

MILTON KEYNES ADOPTION PANEL AND PERMANENCE REPORT OCTOBER 2012 – MARCH 2013

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Report Summary

Purpose:

To detail the activity of the adoption panel: to give a brief summary of the work undertaken by the panel; to highlight the practice and policy matters raised; to feedback on the monitoring role of panel, in particular in relation to the quality of the reports which the panel receives.

Background:

As required by regulations, the registered person is responsible for providing a six-monthly report to the Local Authority's executive.

Corporate Priorities:

Improving the quality of the Adoption Service and related panel contributes to good outcomes for Milton Keynes' Looked After Children. This is in line with the council's Children & Families 2012/13 priority 4; To develop and maintain effective intervention that prevent the most vulnerable children and young people in our communities from experiencing additional difficulty and prevents them from suffering significant harm.

Performance Information

A national data set for the adoption service is provided through the introduction of the adoption scorecard (previously reported to CPP). Milton Keynes Adoption Service has continued to improve its performance against the scorecard's key threshold measures.

Equality and Diversity Impact:

The service is provided for children from across the Milton Keynes community. There are targets for ensuring a focus on those children who are often more difficult to place, who include: children with complex needs and disabilities, children from black and minority ethnic groups and older children.

Recommendations:

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note the reports

FULL REPORT

Introduction:

This is a six month report detailing the activity of the adoption panel. The aim of this report is to give a brief summary of the work undertaken by the panel, the practice and policy matters raised and feedback in relation to the monitoring role of panel, in particular the quality of the reports presented to panel.

Panel Membership:

The panel now has a central list of 11 panel members which includes the Independent Chair, Vice Chair, Medical Advisor, Education Representative, Two Social Work Representatives from Luton Adoption Team, Elected Member, three Milton Keynes Social Workers and three Independent Members who have direct experience of adoption. One social work representative has resigned.

We plan to recruit two additional panel members to increase diversity and expertise within the panel.

Panel appraisals:

Between October 2012 and March 2013 there have been 3 appraisals completed.

Observers

There have been seven observers; SGO worker (Adoption Team), Higher Specialist Trainee MKPCT, Consultant Paediatrician/Named Doctor for Safeguarding, Child Health Dept., Core Trainee MKPCT, Social Work Student, CiC Team, Social Worker, Adoption Team and Senior Practitioner, Adoption Team.

Panel administration

We have a dedicated Business Support Administrator who is meeting the timescales for completing panel minutes.

Details of Agency Decision Maker:

Nicky Rayner, Assistant Director of Children's Services is the Decision Maker, and Charles Greer, Head of Children in Care Services is the Deputy Decision Maker. Nicky Rayner has made all the decisions in this review period.

Training:

A full day training course was facilitated by BAAF on 22.01.13 for panel members and the Adoption Team joined the training in the afternoon. The training focuses on the way in which the panel functions and the new Perspective Adopters Report (PAR).

A half day training course was provided to panel members on 08.03.13 which covered assessing Gay & Lesbian adopters, matching children and the adoption reform.

A full day's training at Adoption Plus was offered to panel members entitled 'Developmental Re-parenting'. Three panel members attended this course.

Information from feedback forms

No feedback was received during this period. We will take the feedback forms to each panel to encourage attendees to complete and return the forms.

Adoption Overview Meetings

These have taken place at least quarterly and are chaired by the Adoption and Fostering Service Manager and attended by Adoption and Adoption Support Team Managers, a Manager from Children's Services, the Agency Adviser to Panel, and the Panel Coordinator and Administrator, and both Panel chairs.

Panel activity

Adoption Orders October 2012 – March 2012

Number

15

Ethnicity of children

White British (13)

Any Other White Background (1)

White Irish (1)

Ages at adoption

AGE	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
	0	1	5	1	1	2	3	1	1

Sibling groups

There were three sets of sibling groups, two sets of two children and one set of three children.

Placements for adoption October 2012– March 2012

Number

14

Ethnicity

White British (13)

African (1)

Ages at placement

AGE	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
	7	1	1	3	0	1	1	0	0

Sibling groups

There were no sibling groups.

Panel Business October 2012 – March 2013

Number of panels held 7; two panels were cancelled in March 2013 as the paperwork was not ready within the timescales. Long term sickness to three of the team required reallocation of cases. These were prioritised by staff and presented at April Panel, no significant delay in meeting adoption time scales resulted.

The decisions that a child should be placed for adoption are taken outside of the panel by the Agency Decision Maker unless the child is relinquished for adoption, then the decision is made at the panel.

Recommendations that a child should be placed for adoption

10

Ages

AGE	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
	6	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity

White British (7)

Any Other White Background (1)

Any Other Mixed Background (2)

Siblings

One set of two siblings.

Adopters approved

7 couples were approved.

Ethnicity

White British (6)

White British/White Any Other (1)

Matches during this period

12

8 children were matched with in house adopters

1 child was matched with adopters from Voluntary Adoption Agency

2 children were matched with adopters from two Local Authority Adoption Agencies

Ages

AGE	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
	7	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0

Ethnicity

White British (14)

Any Other Mixed (1)

Rescind of Adoption Decision

Number 2

Ages

AGE	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	9-10
	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Ethnicity

All children are White British

Permanent Placement via other Orders

Inter-country adoptions

One inter-country adoption order was made within this period.

Residence Orders

None

Special Guardianship Orders

Number

7

Ages

AGE	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	10-11
	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2

Ethnicity

White British (5)

White and Black Caribbean (1)

Any other Black Background (1)

Budgets

Profit Centre	Actual	Budget	Forecast	Variance
433709 Adoption Panel	25,567	23,768	23,063	1,799
440104 Residence Allowances	164,496	182,392	168,414	-17,896
441101 Adoptions	655,511	661,040	639,246	-5,529
441102 Adoptions	665,907	606,011	639,596	59,896
441105 Special Guardianships	426,696	384,533	434,000	42,163
Totals	17,389	0	20,000	17,389
	1,955,566	1,857,744	1,924,319	97,822

Policy and Practice Issues

- High quality of assessments including evidence/observation of child care and that most applicants are being matched promptly.
- Very positive feedback received about Adoption Team.
- Panel welcomed the detailed feedback from Agency Decision Maker.
- Strong matches presented to the panel including additional work as part of matching and more robust support plans.
- Staff and panel have developed their focus on strengths and vulnerabilities.
- The quality of Child Permanency Reports (CPRs) is improving.

Service Developments relevant to Adoption Panel

- To ensure that the monthly highlight report is presented to panel members on a quarterly basis.
- To ensure the quality of matching reports improves and reflects on individual children's needs.

- To ensure that policies to support 'foster to adopt' scheme are implemented.
- To ensure that the panel are involved and take part in the steering group for the 'concurrent placement scheme'.
- The adoption team to implement the new PAR.
- The panel advisor to inform panel about the detail and learning from the rescinding of adoption decisions.
- The panel advisor to inform panel members about progress in relation to the revocation of Freeing and Placement Orders.

How and by when will these be achieved?

- The panel advisor will devise a timetable to ensure highlight reports are discussed at the panel.
- The panel advisor will monitor the quality of matching reports and will share feedback with social workers.
- The panel advisor to arrange a meeting with the fostering team manager and the chair of the panels to devise and implement the new policies and procedures.
- The panel advisor to invite the chair to take part in the steering group.
- The new PAR will be implemented from the 01.04.13.
- The panel advisor to write a memo to the panel detailing the learning from rescinds decisions.
- The panel advisor to write a memo to the panel detailing the learning from the revocation of Freeing and Placement Orders.

Carol Noble
Team Manager
21.05.13