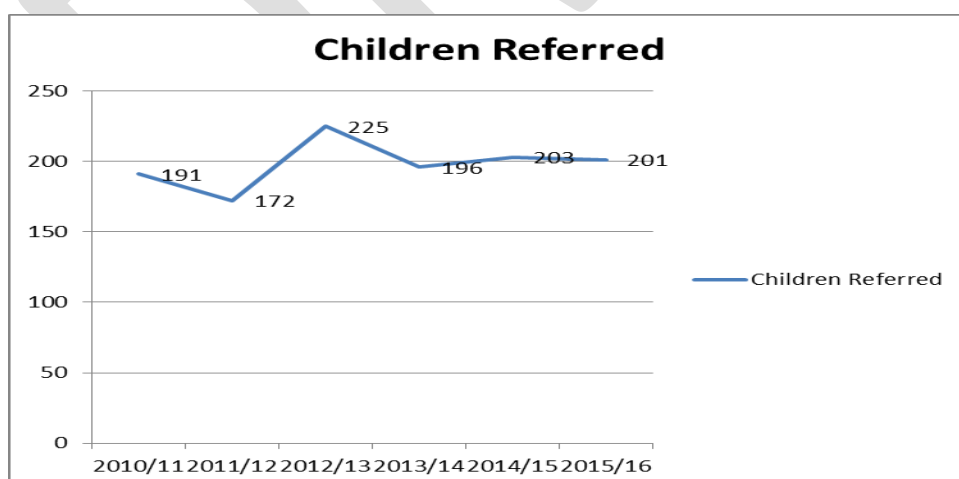
1. Children referred 2015/16 - 201

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



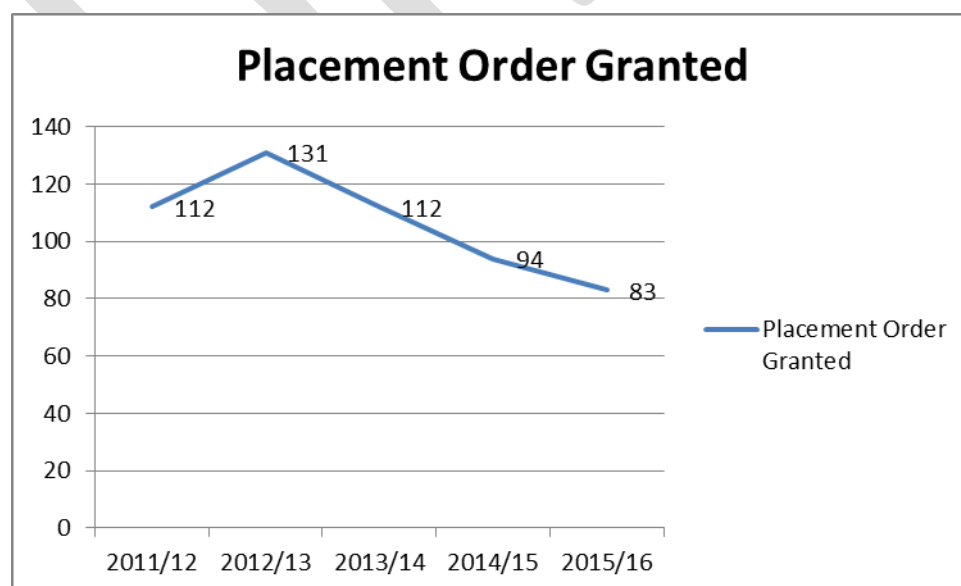
2. Placement Orders granted = 83

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

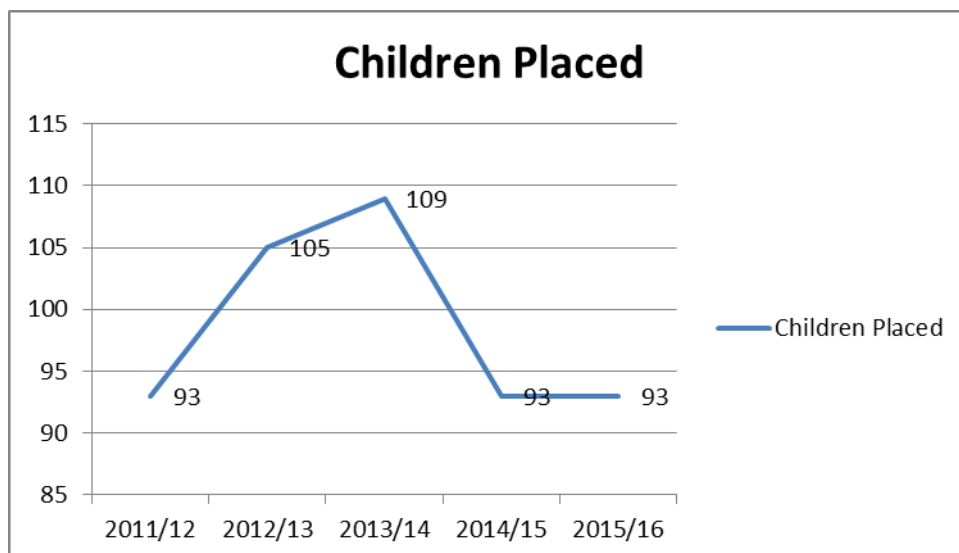
Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	20	25	21	27	93

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

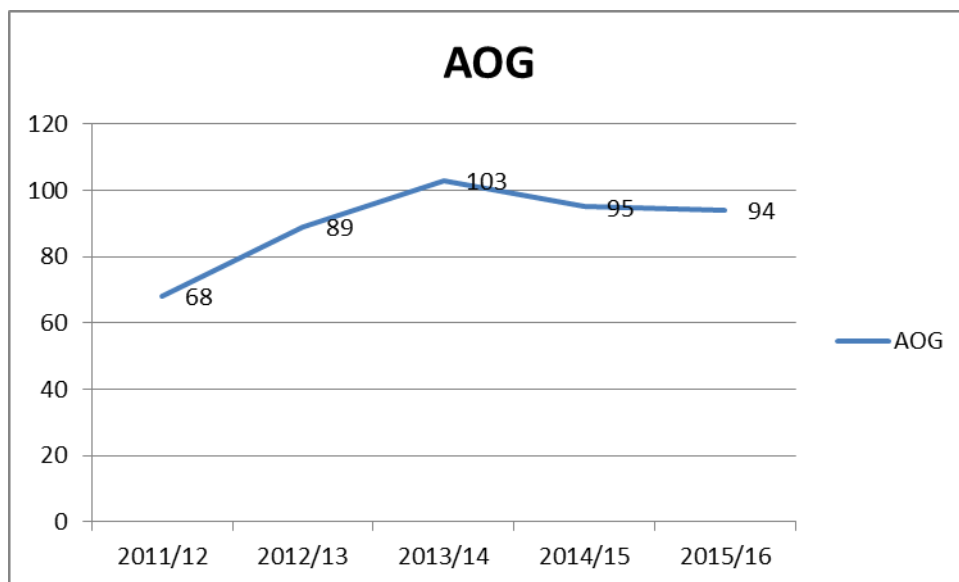
Compared to the previous year there has been a nominal decrease in the length of time it has taken from SBP to placement. However, this is still an encouraging figure in that despite a number of highly complex care proceedings where there have been delays in the granting of a placement order, the proactive 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



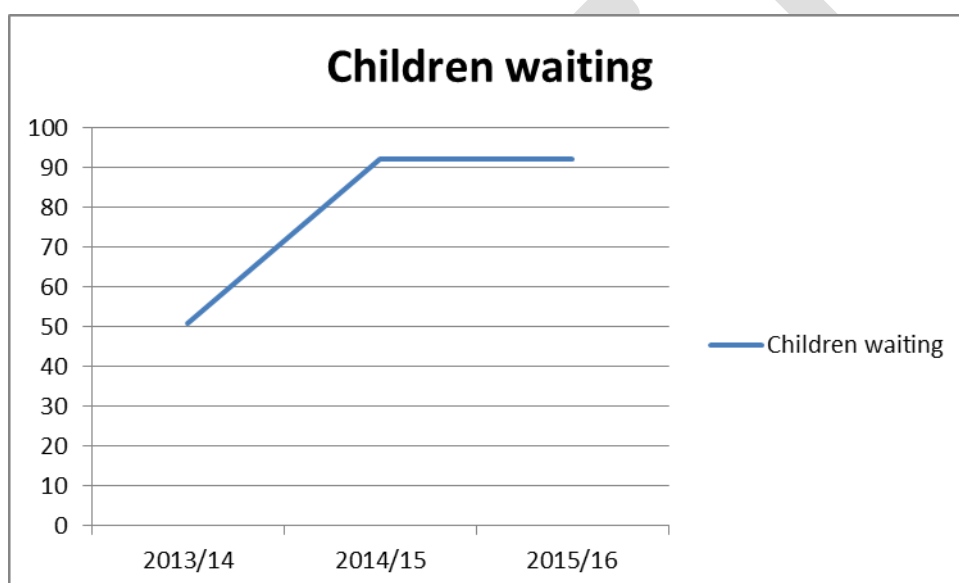
There is no comparative data across Wales within the PI framework for AOGs currently. This will be included for the 2016/17 indicators.

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.

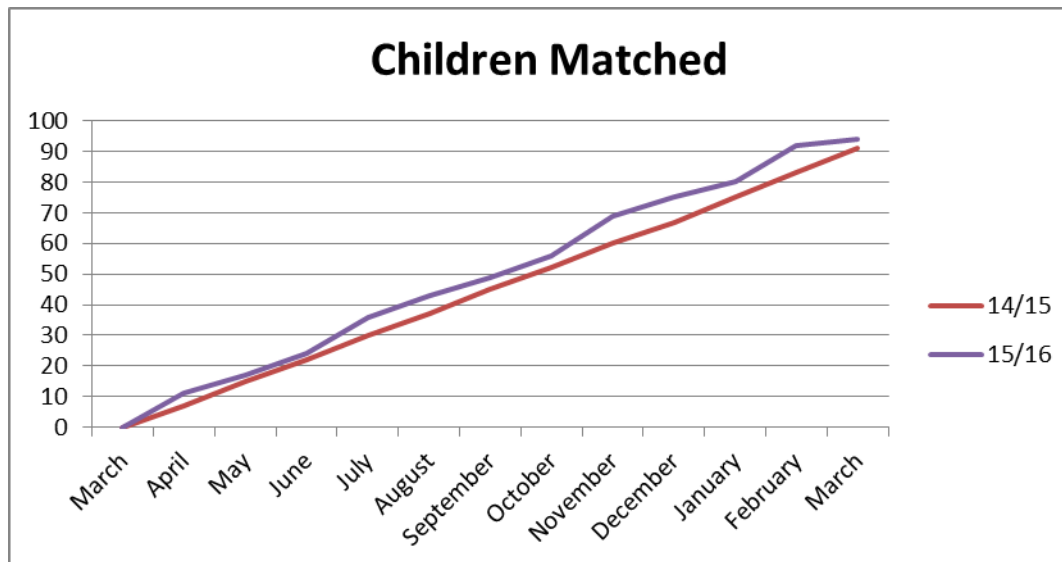
Children waiting	TOTAL
2015/16	92
2014/15	92
2013/14	51



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



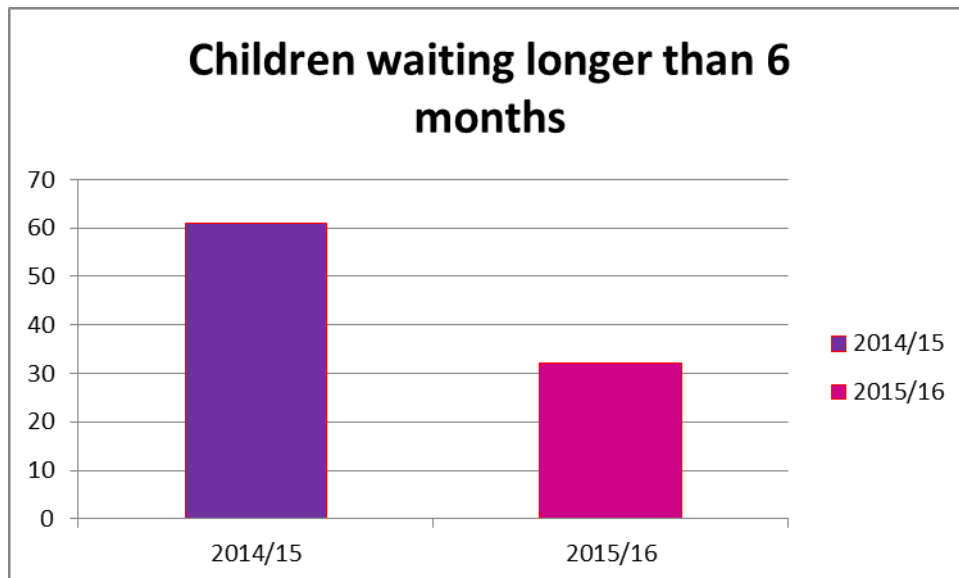
Compared to other regions across Wales WBAS matched the highest number of children in the year, SE matched 87, VVC 64, NW 52 and MWW 33.

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%.

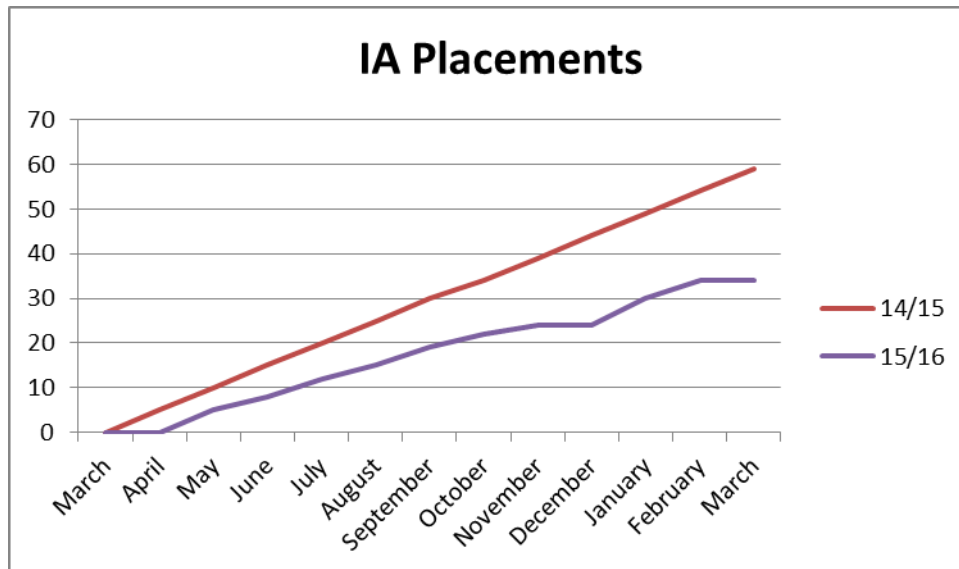


10. Number of Inter-Agency placements = 34

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.

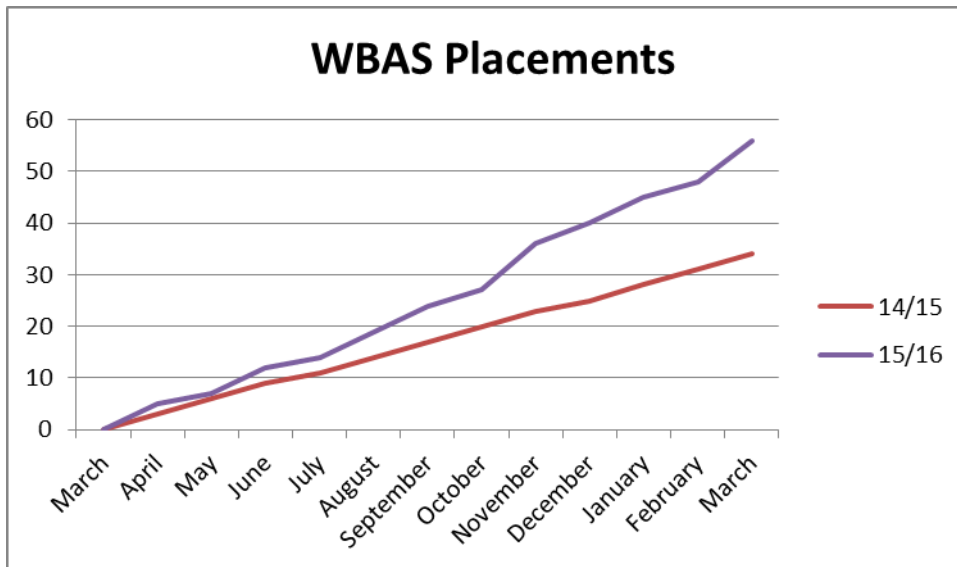
IAs	BCBC	NPT	SWAN	TOTAL
2015/16	7	20	7	34(38%)
2014/15	24	20	15	59 (63%)
2013/14	21	27	20	68 (62%)
2012/13	16	29	26	71 (68%)
2011/12	14	23	30	67 (73%)



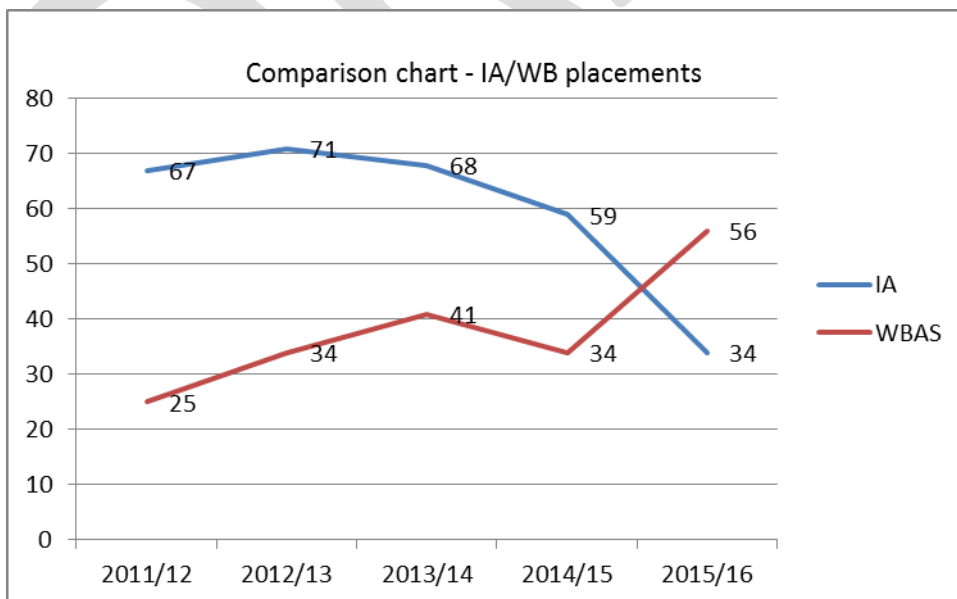
11. Number of WBAS placements = 56

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.



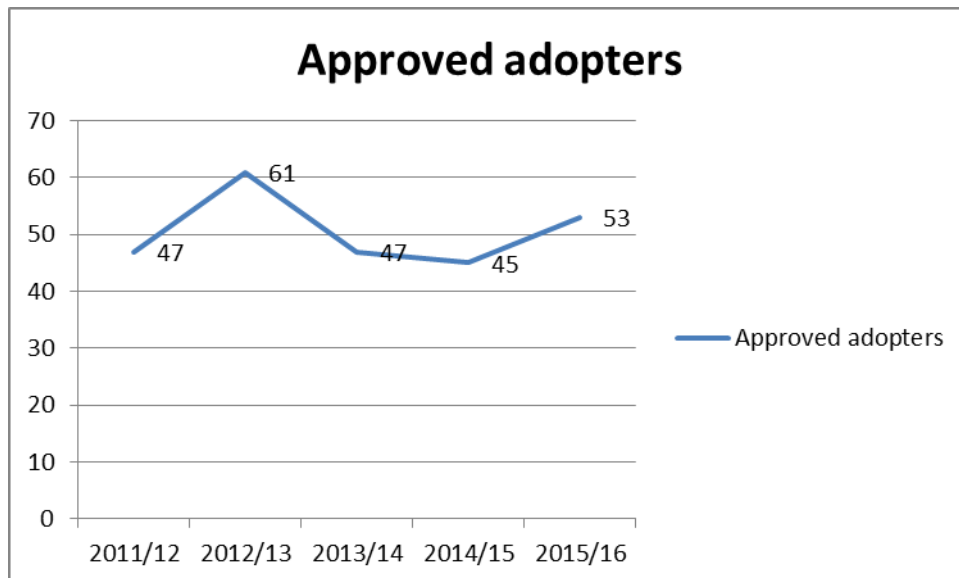
12. Number of adopter approvals = 53

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.

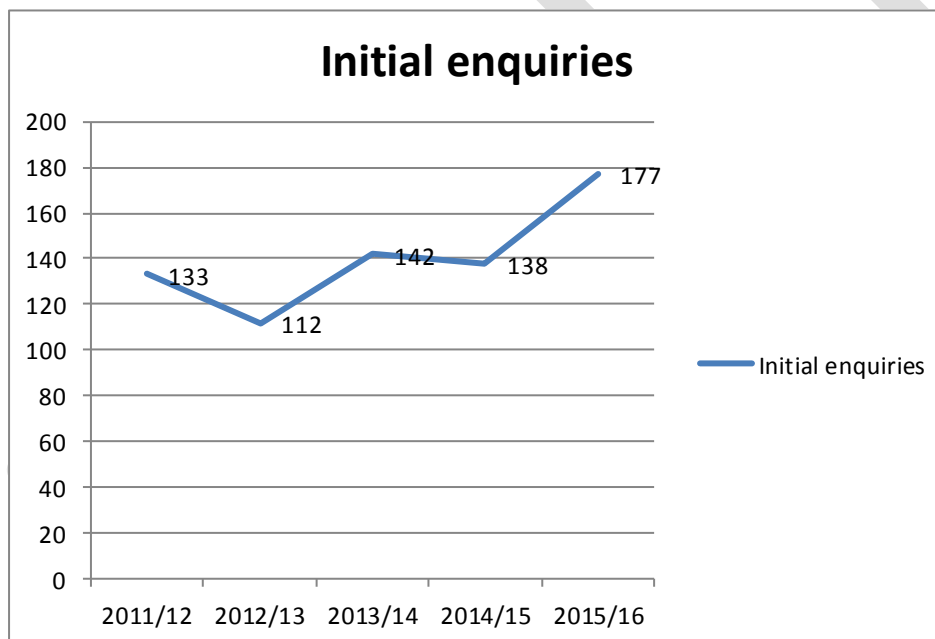
It also noteworthy to point out that WB maintained its recruitment of adopters in the latter part of the year where it is apparent other agencies were indicating to enquirers that they were not in a position to undertake assessments.

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**