

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
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Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE
CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

22 June 2016

Dear Councillor

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – MONDAY, 4 JULY 2016

Further to the agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following report which was marked to follow:-

8. Adoption Agency Annual Report 2015/16

To consider the 2015/15 Annual Report for the Adoption Agency.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Manning
Committee Services Officer

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Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Monday, 4 July 2016

**Corporate Parenting Service - Adoption Annual Report
2015/16**

Report of Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
(carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report

1. The report and appendix outlines the statutory framework regarding the Adoption annual report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Note the statutory report

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. The report is planned to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Issues

2. Appendix A is the Adoption Annual Report for 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

Options for consideration

3. None

Council Priorities

4. Indicate how the proposed action supports at least one of the Council's priorities, listed below:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Great resident services

- Improving education and skills
- Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
- Creating stronger communities
- A more efficient and responsive Council.

Adoption is a key statutory service to Looked After Children.

Corporate Implications

Risk Management

5. The provision of sufficient and suitably approved prospective adopters who are assessed in accordance with the regulations is a key activity monitored by Ofsted and the Department for Education.
6. Reputational risk: Recruitment of prospective adopters is a competitive market activity and has a high profile.

Legal Implications

7. Adoption regulations, associated Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards outline the requirement to report to Members on the management and outcomes of the service, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the service is effective and achieving good outcomes for children.

Financial and Risk Implications

8. Adoption is a route out of care providing legal permanence. Interagency placements are high cost and variations in the proportions of children placed externally and internally impact on forecast spend.

Equalities Implications

9. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
10. The annual report highlights how these considerations are taken into account. Examples include:
 - diversity related training provided for the panel and adopters
 - a range of recruitment activity
 - no adoption disruptions in this period, reflecting the care given to the matching process,

- continued membership of New Family Social, a national charity supporting adopters and foster carers from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender community.

Conclusion and next Steps

11. The Corporate parenting Panel is asked to note the Adoption Agency statutory report for 2015-16.

Appendices

Appendix A – Adoption Agency Annual Report 2015/16

Background Papers

None

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APPENDIX A

Adoption Agency

Annual Report

For the period

1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire Council's Adoption Agency during the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016, noting their achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of their work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service.
- 1.0.2 This report is provided as part of the monitoring of the adoption agency required under the Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and National Minimum Standards 2011. This report will be presented to the Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a six-monthly update report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

1.1 STAFFING / SERVICE STRUCTURE

- 1.1.1 The Central Bedfordshire Council Adoption Team staffing within this period has been:
- 1 x full time Team Manager
 - 1 x part time Senior Practitioner
 - 5.5 x Social Workers
 - 1 x Social Work Assistant
 - 1 x Business Support Administrator
- 1.1.2 The Adoption Agency is supported by specialist staff who work across the Adoption and Fostering Service. These include a Recruitment and Marketing Officer, a Training Coordinator, a Professional Panel Adviser and Panel Secretary who support the Adoption Panel.
- 1.1.3 The service has remained largely fully staffed this year with a number of staffing changes in the quarter 3 and 4 periods.
- 1.1.4 All staff are permanent and have a number of years post-qualifying experience. The team carries out the full functions of an adoption agency, with social workers carrying a range of adoption work, including prospective adopter assessments, adoption support, family finding and work with adopted adults and their birth relatives.

1.2 THE ADOPTION PANEL

- 1.2.1 Adoption Panel contributes to the running and quality assurance of the local authority's adoption service and receives annual reports on the service and its performance. In doing so it has an overriding responsibility to promote good practice, consistency of approach and fairness in all aspects of the adoption service, in accordance with its principles.
- 1.2.2 As part of this function, the Panel makes recommendations as to the following:
- The suitability of prospective adoptive applicants to adopt;
 - Whether a child should be placed for adoption (only for children voluntarily relinquished by a parent)
 - Whether a child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopters.

The recommendations must be unconditional and cannot be 'in principle'.

- 1.2.3 The Adoption Panel continues to be a shared panel with Bedford Borough Council hosted by Central Bedfordshire. The panel usually meet once per month, with extraordinary panels as and when required. Within this period the adoption panel met on 19 occasions.
- 1.2.4 The Adoption Panel makes recommendations to the agency not decisions about the cases referred to it. It is the role of the agency to make a decision and for this purpose it is necessary to appoint a decision maker. The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) is a senior person within the agency.
- 1.2.5 The Agency Decision Maker for Central Bedfordshire within this period was Gerard Jones – Assistant Director for Operations. In addition to considering the recommendations from the Adoption Panel the ADM also makes the decision in regard to whether a child should be placed for adoption.

1.3 ADOPTION PANEL MEMBERSHIP

1.3.1 As at 31st March 2016 the Adoption Panel central list was as follows:

Panel Chair	Independent
Independent	Adoptive Mother
Independent	Adoptive Father
Independent	Birth Parent of an Adopted Child
Independent	Gypsy and Traveller Educational Consultant
Social Work Member	Fostering Team Manager, Bedford Borough
Social Work Member	Team Manager, Children with Disabilities Team (BBC)
Social Work Member	Social Worker, Adoption Team CBC
Medical Adviser	Consultant Community Paediatrician
Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent (Vice Chair)	Adopted Person
Elected Member	Bedford Borough Council
Independent Social Worker	IRO BBC
2 Independent Social Workers	CAFCASS
Independent Member	CAFCASS
Independent Parent	Adopted Child
Independent Member	Education

1.3.2 In attendance but non voting members are:

Professional Adviser	
Panel Secretary	

1.3.3 The Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings.

1.4 PANEL AND AGENCY DECISION MAKER ACTIVITY

- 1.4.3 In this period the Adoption Panel met on 19 occasions.
- 1.4.4 Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the Agency Decision Maker decided that adoption should be the plan for 30 children. This compares to 26 in 2014/2015 showing a slight increase.
- 1.4.5 In relation to the approval of prospective adopters, the Panel recommended that 18 households were suitable to adopt. All applicants attended the panel and the recommendations were all ratified by the Agency Decision Maker.
- 1.4.6 This was under the target for the year of 20 approvals and compares to 22 households in 2014/2015 where there was a target of 26. 1 assessment is still in progress as of 31st March 2016 and 1 was presented to panel but deferred for further assessment however the applicants withdrew their application.
- 1.4.7 In terms of matching children with prospective adopters the panel considered matches for 22 children. This compares to 29 children in 2014/2015.

1.5 PANEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 1.5.1 The Adoption Agency strives to ensure that there is a good level of training, appraisal and induction offered to Panel Members. This year, due to the number of cases and business on the agenda, it has been a challenge to find time for the 'bite-size' training on panel days.
- 1.5.2 Two Training days have taken place in this period. In May 2015 there was a full day training focussing on 'What we Learnt from Placement disruptions'. In September 2015 there was another full day training covering:
- An Introduction to Islam and the Muslim faith.
 - Effective Questioning
 - The role of adoption panel in promoting good outcomes for children.
 - The impact of personal values and assumptions on the panel process.
 - The importance of analysis in effective decision making.
- 1.5.3 All Panel Members had an annual appraisal completed by the Agency Panel Advisor and Panel Chairperson where their personal training needs are discussed and considered. This enables us to identify learning needs and plan the training schedule for next year.
- 1.5.4 The Panel Chairperson meets with the Agency Decision Maker twice per year and has an annual appraisal undertaken by the Agency Decision Maker.

1.6 PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON ADOPTION

- 1.6.1 Central Bedfordshire Council has a single point of contact to the service through a local rate telephone line. Enquiries can also be made via the council website where information on adoption is readily available. Social workers from the team offer to meet with enquirers within 5 working days of contact and offer attendance at information evenings and initial interviews.
- 1.6.2 Information Evenings are held monthly where current information on the needs of children requiring adoption and the process of assessment is given to those people who are interested in becoming prospective adopters.
- 1.6.2 Statistics in relation to enquiries received are included later in this report in 3.2 :The Assessment Process.

SECTION 2 – CHILDREN AND ADOPTION

2.0 – CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

- 2.0.1 In 2015/2016, there were 38 children from Central Bedfordshire referred to the service for parallel planning where adoption would be the alternative plan if no other options were available. This was an increase of 12 from the previous year however not all those referred will have a final Care Plan for adoption.
- 2.0.2 In order to avoid case drift or delay for children, social workers are asked to refer children for family finding when adoption is a possible outcome for that child. This does not mean that all children referred will subsequently be adopted, but ensures that robust planning is considered as part of a child's care plan. In many cases, children safely return to parental care or are placed with extended family members under other legal orders, such as Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement.

2.1 OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH PLANS FOR ADOPTION

- 2.1.0 Of the 30 children with plans for adoption in 2015/2016, 13 children had been placed with prospective adopters by 31st March 2016, with a further 5 having been matched but not yet placed. As of 31st March the team were still family finding for 5 children, 1 child the foster carers are being assessed as prospective adopters, 3 are siblings and national search for prospective adopters is being completed and 1 child has an identified link being explored. 2 were in Care Proceedings as at 31st March 2016.
- 2.2.2 This year we have progressed to provide Foster for Adoption placements for 2 children enabling early permanence. The first was matched with his Foster for Adoption carers and an adoption order was granted before his first birthday.

2.2 – PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN

- 2.2.2 There were 9 sibling groups placed for adoption during this period.
- 2.2.3 1 child placed had a recorded disability.
- 2.2.4 No adoptive placements experienced a disruption pre adoption order which is a significant improvement from the previous period demonstrating the learning implemented throughout the service.

2.3 – TYPE OF ADOPTION PLACEMENT

- 2.3.1 Of the 22 children matched with prospective adopters, 14 were matched with adopters assessed and approved by Central Bedfordshire. 8 were matched with prospective adopters approved by other agencies.
- 2.3.2 Within this period Central Bedfordshire have progressed to place 2 children in placements under 'Fostering for Adoption' regulations. There is a duty for Local Authorities to consider providing these type of placements to children however it is recognised that this will only be an option for a small number of children in any one year due to the risk of the child returning to parental or family care.
- 2.3.3 Foster for Adoption places a child during the period of temporary local authority care with foster carers who are also approved as prospective adopters. If the court agrees that the child should be placed for adoption the child can then be matched for adoption with those carers. The benefits ensure that a child has only one placement and ensures they experience the early months and years as most children would want and expect.

2.4 – ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

- 2.4.1 Of the 22 children matched for adoption by Central Bedfordshire, 18 were White British, 2 were of White/Asian ethnicity, 2 were White British/Romany.

2.5 – AGES OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

- 2.5.1 Of the 22 children matched for adoption by Central Bedfordshire, 14 were aged 2 years or under, 8 were between 3-5 years.

2.6 – GENDER OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

- 2.6.1 From the 22 children matched for adoption by Central Bedfordshire, 13 were female and 9 were male.

2.7 – ADOPTION ORDERS

- 2.7.1 Adoption Orders were made in respect of 17 children during the period. 4 of these were granted on children who were matched within the same period. This is a decrease in the numbers of adoption orders granted in 2014/2015.
- 2.7.2 There has been an increase in the number of parental responses indicating an opposition to adoption applications being received. This results in delay to the adoption application and the adoption order being granted whilst the Court consider those objections. In all of the cases where parental objections were lodged the application order was subsequently granted. However this delay affects whether adoption orders are granted within the same period
- 2.7.2 As of 31st March 2016 14 children were placed with their adoptive family but orders had yet to be granted. It is expected that all these children will have adoption orders granted in 2016/17.

SECTION 3 – ADOPTERS

3.0 – THE WORK OF THE ADOPTION TEAM

- 3.0.1 Every child looked after, who may need a new permanent family via adoption, has a social worker from the Adoption Team allocated to take lead responsibility for finding a suitable family. The Family Finding Social Worker attends regular permanence planning meetings with other professionals involved with the child. For those children for whom a return to the care of his / her parents or a member of the extended family is not possible, adoption or long term fostering will be considered. Family Finding Social Workers are active in identifying suitable prospective adoptive families who are able to meet the majority of a child's needs without delay to ensure a child is able to move to a permanent family in a timely manner. This includes considering whether Foster for Adoption is appropriate for the child.
- 3.0.2 Early permanence planning ensures that the Adoption team strives to achieve National Minimum Standard timescales for all children with a plan for adoption. Where this has not been possible there is good evidence of why this has not been achieved.

3.1 – RECRUITMENT OF ADOPTERS

- 3.1.1 In order to ensure a range of adopters are recruited for children from Central Bedfordshire, and to meet the needs of children nationally requiring adoptive families, a range of recruitment activity has taken place during the year. This has included local press articles and Ebulletins, window displays, Social Media posts and email articles. The Adoption website pages and literature has also been updated this year.
- 3.1.2 Adoption Agencies have a duty to recruit a range of adopters to meet the needs of the children they are seeking to place for adoption and for children nationally. The recruitment strategy considers the sufficiency of adopters required to meet the needs of children this is reflected in recruitment activity.

- 3.1.3 Prospective adopters approved by Central Bedfordshire are able to consider children from other local authorities with plans for adoption. If they are matched with a child Central Bedfordshire receive an interagency fee.

3.2 – THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS: ENQUIRIES, ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVALS

- 3.2.1 All assessments are carried out in accordance with the 2011 National Minimum Standards for Adoption and the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the Statutory Guidance for Adoption published in July 2013. The two stage process for adopters, which was introduced as part of the Government's Adoption Reform Agenda, remains implemented.
- 3.2.2 85 enquiries were received in this period.
- 3.2.3 21 applications were progressed to Stage 2. 2 withdrew their application during assessment and 1 is ongoing.
- 3.2.4 19 were presented to panel. 18 were approved during the period. 1 was deferred for further assessment following which the applicants withdrew from the process.
- 3.2.5 At 31st March Central Bedfordshire had 3 prospective adopter households in Stage one of the process and 10 in Stage two.

3.3 – ETHNICITY OF ADOPTERS

- 3.3.1 Of the 18 adoptive households approved 17 were White British and 1 was Asian.

3.4 – POST APPROVAL SUPPORT

- 3.4.1 All approved adopters are supported by a Social Worker from the Adoption and Permanence Support Team from approval, through the process of placement of children, to the making of an Adoption Order.
- 3.4.2 Once an Adoption Order has been made, adopters can continue to access support or request an assessment of their additional support needs through the Adoption and Permanence Support Team.

3.5 – TRAINING FOR ADOPTERS

- 3.5.1 Social Workers from the Adoption team provide the preparation training for prospective adopters within Stage 2. This training is held jointly with Bedford Borough Council and is provided in three modules:

The Process – information about the assessment process and matching.

The Child – Explores the experiences and trauma of children placed for adoption

Adoption for Life – Explores a child's life story and Adoption Support

- 3.5.2 Adopters also have access to the full annual training programme offered to the agency's foster carers and adopters. This annual programme is available to both approved adopters as well as to adoptive parents after an Adoption Order has been granted.
- 3.5.5 Training is evaluated at the end of each programme. The feedback during the past 12 months has been positive.

SECTION 4 – ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

4.0 – POST ADOPTION SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

- 4.0.1 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 established the right of adopted families to request an assessment of their adoption support needs. To inform people about support available we have produced a booklet called 'Adoption support services in Central Bedfordshire'. Also available is a 'Children's Guide to Adoption Support'. Both can be downloaded from the Council website.
- 4.0.2 In this period the team have completed 28 adoption support assessments, each either requiring advice and support only or a prescribed service such as therapy or counselling.
- 4.0.2 The families either self-refer or are referred via other agencies such as school or health services. In such instances the team either provides direct social work support or where a specific need is identified, a specialist service may be commissioned.
- 4.0.3 As of 31st March 2016, the team was working directly with 31 adopted children providing adoption support.
- 4.0.4 The Department for Education Adoption Support Fund has been available this period and 16 applications for funding to provide therapeutic support to children and their family were completed. All were agreed and enabled therapeutic services to be provided to the families.
- 4.0.5 The team have a mailing list of adoptive families who are sent newsletters, invitations to support groups for adoptive parents and family days, some of which are provided by the service and some by Adoption UK. The Adoption Team continued to provide some of these events as a shared service to families living in Bedfordshire.
- 4.0.6 The Adoption & Permanence team also provide groups for adopted children and their families. All adoption support referrals have an assessment of need and adoption support plan upon request.
- 4.0.7 Each child placed for adoption is required to have a contact plan in relation to their birth family. The service currently manages contact plans on behalf of 92 children many of which have required direct intervention to support all the parties involved in the contact arrangements, i.e. adopted children and young people, their adoptive parents and their birth families. .

4.1 – SERVICES TO ADOPTED ADULTS AND BIRTH RELATIVES

- 4.1.1 Social Workers in the Adoption Team provide an advice and counselling service to adopted adults seeking information and access to their birth records. For all residents of Central Bedfordshire an access to records counselling service is offered. Information is also provided to other councils who are supporting adopted adults living in their area who were adopted through Bedfordshire.
- 4.1.2 Initial counselling interview is offered to those seeking birth records and work is undertaken to locate records held by other Adoption Agencies. Counselling and practical advice during tracing, an intermediary service and pre and post reunion support are also available to adopted adults and their birth relatives.
- 4.1.3 Birth relatives or those with a prescribed relationship, seeking to make contact with adopted adults are offered information and advice and an intermediary service where appropriate. In the case of birth relatives, they are not provided with any identifying information about the adopted person but the Agency acts as the intermediary.
- 4.1.4 At 31st March 2016 the Adoption Team were providing support to 9 adult adoptees and birth relatives who were seeking access to records and support in tracing.

4.2 – DISRUPTED ADOPTIONS

- 4.2.1 There were no adoption disruptions in this period. One placement was considered at risk of disruption involving a sibling group of 2 placed in October 2014 and this placement continued to be supported at 31st March 2016. This low figure reflects the care given to the matching process between children and adoptive families, the resilience and commitment of adoptive parents and the support given to them and the children in the critical early months of placements.

SECTION 5 – OTHER ACTIVITIES

5.0 – INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION

- 5.0.1 Inter-Country adoption has become increasingly more complex in terms of the legal requirements of those countries that permit children to be placed for adoption outside of their country of origin. In recognition of this and given the specialist knowledge and expertise which this work demands, the Adoption Agency has a Service Level Agreement with a voluntary adoption agency based in Reading, Parents and Children Together (PACT), which is recognised as being a leading agency in this area of work, to provide this service on its behalf.
- 5.0.2 Families who are normally resident in Central Bedfordshire wishing to adopt children from overseas are advised to contact PACT who will provide information and preparation training and will assess and approve families wishing to adopt children from overseas.
- 5.0.3 Families are required to pay for their assessment in accordance with Regulations but Central Bedfordshire funds the initial counselling interview.

- 5.0.4 During this period the Adoption Team did not receive any enquiries regarding intercountry adoption. PACT received 24 Enquiries and sent 16 information packs. They completed 1 initial interview and have no children placed in the local authority area in this period.

5.1 – THE ADOPTION CONSORTIUM

- 5.1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council Adoption Agency was a member of the local adoption consortium whose aim is to work in partnership to share information about children and approved adopters to make local matches and to share good practice. The other full members were:

Buckinghamshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Luton Borough Council
Milton Keynes Council
Associate member: St Francis Children's Society

- 5.1.2 During this period the Consortium was replaced by Central Bedfordshires involvement with the development of Regional Adoption Agencies in accordance with the government proposal. Central Bedfordshire are part of the Central East Partnership with others members:

Northamptonshire
Buckinghamshire
Cambridge
Bedford Borough
Norfolk
Adoption Adoption Plus – Voluntary Adoption agency
St. Francis Children's Children's Society – Voluntary Adoption agency.

5.2 – BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR ADOPTION AND FOSTERING (BAAF)

- 5.2.1 Central Bedfordshire Council remained a full member of BAAF which was a leading national voluntary organisation working to promote best practice for children separated from their birth families until its closure in August 2015. It was the leading organisation representing local authority and voluntary adoption agencies and provides training courses, practice guidance, research material, and a consultation and advice service to all its members.

- 5.2.2 In August 2015 BAAF closed and a new organisation established. CoramBAAF Adoption and Fostering Academy will continue BAAF's work in adoption policy research, professional advice and development as well as taking over the running of National Adoption Week and Adoption Activity Days when would-be adoptive parents meet children with a plan of adoption. BAAF's role in running the National Adoption Register will be taken on by the First4Adoption information service - which is jointly run by Coram and Adoption UK.

- 5.2.2 During the last 12 months the agency has continued its membership of New Family Social, a national charity supporting adopters and foster carers from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and

Trans-gender community. The organisation provides social events, a website and membership events for carers, and support and advice to adoption agencies

5.3 – INDEPENDENT BIRTH FAMILY COUNSELLING

- 5.3.1 The agency provides an Independent Birth Family Counselling and support service. This service is provided by Adoption Plus Limited on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council. Adoption Plus is an independent adoption support agency.
- 5.3.2 The aim of the service is to provide birth relatives of children who might be adopted an opportunity for counselling support. Although the agency are involved in commissioning this service, Adoption Plus will undertake all counselling work with the birth family members and the counselling will be confidential unless concerns arise about the safety or welfare of a child.
- 5.3.3 The contract with Adoption Plus continued up to 31st March 2016 with ongoing contract reviews to ensure there is maximum support for those accessing the service and to ensure optimum take up by birth parents.

5.4 – THE ADOPTION SCORECARD

- 5.4.1 In 2012 the Department for Education published 'An Action Plan For Adoption: Tackling Delay' in which they outlined the intention to publish Adoption Scorecards for each council outlining performance in relation to numbers and timeliness of adoptions.
- 5.4.2 The scorecard details the average length of time between a child becoming looked after and moving in with their adoptive family and the length of time between the council having court authority to place a child and them moving in with their adoptive family. This is measured over a three year period.
- 5.4.3 The scorecard for Central Bedfordshire for the period 2012-15 showed that the average time between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family was 538 days. The final ranking at the end of the three year period ranked Central Bedfordshire in 49th place out of 151 Local Authorities and 4th in relation to our 11 statistical neighbours. Average time in 2015 was shorter than in 2014 and average time in 2012-15 was shorter than in 2011-14 demonstrating the improvement within the service to place children in permanent placements.
- 5.4.4 The average time between receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family was 142 days. This ranked in 18th place out of 151 Local authorities and 2nd place of our statistical neighbours. Average time in 2012-15 was shorter than in 2011-14.

SECTION 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.0.1 The first quarter of this period experienced several staffing changes but was managed to ensure minimal impact on plans for children and service users. The second quarter saw several new permanent staff join the team and has remained stable since.
- 6.0.2 There has been a continued increase in activity across all aspects of the service with several changes taking place nationally in regard to adoption. There has been an increase in children being referred for parallel planning and having plans for adoption which is different to the national trend in the reduction of children being placed for adoption. Despite this increase the Agency has maintained good performance with the Scorecard.
- 6.0.3 The number of approvals of prospective adopters was a decrease from the previous year however there has been an increase of the numbers of children being placed with Central Bedfordshire approved adopters in comparison to those placed with Interagency adopters. Within this period 15 out of 22 children were matched with adopters approved by Central Bedfordshire Council. This has ensured that more children are able to remain living locally and ensure support is accessible and available.
- 6.0.4 In order to meet continued demand a recruitment target for adopters has been set based on likely numbers and needs of children requiring adoption. The target has been set at 20 new approvals in 2016/2017.
- 6.0.5 Post Adoption support is an increasing feature of the work of the Adoption team. As well as undertaking adoption support assessments we manage post adoption contact for 108 children and have 140 families on our mailing list. Adoptive parents have access to the annual training programme and can request an assessment of adoption support needs until their child is 18 years old. We provide support groups for adoptive parents and activities for children and families. Next Year we are planning to develop a children's group and re establish the Teenage Adoption Panel.
- 6.0.6 From 1st May 2015 The Adoption Support Fund has been available to provide therapeutic support and services to parents and children during this period. This has enabled us to apply and receive funding for 16 children to provide services such as Therapeutic Life Story Work, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, Sensory Therapy and Psychotherapy. The availability of funding has been agreed for a further four years from this fund.
- 6.0.7 The development of a Regional Adoption Agency was initiated with our involvement in the Central East partnership. This will be ongoing in the forthcoming year.

Report written by:

Nickie Phillip
Adoption Practice Manager

Telephone: 0300 300 8090

This information can be made available in
Large print and in other languages if required

Për Informacion

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برای اطلاع

Per Informazione

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Informacja

Za Informacije

তথ্যের জন্য

Produced by Central Bedfordshire Council

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