

# Croydon Council

For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b> <b>15<sup>th</sup> January 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Annual Report of Adoption Service and Panel</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Alisa Flemming</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Children, Young People &amp; Learning</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:</b> <i>Include here a brief statement on how the recommendations address one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:</i> <a href="#">Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022</a>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> None.	

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The adoption agency report is for information only and relates to the operation of the adoption service in the previous financial year.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are three reports attached;

- 1. Annual Adoption Agency Report**  
A summary of the adoption service activities over the last financial year
- 2. Annual Adoption Panel Report**  
A report by the independent chair on the activities of the Adoption Panel
- 3. Update on the transfer and progress of Adoption London South.**

### **3. DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT**

#### *3.1 Annual Adoption Agency Report*

3.2 One key development was the restructuring of the service to ensure clearer lines of accountability and effectiveness in terms of key performance areas such as recruitment, family finding and adoption support. This restructuring took place in January 2019 and therefore had limited impact on performance for 2018/2019 but has had an impact on timeliness in 2019/2020.

3.3 The adoption service was also enabled to use the Children's Recording System, (CRS). This has meant better record keeping and the ability to obtain performance data more easily.

3.4 These changes have improved the services operation and resulted in positive comments from Ofsted in October 2019 about the progress and improved performance.

3.5 The main areas to develop for 2019/2020 are focused on preparing for the RAA, Adoption London South.

- Preparation of staff for TUPE to RAA.
- Preparation of data for transfer
- Alignment of working practices.
- Ceasing of the LB of Croydon Adoption Panel – (August 2019).
- Weekly tracking of all children with a plan for adoption and a Placement Order.
- Reducing the waiting lists in Adoption Support specifically adult adopter enquiries.
- Improvement in links with Social Work with Families Teams.

#### *3.6 Annual Adoption Panel Report*

3.7 The LB of Croydon Adoption Panel has had a very experienced chair and consistent members, this has provided a level of stability to the service as well as an oversight of the quality of work and functions.

3.8 The adoption panel stopped operating in August 2019 due to the start of Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption London South.

3.9 All Adoption Agencies have to set up an Adoption Panel. The Agency has to create a 'Central List' of people who have experience, expertise and knowledge about adoption matters who will make up the Adoption Panel. The three main functions of the Adoption Panel are to make recommendations to the Agency about the suitability of potential adopters, to recommend the placement of a child with specific adopters and to recommend an adoption plan for a relinquished child. The Adoption Panel has an independent status and a role to assure good standards of practice, consistency of approach and fairness in the adoption service. The National Minimum Standards for Adoption require a report to be made by the Adoption Panel to the Agency on the local authority's adoption service.

- 3.10 The panel reported that there were 6 families approved for adoption in the second half of the year and only one was improved within time scales. The reason for the delays was mostly due to issues collecting background checks in stage 1 and this was mainly due to delays in receiving DBS checks.
- 3.11 The panel recommend matches for 11 children and stated that the quality of the reports generally range from good to excellent.
- 3.12 *Update on the transfer and progress of Adoption London South*
- 3.14 It was expected that the transition to ALS would have some impact on the performance of adoption in the region and this has been the case.
- 3.15 Adoption activity for the LB of Croydon has remained static and the timeliness of placements has improved.
- 3.16 The challenges remain the same for the placing of children who have a disability, are of ethnic minority or are older. There is opportunity to engage with the public with larger resources across the whole of London in order to meet the variety of needs of adopted children in region.
- 3.17 The communication with Adopters could have been improved. The ALS website was not ready until November 2019 and there was not clear routes for adopters to contact ALS. This lead to some service dissatisfaction from service users. This has been addressed now but could have been avoided with a longer transition period.
- 3.18 ALS staff and management are committed to improving adoption practice, recruitment and support and I am confident that this will happen. As part of a pan-London structure the resources are much enhanced.
- 3.19 Good governance arrangements are in place and there is a commitment to make ALS work.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

None.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

None.

#### **6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

None.

**7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

None.

**8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

None.

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

None.

**10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

None.

**11. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

**11.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

**No**

**HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

**No**

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**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

1. Annual Adoption Report 2018/2019
2. Annual Panel Report 2018/2019
3. Update on the Regional Adoption Agency

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

*None.*