



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 9 November 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Council Antechamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

There will be a private meeting for Committee Members only at 1:30pm in Room 2006, 2nd Floor, Town Hall Extension

Access to the Council Antechamber

Public access to the Council Antechamber is on Level 2 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension.

There is no public access from any other entrance.

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

Meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are 'webcast'. These meetings are filmed and broadcast live on the Internet. If you attend this meeting you should be aware that you might be filmed and included in that transmission.

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillors –

Reid (Chair), Abdullatif, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Cooley, Gartside, Hewitson, Johnson, Judge, Lovecy, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

Co-opted Members -

Mr G Cleworth, Miss S Iltaf, Ms K McDaid, Mrs J Miles, Dr W Omara and Ms L Smith

Agenda

1. Urgent Business

To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.

2. Appeals

To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.

3. Interests

To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

4. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2022.

Pages
7 - 16

5. Update on the 2023/24 budget position - to follow

6. LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Annual Report 2021-2022

Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Pages
17 - 40

The purpose of the annual report is to provide an overview and analysis of the management of allegations against adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity in Manchester, for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This includes how effective the safeguarding partnership is in discharging its statutory responsibilities. The report considers the learning and development over the last twelve months and sets the priorities for 2022-2023 based on the analysis of activity.

7. Adoption Counts Annual Report

Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Pages
41 - 96

This report fulfils the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report to the “executive

side” of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.

- | | |
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| 8. Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub
Presentation of the Strategic Lead (Complex Safeguarding) and
Claire McNicholls, Named Nurse (Safeguarding) | Pages
97 - 112 |
|---|-------------------|

To receive a presentation on the Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub Annual Report 2021/2022.

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 9. Overview Report
Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit | Pages
113 - 124 |
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The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee’s work programme and any items for information.

Information about the Committee

Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Our Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reviews the services provided by the Council and its partners for young people across the city including education, early years, school standards and valuing young people.

In addition to the elected members the Committee has seven co-opted member positions. These are:

- Representative of the Diocese of Manchester – Vacant
- Representative of the Diocese of Salford – Mrs Julie Miles
- Parent governor representative – Dr Walid Omara
- Parent governor representative – Ms Katie McDaid
- Parent governor representative – Mr Gary Cleworth
- Secondary sector teacher representative – Miss Saba Iltaf
- Primary sector teacher representative – Ms Laura Smith

The co-opted members representing faith schools and parent governors are able to vote when the Committee deals with matters relating to education functions.

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. If you have a special interest in an item on the agenda and want to speak, tell the Committee Officer, who will pass on your request to the Chair. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

The Council welcomes the filming, recording, public broadcast and use of social media to report on the Committee's meetings by members of the public.

Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website www.manchester.gov.uk

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

Joanne Roney OBE
Chief Executive
3rd Floor, Town Hall Extension,
Manchester, M60 2LA.

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2022

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair

Councillors Abdullatif, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Gartside, Hewitson, Johnson, Lovecy and Sadler

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non-Voting Members:

Miss S Iltaf, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children Services

Councillor Foley, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Councillor Shilton Godwin, Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Wright, Member of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

CYP/22/44 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2022.

CYP/22/45 Bee Green summit update and Education Green Climate Change Action Plan 2022-24

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided an update on work done by the Council to support the education sector with decarbonisation since the previous report to the Committee on the Climate Emergency in January 2022. It also outlined the plans for this work moving forwards, with the action plan refreshed bi-annually following on from several review points within the two years.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- Progress to date in relation to:
 - Bee Green Education Summit;
 - Green Bee Assembly;
 - Schools Hub;
 - Education Services' Climate Change Action Plan 2022-24; and

- Plan Launch and World Car Free Day; and
- Future opportunities.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Plans to work with schools who had not engaged with the Bee Green event;
- School carbon emission figures and whether the Key Performance Indicators in the appendix should include a specific target for reducing carbon emissions;
- How the Council could help schools to focus on the climate change crisis, given the other pressures on schools, their pupils and families at the present time;
- Travel to school, including the safety of pupils walking and cycling to school;
- The role of Ward Councillors, including how they could engage with schools and sharing information with Ward Councillors about the work the schools in their wards were doing;
- To request that school governors be given carbon literacy training; and
- Recognising the important role of the Manchester Environmental Education Network.

The Director of Education advised that there were always competing priorities and challenges for schools but that the Council was committed to keeping this issue high on the agenda, making it a priority and supporting schools to do the same. She informed Members that an audit was taking place on the progress schools in Manchester had made so far in addressing climate change. She reported that some schools had already made a lot of progress with this while some were still at a very early stage with this work, not because they were unwilling to address it but because they did not know how to start to approach this. She reported that, following the audit, the Council would look to group schools together to provide support.

The Graduate Management Trainee reported that there was not currently a tool available to calculate school emissions but that work was taking place to look at how this could be achieved and to try to calculate energy use per pupil and that a clearer picture of emission levels was needed before setting targets. In response to Members' comments on rising energy bills and funding available to help schools reduce the amount of carbon produced by their heating systems, he informed Members about some of the funding which was available, that information on this was available on the online schools hub and that the Council could assist schools with applying for these funding streams. The Director of Education informed Members that information was being sent to schools the following week about how they could reduce their energy use. The Graduate Management Trainee reported that procurement was another area where schools could reduce their carbon emissions through working together to source sustainable, local providers. The Chair suggested that schools sign up to the Council's Ethical Procurement Policy and Social Value Policy.

In response to a Member's question, the Post-16 Lead outlined how the Council, schools and settings worked together to understand and respond to labour market intelligence on green skills and green jobs. In response to a Member's question about figures on the level of engagement with the online schools hub, he advised that

he would look at what data was available on this. In response to a question about ward-level work on climate change, he advised that he and his colleagues were working in conjunction with ward action plans and liaising with other teams, including Neighbourhood Teams, and the Highways Service, to ensure a joined-up approach. He informed Members that this included working together on a pilot project in relation to active travel. The Chair expressed concern that Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) had so far not been able to find funding for some sustainable travel projects.

The Executive Member for Children's Services highlighted that integrating the school action plans with the ward action plans was referred to in the action plan and he encouraged the Ward Councillors to ensure that this was taking place in their ward. He recognised the important role of Ward Councillors and advised that he would email all Councillors to encourage them to engage with schools on climate change and that he would arrange for Ward Councillors to have access to school action plans. He reported that carbon literacy training was available for school governors and that this would be made clear and that the Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport was working to increase the number of carbon literate people in schools. He confirmed that the Council was working with the Manchester Environmental Education Network.

The Graduate Management Trainee acknowledged a Member's comment about parental engagement, reporting that the Green Bee Relay referred to in the report would be a good way of initiating this.

The Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee welcomed the work outlined in the report, in particular the focus on children and young people's voices and giving them ways of taking action to address climate change. She advised that some actions to address climate change were more easily achieved than others and that this should be taken into account when prioritising actions. She highlighted a report by the Manchester Climate Change Partnership which was going to the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee meeting the following day and which indicated that the city was failing to meet its targets on its journey to reach zero carbon by 2038. She reported that the age, design and condition of school buildings was a challenge and that schools would need a lot of support to address this. She encouraged the Council to be more ambitious than the targets set by the Department for Education (DfE) on rolling out carbon literacy training. She reported that she had attended the Bee Green event and asked whether it would be better to spend the money on trying to engage with the schools who were not currently engaged in this work.

Councillor Wright, Member of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee, stated that it would be useful to have a breakdown of the current position in relation to school buildings and which were likely to require more work to reduce carbon emissions and what access to funding was available. She asked to see the information that was on the schools hub in relation to climate change.

In response to a question from Councillor Wright, the Graduate Management Trainee clarified that the figure on the percentage of education emissions which came from travel and transport, included all school travel, relating to both pupils and staff. He proposed a travel survey to better understand how pupils were travelling to school

and informed Members about the school streets toolkit which was being developed. He reported that a task group was looking at installing solar panels on school buildings and overcoming the barriers that schools faced in doing this.

The Chair informed the Committee that she and the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee had been working with TfGM to ensure a more equitable provision of school buses across Greater Manchester by September 2023. She advised that a report would be brought to either this Committee or the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee once this work had been completed. She advised that this would have a significant impact on the number of car journeys by parents to take children to school. She also stated that it would be beneficial to have a RAG rating for schools, to monitor the progress they had made in relation to addressing climate change and support them to improve. The Post-16 Lead reported that this would be done through the audit process.

The Executive Member for Children's Services explained that the Bee Green summit had been a form of quality engagement which had informed the action plan and that it was the actions arising out of the summit that were important, rather than the event itself.

The Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Transport thanked the Director of Education, the Executive Member for Children's Services and all those involved for their work on this, which went beyond that which was outlined in the report. She advised that the information and resources on the schools hub was the legacy of the Bee Green summit and asked officers to provide a briefing to Members on this.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/22/46 Admission Policies for 2024/25 for community and voluntary controlled primary schools and community high schools

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which sought approval to commence consultation on revised admissions arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary schools and community high schools. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 19 October 2022.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background;
- Main issues;
- The proposal to change the re-application process from three times per year to one and the benefits of this;
- Oversubscription criterion, which were not changing;
- Consultation; and
- Other admission authorities.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions

were:

- To support the proposal that applicant details remained on the waiting lists for the higher preference school for the whole or remainder of that academic year, rather than parents having to re-apply each term;
- Families who had to move, sometimes more than once, due to domestic abuse and what was being done to support them in obtaining a suitable school place;
- The medical evidence required to be classed as Category 2 (children with exceptional medical/social needs) under the oversubscription criterion and costs associated with this;
- Children in a school nursery who were not successful at getting a place in the Reception year of the school;
- The importance of communication to parents on applying on time and putting more than one preference on the admissions form; and
- Travel to school and further education settings, including the financial costs for families, and the environmental costs.

The Head of Access and Sufficiency reported that, where families were placed in temporary accommodation, the Council worked to provide travel solutions to enable the children to continue to attend their existing school but, where this was not possible, they would look to provide a more local school place as quickly as possible and the process for this had recently been improved. She advised that parents were usually able to provide documents that they already had, such as letters about hospital appointments, as evidence that their child should be classed under Category 2 and, therefore, there was no additional cost to the family. In response to Members' questions, she reported that a high proportion of in-year applications were offered a place at one of their preferred schools but that this was more difficult at secondary level and that, as more secondary places were made available, this should improve. In response to a question about families re-applying for a preferred school, she reported that, once children had started attending at a school which was an alternative offer, most families chose for their child to continue at that school, rather than continuing to re-apply for the school they had originally preferred. She advised that there was currently more availability for primary school places but, if Members had concerns about particular primary schools where children from the school nursery were not getting a place in Reception, she could look into it to see if parents were applying after the deadline and whether more needed to be done with those nurseries to communicate the importance of submitting an application on time. The Director of Education clarified that attending a school nursery did not guarantee a place in the school's Reception year; however, there was now better sufficiency of places at Reception level and sometimes the reason for not getting a place was because parents thought they did not need to submit an application because their child already attended the nursery, or because they did not submit it on time, and all the places were allocated to families who had submitted the application on time. The Chair advised that nurseries could help to communicate this information to the parents.

The Committee discussed secondary school places, in particular in the north of the city, and a Member shared concerns about children who had not started secondary school because the school they had been offered was of a different faith from the

family's. The Executive Member for Children's Services offered to discuss the specific cases raised with the Member. He emphasised the importance of the Council and primary schools communicating strongly to parents about the importance of including more than one school preference on the admissions form. The Chair suggested that this issue be discussed with Ward Councillors in the north of the city as it was likely that other primary schools were aware of issues with parents not accepting the secondary school places that were offered. She expressed concern about children who were not in school, including those whose parents had chosen Elective Home Education (EHE) and asked for up-to-date figures on this, including a breakdown by areas of the city. The Director of Education reported that school attendance was improving and that her service was looking at children who had not returned to school. She stated that, where families had not got a place at their preferred school, they were advised to send the child to the offered school and that they could still try to obtain a place at their preferred school through the waiting list or an appeal, or look for another alternative school. A Member commented that some families would be concerned about the cost of buying a school uniform for their offered school if their child might later get a place at the preferred school.

Decisions

1. To support the proposal that applicant details remain on the waiting lists for the higher preference school for the whole or remainder of that academic year, rather than parents having to re-apply each term.
2. To note the formal consultation on changing the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary schools and community high schools will commence on 31 October 2022.
3. To ask that up-to-date figures on children who are not in school, including those whose parents have chosen Elective Home Education (EHE) be included in a future report and that this include a breakdown by areas of the city.

CYP/22/47 School Places

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education and the Head of Access and Sufficiency which provided an overview of Manchester's current school age population and the numbers forecast for future academic years. It also detailed work previously undertaken and that which was planned to achieve a sufficiency of school places. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 19 October 2022.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The school age population;
- Approach to securing sufficient school places; and
- Actions to secure sufficient school places, including work to progress the establishment of a new secondary special school at a site identified in north Manchester.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The impact of the growth of the city centre on inner city wards and the need to consider the sufficient provision of schools and medical facilities for the expanding population;
- Could the Department for Education (DfE) override the Council's proposals in relation to the new secondary special school; and
- Timescales in relation to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

The Director of Education advised that her service was being included more in the planning related to residential developments and she highlighted that a city centre school was being built. She reported that the Council had involved the DfE when undertaking the Free School Presumption Process so that they were assured about the way the Council was carrying out the process. Therefore, she advised, it was less likely that they would overrule it and they had never overruled the Council on this previously.

The Head of Access and Sufficiency informed Members about the statutory 20-week process for EHCPs, advising that currently the Council was delivering about 80% of EHCP requests within this timeframe. She reported that the Council was working with schools to improve support to children before and during the time taken for the EHCP application process, with a focus on early intervention and support before the child had an EHCP in place.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Executive Member for Children's Services highlighted the demand for more school places in Wythenshawe, due to the closure of Newall Green High School, and that this was being addressed through the opening of a new school next year. Referring to the Newton Heath school, he reported that the need for an additional school in north Manchester had been identified some time ago and that the Council had worked very hard to identify a site for it. The Head of Access and Sufficiency reported that the Co-op Academy Belle Vue was already open in temporary accommodation with a reduced number of places and would offer the full number of places from next year. In response to a further question from the Chair, she advised that, once these new high schools were fully open, there should not be a need for any further new high schools, unless there were any long-term major residential developments in future, in which case her service would be involved in planning for this. In response to a question from the Chair about whether the new high school in Belle Vue could open up to other year groups, she advised that this was an option which could be considered.

In response to a question from the Chair about special schools, the Head of Access and Sufficiency drew Members' attention to the information in the table at 5.9 in the report which outlined what had been done to increase specialist provision in the city, as well as the proposed new special school. She reported that the vast majority of children attending the city's specialist provision were Manchester children.

The Chair advised that Ward Councillors needed to ensure that they were aware of developments in their area and the impact on infrastructure, including the need for sufficient schools.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/22/48 Update on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care

The Committee received a presentation of the Deputy Strategic Director for Children's Services which provided an update on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

The main points and themes within the presentation included:

- A reset in children's social care;
- A revolution in family help;
- A just and decisive child protection system;
- Unlocking the potential of family networks;
- Transforming care;
- The care experience;
- Realising the potential of the workforce;
- A system that was relentlessly focused on children and families;
- Implementation; and
- Manchester's readiness.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Deputy Strategic Director for Children's Services advised that there were aspects of the report which he welcomed, in particular the call for investment in services, but that the Council was waiting for the details of the policy before being able to form a fuller view of it. The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services reported that the outcome of the Review was welcomed overall by the social work profession but that there were concerns about some of the proposals, which they would need to see the details of before forming an opinion, including the regional care consortiums and plans for the social work workforce. The Executive Member for Children's Services welcomed the discussion on reform and investment in children's services which this had raised but expressed concern about how the national government would respond to the call for investment and the impact of the current backlog of legislation waiting to go through parliament, as some elements of this would require additional legislation.

In response to a Member's question about the proposal for a windfall tax on profits in the children's social care market, the Deputy Strategic Director for Children's Services referred Members to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on children's homes and a recent article on the difference in Ofsted judgements between private providers and local authority providers; however, he advised that there were some very good private providers which the Council wanted to work with and he outlined how quality of care and value for money were monitored through commissioning arrangements and commissioning officers, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers and Ofsted. The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services reported that the Council had significantly reduced the number of children who were Looked After and those who were in residential provision, which was the primary area where there was the issue of profiteering. He advised that next

month's budget report would include the costs relating to individual children due to the complexity and range of their needs. He reported that his service was not waiting for a response from the national government to make improvements and outlined work already taking place to continuously improve, working collaboratively with a range of partners within the city and across Greater Manchester.

Decision

To note the report.

CYP/22/49 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

The Chair invited Members to contact her with any suggestions for the work programme and she suggested that the Committee might want to look at Multi-Systemic Therapy at a future meeting.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme, subject to the above comments.

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Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2022

Subject: LADO Annual Report 2021-2022

Report of: Strategic Director, Children and Education Services

Summary

The purpose of the annual report is to provide an overview and analysis of the management of allegations against adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity in Manchester, for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This includes how effective the safeguarding partnership is discharging its statutory responsibilities. The report considers the learning and development over the last twelve months and sets the priorities for 2022-2023 based on the analysis of activity.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) consider the progress and impact being achieved by the LADO service in Manchester.
 - (2) agree the goals set out for 2021/2022 with regards to continuous drive for improvement of service delivery and the impact on the children's workforce and children.
-

Wards Affected: All

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>
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<p>The LADO Service has successfully embedded a hybrid model of working by utilising technology, which has reduced the transport requirements of professionals attending meetings.</p>
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<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>

<p>The LADO service works with partners to make sure that the organisation conducts investigations that are fair and equitable across our diverse workforce in Manchester. We ensure that equality and valuing diversity is reinforced by our values and embedded in our day to day working practice.</p>

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The LADO service employs 2 members of staff that contributes to the diverse workforce within Children's Safeguarding & Review Service.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The LADOs in Manchester all have at least 20 years post qualifying experience in Social Work and share their knowledge and expertise across Children's Services and the wider children's workforce.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Throughout 2021-2022 we have successfully delivered several training sessions virtually and briefing sessions to a wider section of the workforce, the impact of this is that more services across the city have a greater understanding of the role of the LADO.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The LADO service has adopted a hybrid model for investigation meetings and use technology to facilitate, this reduces the need for professionals to travel to meetings.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The LADOs in Manchester are involved within the Northwest LADO network and national work to ensure we share learning and continuously develop in line with regional and national practice.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Not applicable

Financial Consequences – Capital

Not applicable

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

LADO Annual Report 2021-2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the annual report is to provide an overview and analysis of the management of allegations against adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity in Manchester, for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This includes how effective the safeguarding partnership is discharging its statutory responsibilities.
- 1.2 The report considers the learning and development over the last twelve months and sets the priorities for 2022-2023 based on the analysis of activity. It also builds on previous annual reports and North West comparative intelligence.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The LADO Annual Report is a statutory requirement from Working Together to Safeguarding Children and their Families (2018) to outline the work of the Local Authority LADO. It is required in Manchester to be presented to Scrutiny Committee and Manchester Safeguarding Partnership.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 The recommendations of the report set out the service priorities for 2022-2023, which are;

Priority 1. To provide a timely and effective service to employers.

- We will work with agencies to ensure that they use their internal resource effectively before sending enquiries or referrals to the LADO service. This will ensure that LADOs are able to continue to focus on the enquiries and referrals which have been through this process in a timely way.
- We will work with employees to improve how we feedback to children and alleged perpetrators and make this a focus at each final LADO Meeting.
- We will ensure that we have a focus in each meeting on the duty of care to children and their families and the alleged perpetrators.

Priority 2. Improve participation from partners to focus on improving outcomes for children.

- We will continue to offer training to our partner agencies to ensure they understand LADO thresholds and the confidence to deal with internal allegations where appropriate. We will consider the groups that continue to be low refers into the service. This includes understanding better with agencies why referrals are high but why referrals are not progressed to allegation meetings, for example faith groups and transport.
- We will work with PRI to improve the data available to us to understand, improve practice and support the training offer to partner agencies.
- We will work in partnership with MSP to understand what the outcomes of the Section 11 report to identify organisations that require additional support from the LADO around their overall rating of safe recruitment and safeguarding with specific reference to employees.

Priority 3. To improve quality assurance to be more focused on learning and development.

- We will continue to develop the monthly Performance Report to understand the performance of the LADO service, including strengths and areas for development.
- We will use the North West Audit tool to develop an effective audit process and ask for moderation by another NW authority.
- We will develop a more learning environment through the QA process linked to regular thematic audit and observation of practice.

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**Managing Allegations against Adults who work
with children -
Local Authority Designated Officer Annual
Report 2021-2022.**
Children's Safeguarding & Review Service.

Report to: Children's Leadership Team, Children and Education Management Team, Manchester
Safeguarding Partnership (MSP)

Principal Author: Jayne Jones - Service Lead Safeguarding

Co-Authors: Jackie Shaw & Majella O'Hagan LADOs

Date completed: 30th July 2022

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the annual report is to provide Manchester Safeguarding Partnership with an overview and analysis of the management of allegations against adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity in Manchester, for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This includes how effective the safeguarding partnership is discharging its statutory responsibilities.

The report considers the learning and development over the last twelve months and sets the priorities for 2022-2023 based on the analysis of activity. It also builds on previous annual reports and North West comparative intelligence.

2. Keeping Children Safe

2.1 The Role of Local Authority LADO

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in Manchester is responsible for ensuring itself and its partners comply with their statutory obligations as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children¹ in relation to the management of allegations against adults working in a paid or voluntary capacity. These procedures are in line with the DfE Guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. In Manchester, the term LADO is widely known and used by partner agencies who clearly identify the role as set out in the above legislation and procedures.

The Children Act 2004, Section 11 placed a duty upon a range of organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions and any services that they contract out to others have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This also includes the voluntary and community sectors as well as private companies who employ staff who work directly with children and those engaged as foster carers for both the local authority and private agencies.

Children are central to the role of the LADO and in Manchester we ensure all allegations we receive against adults who work with children are not dealt with in isolation. The welfare of children remains paramount, and any corresponding actions required to safeguard children are shared, where appropriate, with partner agencies and accurate records of actions kept.

2.2 Managing Allegations

Statutory guidance makes clear that organisations and agencies must have clear policies for dealing with allegations against adults working with children in positions of trust. Furthermore, such policies should make clear the difference between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice and a complaint. An allegation relates to adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity who have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;

¹Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2018

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Managing allegations involves those working within regulated settings. Regulated activity is defined as:

- Unsupervised activities such as teaching and social care
- Work for a limited range of establishments such as schools, children's homes and other child care premises.
- Relevant personal and healthcare
- Registered childminding
- Foster Care

The introduction of the 4th criteria in relation to "suitability to work with Children" (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020) is now well embedded in LADO processes. The suitability criteria cover all people working in regulated activity. This criteria considers situations whereby a person's behaviour outside or inside the workplace may suggest a transferrable risk. The fourth additional criteria of suitability will apply to situations as follows:

- Mental health
- Criminal behaviours outside of work
- Domestic abuse
- Offences against adults
- Substance misuse.

Example:

"two colleagues who work with children have an altercation outside work during a social event and 1 colleague is physically injured by the other, the referral to LADO met consideration of the 4th suitability criteria."

In managing allegations, we consider the allegations, actions required to safeguard children and the welfare of the subject of the LADO investigations.

In concluding LADO investigations, we ensure employees are aware of their duties set out by DfE to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where they have removed a person from their work due to them posing a risk to children, as set out in Working Together 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. The duty to refer is clearly discussed in the meetings and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. This information is clearly discussed also as part of any multi-agency training to ensure that organisations and partners are aware of this responsibility at the conclusion of an allegation that they need to refer to the DBS.

2.3 Profile of Service

The LADO Service sits within the Children's Safeguarding & Review Service (previously known as the Safeguarding Improvement Service) and is responsible for ensuring that there are effective and timely responses to allegations against adults who work with children. The LADOs also provide advice and guidance

to employers on policies and safer working practice that enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and oversee the allegation management process.

There are 1.4 permanent full time equivalent staff in the Service, which consists of 1 full time member of staff and 0.4 member of staff. The LADOs in post are permanent members of staff for Manchester City Council and have both been in the role for 4.5 years and 13 years. This year we have added an additional 0.2 full time equivalent resource to the Service to support the increase in demand. This member of staff has previously been a LADO in another Local Authority and is a permanent member of staff in Manchester.

All 3 LADOs hold a Social Work qualification, and two are registered with Social Work England. They are sufficiently qualified and experienced to fulfil their role as set out in Working Together 2018 and are skilled in managing allegations. Following changes to statutory guidance, there is a requirement for new appointments to LADO to be qualified social workers, Manchester has always held the position that this ensures the right quality and expertise required to deliver the service.

The service receives business support equivalent to 1 full time member of staff. This support is vital to the effectiveness of service delivery. They support the administration of referrals, allegation meetings, maintain the data base and respond to other general enquiries such as freedom of information requests and other data information requests.

LADOs have been managed by the Service Lead for Children's Safeguarding up to January 2022 when resource was moved within the service to provide a part-time Safeguarding Manager to provide additional capacity to support the continued development of the service. The LADOs receive monthly formal supervision and informal supervision, support and development, which includes regular Team Meetings.

The full time LADO is actively involved in the Northwest Regional LADO forum. This forum provides an opportunity for peer support, sharing practice and key performance data, considering new developments and the review and development of regional policies and procedures. This group also acts to provide a link into the national group and DfE.

2.4 The key roles and responsibilities of the LADO

In Manchester, the key roles and responsibilities for the LADOs are to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police, children's social care, other local authorities, and relevant agencies
- Manage the allegation process, including chairing the allegation meetings and monitor the progress of the allegation to ensure that it is dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.
- Participate in the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership Learning and Development programme.
- Training and development
- Strategic development role in providing analysis, identifying patterns and themes to support single agency strengthening of their organisations in delivering services that are safe.

The LADOs also play a role in responding to Subject Access Requests (SARs), responding to requests from DBS for information about allegations and outcomes, Freedom of Information Requests and providing information about adults who have worked in Manchester in the past as part of historical abuse enquiries.

The work carried out by the LADOs is all recorded electronically. Enquiries are kept on an electronic file and referrals through to allegation meetings recorded on the Children's Services electronic system (Liquid Logic).

2.5 Complaints

There has been 1 complaint about services for managing allegations against adults who work with children in Manchester during the reporting period and this complaint was unfounded. This reflects the continued quality of the service provided. We are keen to learn from complaints and there is always learning to take away. For this complaint the learning was regarding how we share information about managers contact details when complaints are being made. We now ensure that we give the details of MCC complaints department and the manager of the person who the complainant is making a complaint about.

3. **Overview of enquiries and referrals data - 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022**

There were 708 contacts this year. This is a significant increase (42%) from 497 contacts made to the LADOs between 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. All contacts are assessed by the LADO to either be an enquiry or a referral. All contacts are received through telephone calls, emails or written referrals into the service and responded to by a LADO on the same day as contact is made - this will always involve a telephone call/email to the person making the enquiry/referral. The impact of this is that the LADOs have spent an increased amount of time responding to contacts that generally always involved a minimum of a telephone call and often reading information sent through and recording the outcome. In order to maintain a responsive service to safeguard children, the decision was made to move additional resource on a temporary basis. This has been effective in ensuring the quality of the service. We will be reviewing the needs over the next 6 months and if the demand is maintained, how we manage this longer term.

We know that a significant increase this year is from schools, and this is likely to have been a result of the return to all children being face to face in schools. From the agencies referring in we can also assume that the increased face to face contact with Children in all areas of Regulated Activity has had an impact on the increased contacts. Late 2019 we introduced a more effective recording system for reporting all contacts and while we recorded 590 contacts in 2019-2020 and saw a 12% drop in 2020-2021, it is difficult this year to understand whether the current demand will be sustained in 2022/3.

While we know that some of the increase can be attributed to return of face to face we also know that there has been evidence (NSPCC, NCA and UK's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) that there was an increase in all online activity during lockdown, however the NSPCC's lead for Child Safety online described lockdown as the "perfect storm" for online abuse of children. Both the NCA and the UK's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre stated that the full extent of this abuse would not be known until children returned to school and were able to speak to a trusted adult. Whilst the experience of the LADOs in Manchester would support this hypothesis, how we record our data would not provide the detailed analysis to confirm this. The other factor that needs considering is that the interrogation and investigation into people, and their devices, who are accessing this abuse. Therefore, these crimes are coming to the LADO currently.

3.1 Enquiries

An Enquiry is assessed as only requiring advice, guidance or information and does not meet the threshold for a referral. Enquiries come into the service in a variety of ways; email requests for advice directly to the LADO, emails sent via the generic Children's Safeguarding & Review Service email that is directly forwarded to the duty LADO and through telephone calls via the Children Safeguarding & Review Services. The data shows that 67.5% of contacts are dealt with as enquiries. The implication of this is that significant LADO resource is used redirecting employees to activity not requiring LADO over-sight. The intention is that training will give people the confidence to see when issues are a matter to be investigated by the employer and when a referral is required to the LADO. Manchester is not significantly different to the regional comparison, but there are examples where clear internal processes are not used or followed prior to contacting the LADO. Whilst this is a positive reflection on the service, it creates an increasing pressure that needs to be addressed.

Table 1: Total number of enquiries against adults who work with children over the past 3 years:

Total allegation enquiries by year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/2022
	351	326	478

As discussed above there are several reasons for the increase in enquires this year and a further point to acknowledge is that we have been much more consistent over the last 2 years in delivering LADO training to organisations and this rise in awareness could be reflected in the increase of enquiries. We also know that regulatory bodies (Ofsted/CQC) insist that the information is shared with the LADO for advice and guidance.

Table 2: Total number of enquiries & % against adults who work with children over the past 12 months:

Sector of Enquiries	2020/2021		2021/2022
Health	44	(13%)	57 (12%)
Children's Social Care	76	(23%)	111 (23%)
Education	113	(35%)	157 (33%)
Early Years	16	(5%)	49 (10%)
Faith Groups	8	(2%)	14 (3%)
Police	12	(4%)	6 (1%)
Transport	10	(3%)	28 (6%)
Sport/Leisure	12	(4%)	19 (4%)
Voluntary	2	(1%)	7 (1%)
Sector not recorded	7	(2%)	8 (2%)
Youth Work	0	(0%)	8 (2%)
Other	26	(8%)	14 (3%)
Ofsted	0	(0%)	0
Total	326		478

Table 2 highlights the key agencies whose contact with the LADO results in advice or guidance only and shows the consistency in the key agencies, health, Children's Social Care & Education over the last two years making enquiries.

We have seen the biggest increase in the Youth Service, Transport and Early Years. Again, we know that we have targeted Youth Services to seek advice and guidance from LADO, so it is promising this year to see the increase and regarding Early Years we know that Ofsted expect a LADO discussion from Nurseries / Child Minders with the LADO. These discussions are often advice and guidance rather than resulting in a referral. We know that in 2020-2021 the numbers of children accessing childminders reduced in line with government guidance and this year with the restriction removed children have returned to childcare provisions.

As with previous years we continue to see employers seeking advice and guidance around the 4th criteria and the interpretation of behaviours. This often refers to behaviour in respect of conduct issues rather than behaviour that have or may have harmed a child. The complexity of adult behaviours both in their personal life and when working with children is often the reason for the enquiry and organisations / partners require support to navigate through these. Examples of this but not limited to are; being over friendly with children, having favourites with children in groups, taking photographs of children on mobile, how they interact with others outside work.

It is positive to see agencies continue to use the expertise of the LADO to consider whether it meets the threshold for investigation. These partnership conversations strengthen professional knowledge and skills in managing concerns when adults work with children. However, we plan to deliver targeted training with education and social care in 2022-2023 to ensure that employees have the knowledge and skills to consider what makes an allegation.

3.2 Referrals

A referral to the LADO where the referrer considers that an adult who works with children in a paid or voluntary capacity in Manchester has:

- *Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child*
- *Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child*
- *Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children*
- *Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.*

Table 3: Number of Referrals:

Year	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Total no. of allegation referrals	218	171	230

The table above (Table 3) highlights the number of referrals over the last two years that shows the highest number of referrals this year in the three-year period. We continue to see an increase in the complexities of referrals. We have set out some examples of referrals into the service over the last twelve months.

Example:

“Allegation of physical abuse, kidnapping and forced marriage. This was a health professional and allegation made by adult sister. Sister did not pursue complaint but there was evidence that supported allegations and concerns. Suitability criteria as no harm or crime against a child.”

“Education professional– Internet Protocol address used to view and distributed incident images of children (IIOC) came from an address that the education worker resided at. 2 people living at the address, 1 in regulated activity and both denied any involvement with IIOC and a shared devices in property. Suitability criteria met.”

Table 4: Source of Referrals:

Sector making the Referral	Total Referrals 2019/2020	Total Referral 2020/2021	Total Referral 2021/2022
Early Years	5 (2%)	8 (4%)	5 (2%)
Education	53 (24%)	28 (16%)	51 (21%)
Faith Groups	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	6 (3%)
Health	4 (2%)	6 (3%)	11 (5%)
Sport/Leisure	5 (5%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
Police	26 (11%)	36 (21%)	24 (9%)
Children’s Social Care	92 (42%)	73 (43%)	116 (50%)
Transport	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Voluntary Organisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Youth Work	1 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
Ofsted	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	7 (3%)
Cafcass	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Other	26 (11%)	15 (9%)	2 (1%)
	218	171	230

It is clear from Table 4 that the key agency whereby contacts progress to referral is from Children’s Social Care & Education. This is consistent with the key agencies making enquiries. When you are comparing table 4 and 5 you can see that the occupational sector is consistent with last year in occupations being referred in. This reassures us that while the police referring into LADO has dropped, this is likely to be because the responsible agency for the subject has already referred to LADO.

It is unsurprising that the highest referrals are from Children's Social Care and Education. The roles within these sectors are often foster carers, teachers, teaching assistants and the children’s Social Care workforce,

thereby having most contact, often unsupervised, with children. This is also consistent with Northwest data.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst we know that advice and guidance to determine whether criteria are met is well utilised by some agencies there is always further training required with smaller agencies who we do not see referring in to ensure that those organisations and services know when the LADO criteria is met for a referral.

Table 5: Occupational sectors of adults referred to LADO.

Sector of the Alleged Adult	Total Referral 2019/2020	Total Referral 2020/2021	Total Referral 2021/2022
Early Years	15 (7%)	10 (6%)	21 (9%)
Education	72 (33%)	54 (32%)	79 (34%)
Faith Groups	7 (3%)	7 (4%)	5 (2%)
Health	15 (7%)	20 (12%)	27 (12%)
Sport/Leisure	10 (5%)	4 (2%)	5 (2%)
Police	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Social Care	59 (27%)	63 (37%)	80 (35%)
Transport	10 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (2%)
Voluntary Organisation	1 (1%)	1 (0%)	3 (1%)
Youth Work	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	4 (2%)
Ofsted	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cafcass	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other / not record	24 (11%)	9 (5%)	1 (0.5%)
	218	171	230

Table 6: Nature of harm by sector

Sector of Alleged Adult	Nature of harm				
	Physical	Sexual	Neglect	Unsuitable behaviour/risk	Total
Early Years	9	3	0	9	21
Education	33	30	1	15	79
Faith Groups	2	3	0	0	5
Health	14	5	1	7	27
Sport/Leisure	0	3	0	2	5
Police	0	0	0	0	0
Youth Work	0	4	0	0	4
Social Care	35	8	0	37	80
Transport	1	3	0	1	5
Voluntary	1	2	0	0	3
Ofsted	0	0	0	0	0
CAFCASS	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	1

Total	95	62	2	71	230
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The highest category of harm continues to be that of physical abuse. This year 41% of all referrals made related to physical abuse, which is consistent with the previous year of 39%. The high rate of physical abuse allegations relates to those within the Social Care and Education sectors.

This year we see a decrease in the category of harm being sexual abuse from 35% to 28% of all referrals, again with the highest rate of allegations within education. However, while the percentage is lower overall, we know that educationally the percentage is higher than last year. This is consistent with research discussed above around online sexual abuse.

The most significant increase this year relates to allegations against adults who may pose a risk to children; linked to unsuitable behaviours, which has increase from 19% last year to 31% this year. We would expect to see this increase given that we now have an additional criterion that was introduced at the beginning of 2021 for all sectors of the children's workforce. We know the introduction of the 4th criteria has now provided an additional criterion that has often better reflected the allegations than previously.

Example:

"PE teacher that pupils said he was looking at me in the PE and made me feel uncomfortable – this may have been previously sexual rather than suitability"

As in previous years we continue to see the referral rate from Youth Services being generally low. We had said last year that it is reasonable to conclude that the number of allegations should be higher, and this is an area of work around multi agency training for key partners where referrals are lower than would be expected. We have this year invested time in meeting with strategic leads for Youth Services to explore this and ensure that managing allegations made against professionals is part of the ongoing training available to managers in Youth Services. The impact of this has been a slight increase in this area, which is positive and demonstrates the importance of training and development across all sectors of the children's workforce.

4. Managing Allegations: Allegation Meetings & Outcomes

The LADOs take a multi-agency approach at the first point of contact ensuring the management of the allegations have strong partnership engagement and coordinate the three strands of investigation without compromise to the safeguarding of children, or the duty of care to the alleged perpetrator. The lines of communication with key partners are good and results in decisions being made as to the response to a referral being timely and effective.

It is important to note that the LADO will ensure that all safeguarding measures are in place prior to the allegation management meeting and throughout the allegation meetings thereafter. The safeguarding of the children forms part of the agenda in considering that professionals have all taken appropriate steps to safeguard children.

4.1 Allegation Meetings

Table 7: Initial Meeting taken place between 1st April 2020- 31st March 2021

Year	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22
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No of initial Meetings taken place	69	83	101
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We have seen a continued increase in meetings in the last twelve months, which is in line with the increase in referrals. The percentage of meetings from referrals is only a slight decrease this year. Last year the conversation rate from referral to meeting was 48% and this year 44%. In 2019-2020 32% of referrals resulted in a meeting. The reason for the increase in meetings over the last two years is a result of improving the management of referrals given the complexities and ensuring that we bring key partners together to make multi-agency decisions through the allegations meeting.

From the 101 meetings held 58% of allegation meetings required at least one further meeting, this is consistent with last year (51%) and previous years, and is often a result of ongoing police investigation.

Table 8: Sector where alleged perpetrator is employed that had an Allegation Meeting.

Sector where alleged perpetrator is employed	Total Meetings 2019/2020	Total Meetings 2020/2021	Total Meetings 2021/2022
Early Years	8	4	8
Education	25	24	36
Faith Groups	4	0	0
Health	7	9	12
Sport/Leisure	5	3	2
Other	0	5	5
Social Care	17	37	34
Transport	2	0	1
Youth Groups	0	1	3
Police	1	0	0
Total meetings	69	83	101

Table 8 demonstrates that, as with last year's statistics, a significant amount of the LADOs workload from enquiry/referral through to meetings remains focused on the social care and education sector with 69% of all meetings taking place in 2021-2022.

The LADO service offered bespoke LADO training again to the Fostering Service this year and the plan is to continue this regularly for interface with the service as we know several the referrals marked Social Care would include Foster Carers. It is planned that next year we will separate out allegations against Foster Carers to capture these referrals and ensure we continue to receive them appropriately and provide a guide for future training needs.

4.2 Outcomes of Investigations

This section discusses the outcomes of the investigations concluded in 2021-2022. LADO meetings provide an Outcome at the final meeting. These outcomes are provided in "Keeping Children Safe in Education".

Table 9: Outcomes of Investigations for alleged adult.

Outcome	Meaning (Keeping Children Safe in Education)	Number
Substantiated	<i>There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.</i>	36
Unsubstantiated	<i>There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation</i>	45
Unfounded	<i>To reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation/s being made.</i>	21
False	<i>There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.</i>	1
Total		103

The outcome will be judged on the “balance of probabilities” threshold rather than the higher “beyond reasonable doubt” threshold. The Unsubstantiated outcome does not mean that the allegation is untrue and the incident did not happen, it means there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation, hence this is the significantly higher outcome as many allegations will be one person’s word against another.

This year we have seen a decrease in the number of substantiated outcomes from 47% last year to 35% this year. In writing this report we have compared the last three years and this year are more in line with 2019-2020 when 29% of Allegation meetings / investigations concluded as substantiated. Generally, the Northwest data in this measure varies between 30%-40%, which indicates that we are consistent with other Northwest authorities.

There are 12 investigations that remain ongoing at the time of writing this report within this reporting year.

5. Service Reflection

The past twelve months have enabled the LADOs to work differently to deliver this service and the below are the reflections and learning.

5.1 What went well

Agile Working - The service continued to adopt an agile working approach, which has allowed all LADO meetings to take place virtually using video conferencing facilities (Microsoft Teams). This has allowed both the LADOs and partners to work remotely. This has allowed for improved attendance across LADO Meetings and better flexibility for participants in arranging and participating in meetings.

Feedback from partners – This year we asked all partners for feedback following LADO Meetings, 81 partners responded throughout the year and general feedback was extremely positive about when asked how satisfied they were of the meeting, the general score overall was 4.8 out of 5. Generally, everyone felt that virtual meetings were as effective and that when asked for any areas for improvement it was generally a reflection of how well they had been organised and carried out and a recommendation to continue ‘as is’. The breakdown of agencies completing the feedback:

Social Care	29
Education	24
Police	6
Other	13
Health	4
Sport	3
Early Years	2

Partnerships engagement – Throughout the year we have been able to engage with Education and Youth Service to focus on how we ensure that their roles and responsibilities and the role of the LADO is fully understood in keeping children safe. We have been able to deliver 3 virtual sessions over the 12 months to a range of multiagency partners, football safeguarding, nurses, head teachers through MSP, on average with 10 per session. The training provides partners with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of managing allegations for staff within the children's workforce.

Managing Allegation Meetings – Last year we said we were worried about the quality of the minutes, and they had become very descriptive of what people said and when. We have made an improvement on this over the last twelve months. This includes organising and recording the meetings. Dedicated LADO support has provided an improved coordination to the meetings and improved recordings. We have dipped sampled the quality of the minutes in March 2022 and can evidence that minutes are thorough, concise in recording discussions and outcomes.

5.2 What we are worried about.

Managing Enquiries – We continue to find the demand of enquiries on LADO resource challenging. Over the last twelve months we have continued to analyse the data in respect of how many enquiries do not result in a referral and whilst we want to continue to promote the conversational approach to professionals ringing / contacting for enquiries as we know this is an important and invaluable part of the role, the demand is significant on the LADO resource. We need to work with partners to ensure that when they ring for advice and guidance some of their own mechanisms for advice and guidance is considered prior to ringing the LADO. For example, when a Head Teacher rings for Advice and Guidance that they have first considered why they require advice and guidance and have they sought advice and guidance within education prior to ringing the LADO. Addressing this worry we have identified that throughout 2022-2023 we need to work with MSP to identify a way in supporting the LADO service in improving our joint performance around managing contacts.

6. Service Achievements 2021-2022

The service has several achievements this year set against the priorities. We said we wanted to:

- Broaden the training offer

What we did & the impact:

We have delivered training virtually across MSP over the last 12 months alongside continued training to Social Workers and Fostering. We have invested in making links with locality Social Work teams to raise awareness of the role of the LADO and expectations of people who work with children.

- **Develop our Quality Assurance Framework**

What we did & the impact:

This is an area that we have significantly improved in over the last twelve months – we have improved our performance data and now better understand what it is telling us to help shape the service. There are monthly performance reports and performance meetings.

We have dip sampled quality of recording and minutes to ensure that the outcomes and impact of the service is good. This was recognised by OFSTED in April 2022 who considered the work of the LADO over the period of this reporting and recognised that we delivered a good and effective service. We have continued to seek partnership feedback too, which again assures us that the service we are delivering is improving outcomes for children.

- **to develop SMARTER ways of managing enquiries and referrals.**

What we did & the impact:

We better understand the data that shapes enquiries and the resource implications. We have considered different approaches to managing the enquiries, which has involved ensuring that we check some basic details at the first point of contact (do they work in Manchester, do they work with children). We know this is an area for further development and will continue to be a key priority area for 2022-2023.

7. KEY PRIORITIES 2022 - 2023

Priority 1. To provide a timely and effective service to employers.

- We will work with agencies to ensure that they use their internal resource effectively before sending enquiries or referrals to the LADO service. This will ensure that LADOs are able to continue to focus on the enquiries and referrals which have been through this process in a timely way.
- We will work with employees to improve how we feedback to children and alleged perpetrators and make this a focus at each final LADO Meeting.
- We will ensure that we have a focus in each meeting on the duty of care to children and their families and the alleged perpetrators.

Priority 2. Improve participation from partners to focus on improving outcomes for children.

- We will continue to offer training to our partner agencies to ensure they understand LADO thresholds and the confidence to deal with internal allegations where appropriate. We will consider the groups that continue to be low refers into the service. This includes understanding better with agencies why referrals are high but why referrals are not progressed to allegation meetings, for example faith groups and transport.
- We will work with PRI to improve the data available to us to understand, improve practice and support the training offer to partner agencies.
- We will work in partnership with MSP to understand what the outcomes of the Section 11 report to identify organisations that require additional support from the LADO around their overall rating of safe recruitment and safeguarding with specific reference to employees.

Priority 3. To improve quality assurance to be more focused on learning and development.

- We will continue to develop the monthly Performance Report to understand the performance of the LADO service, including strengths and areas for development
- We will use the North West Audit tool to develop an effective audit process and ask for moderation by another NW authority.
- We will develop a more learning environment through the QA process linked to regular thematic audit and observation of practice.

8. References

Greater Manchester - Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who Work with Children and Young People – Policy, Procedure and Guidance

http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_man_allegations.html

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People.

<http://www.manchesterscb.org.uk/docs/Guidance%20for%20Safer%20Working09%281%29.pdf>

Regulated activity in relation to children: scope

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522656/Regulated Activity in relation to Children.pdf.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522656/Regulated_Activity_in_relation_to_Children.pdf.pdf)

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Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2022

Subject: Adoption Counts Annual Report

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

This report fulfils the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report to the “executive side” of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.

It is important to note that data and information within this report is accurate as of 31 March 2022. Plans for children are dynamic and develop every day and the picture will have changed at the point that this report is read.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to: -

- (1) Read and consider the content of the action plan (Appendix 1).
 - (2) Recommend any aspects of consideration, amendment or clarification as required.
-

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

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Background Documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents

are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Executive Scrutiny Report

1.0 Background and Context

Since going live in 2017 Adoption Counts has undertaken to discharge Manchester's responsibilities as an Adoption Agency. The working relationship between the local authority (LA) and the RAA (Regional Adoption Agency) has been fundamental to the success so far of the partnership working. The established processes to maintain the good working relationships and the communication necessary. In addition, The Assistant Director of Children's Services sits as a member of the Adoption Counts Board.

The RAA Head of Service and the Operations Manager linked to Manchester meet twice a year with the Assistant Director to discuss performance over the period and any issues or themes that may be arising. This meeting is very much a two-way dialogue, with Manchester ensuring that the RAA is fulfilling its responsibilities as well as the RAA being able to offer feedback to the LA about any emerging themes or issues in care planning or working together.

2.0 Introduction

A full annual report is available, along with annual report from the Adoption Psychology Service, and this has been shared with the Board members and Local Authorities. This report for scrutiny committee gives an abridged version of the annual report detailing the progress in planning and placements for children, assessment, and approval of prospective adoptive parents, and in offering adoption support. Priorities for Manchester's children over this reporting period were highlighted as CPR (Childs Permanence Report) quality to be improved, Later Life Letters followed up in a timely way, early permanence training package to be introduced to Manchester social workers. Also high on the agenda, Black Adopter Recruitment, Black Lives Matter Training and a Race and Ethnicity Group set up, Initial Visits Process reviewed.

3.0 Performance – Children

Manchester and Adoption Counts work collaboratively in tracking children with a potential plan of adoption through to the adoption order being granted. This is achieved by regular meetings in relation to children and any planning drift or delay highlighted and escalated to Head of Service Adoption. Senior Managers in both organisations, share care planning concerns for children for whom family finding has not been successful and children who wait longer for a permanent family through adoption. Adoption Counts core offer is supporting adoption planning to social workers and managers in Manchester for children with a plan or potential plan of adoption under 5 years. Alongside planning for children for those who have been adopted later in life letters and life story books which outstanding are escalated to the Adoption ADM.

34 children were made Subject to Should Be Placed for Adoption (SHOBPA) decision as their care plan. The decision that adoption would be in the child's best interest was made following the local authorities final care planning meeting with all other permanence options for the child being ruled out. The

number of children with a SHOBPA decision agreed as part of their care plan in this time last year has fallen by approximately 25%.

31 children were made subject to a Placement Order by the Court. This has been a slight decrease in the number of Placement Orders for Manchester's children in comparison with the last two years 31 POs in 2020-2021 and 17 POs in 2021-2022.

11 children had a Change of Plan away from adoption five to long term foster care and six to SGO in this period.

36 children were placed for adoption joining their adoptive families with 32 of these children being placed with Adoption Counts adopters and four children with interagency adopters. This is a decrease of eight children from 2020-2021.

Timeliness of children's adoption plans are measured by national scorecard indicators of A1 (the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted – target of 426 days) and A2 (the average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family – target of 121 days). For the 36 children placed with adoptive families the average A1 measure was 547 days and the A2 is 150 days. This was impacted considerably by two children whose care plans for adoption were sensitive to their needs in their journey to adoption.

24 of these children placed with adoptive parents were above the A1 threshold of 426 days. This included two sets of sibling groups of three, and a sibling pair. 18 of the children were placed above the A2 threshold of 121 days. Manchester and Adoption Counts ensure opportunities to secure legal permanence for children via adoption are considered at the earliest opportunity by monitoring the A1 and A2 figures.

50 children were adopted, the average number of days for A1 503 which is 77 days above the threshold.

22 children were outside the threshold with an A1 figure of 1201 and 1774, respectively.

The average A2 figure for these children is 147 which is 26 days above the threshold. Fifteen children were outside the threshold including whose A2 figures were 600 and 682 days, respectively. A1 threshold average time between entering care and being placed with adoptive family is 150 when target is 121. 50% met the target, but this too will be impacted nationally by covid implications for courts.

Three children were placed in an early permanence placement. Wherever children are placed in an early permanence placement with a potential for adoption by the same carers. The children were placed with carers temporarily

approved by Manchester's Agency Decision Maker as foster carers under regulation 25A of the Care Planning Regulations

COVID-19 continued to have an impact upon general court timetabling and care proceedings for a number of the children therefore, adoption has taken longer to achieve. A number of Court hearings were deferred, there was an increase in the number of birth parents applying for leave to contest the adoption placement and adoption orders. During care proceedings family members coming forward to be assessed at a later stage in proceedings delayed adoption or another permanence option being achieved in a timely way. Adoption Counts continued to plan successful transitions of children during Covid restrictions using a robust risk assessment for each individual child moving to an adoption placement.

Manchester and Adoption Counts are scheduled to complete a thematic review for those children who wait more than 12 months after Placement Order for an adoptive family. (Currently eleven children in Manchester have been waiting 12 months or more). This will report will be available in the next six-monthly report. Learning and actions from these children's journey will be focussed into early planning for children.

3.1 Quality of Children's Reports

The child's social worker writes children's permanence reports (CPR's) are audited by Manchester's Service Managers then Adoption Counts Manager prior to SHOBPA consideration. These reports are then re-audited prior to a child being presented to adoption panel for matching with prospective adopters. This is to ensure that these child centred documents are graded as being 'Good' as a minimum.

Thirty-nine Manchester child permanence reports (CPR's) audits have been completed during this period.

Of the CPRs presented at Shobpa, 74% needed improvement. By presentation at panel 97% were rated good or above. Whilst this demonstrates good impact, the aims is to achieve a higher percentage of good or above gradings at first presentation. Adoption Counts offers support and training to children's social workers and managers. There is an increased focus on achieving good quality child focussed reports at SHOBPA and gradings will be monitored to ensure improvement.

3.2 Marketing Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters

A key priority for Adoption Counts is to ensure sufficiency of adopters to meet the individual needs of all Manchester's children with a plan of adoption recruitment of adopters continued to be successful within this time. Marketing activity increased compared with the previous year in line with some lockdown and pandemic restrictions being eased. A high presence of digital and social media advertising re-commenced along with outdoor advertising and commissioning Manchester Evening News. Targeted Facebook advertising

was to specifically reach out for members of the Black Community to come forward and consider adoption. Children whose race and ethnicity is Black traditionally wait longer to be matched with an adoptive family and Manchester have a higher proportion of children from Black or mixed ethnicity race and heritage within our five partner authorities

Eighty-seven adopters approved in this year.

Enquiry numbers have significantly increased this year with **1428 for the full year**. This is an increase of 454 from the previous year. **282 attended our information sessions** of which **122 entered the adoption process**. This is a 43% conversion rate which is higher than the previous year. 61% of those who attend an information session go on to request an Initial Visit and of those, 71% enter the adoption process by submitting a ROI. **Information evenings** continue to run weekly on-line which ensures timescales are met. **Initial visits** decreased 173 in total; this is a decrease of 41 from the previous year. The decrease in initial visits does not seem to have had a negative impact on the number of applications received by the Agency. **Registrations of Interest** received **123 in total** from 150 the previous year. It is possible this decrease could be influenced by the gradual lifting of the Covid restrictions. The Agency's performance should be viewed in the context of an ongoing national picture with the figures reflecting a national surplus of adopters. It suggests that the strategies implemented through our recruitment and marketing plan continue to be effective in terms of our local adopter sufficiency strategy.

Adopter assessment performance in relation to timescales for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the assessment process 44% were within timescales for stage 1 (this excludes seven families who were fast tracked) and 72% for stage 2.

The completion of medicals 2021-2022 due to the pandemic caused some delay along with overseas checks. Stage 2 assessments during the year moved from being completed virtually to being completed 75% face to face and 25% virtually, as restrictions were lifted.

There has been a noted rise in withdrawals in the year which was identified within the monthly sufficiency meetings 17 in Stage 1, 1 In between 1 and Stage 2, 12 in stage 2.

An audit of these cases was undertaken to understand the reason for the rise and to reflect on any findings and impact on processes needed. All but one withdrawal was appropriate to the circumstances of the applicants and all, but one was adopter led decisions.

3.3 Practice Developments

Family finding practice developments in relation to achieving permanence in a timely way for Manchester's children has focussed on families for children with a Black heritage alongside children with a disability, sibling groups and children with complex health needs. Work in partnership with other regional

adoption agencies across England and have taken part within a national Family Finding focus for Black children.

In relation to early permanence for children a working group have developed an early permanence training package which will be delivered to our LA colleagues to enhance awareness and understanding regarding the benefits of early permanence options for children. Adoption focussed matching events have been developed and allow access to approved adopters through video clips of children through a secure link.

Six staff have been trained in Adult Attachment style interview (ASI) training and this model to be rolled out from September 2022. This model of practice offers a conversational style interview which questions adoptive applicants about their current relationships with their partner, family of origin and with two adults close to the applicants. This will be a clear indicator of how as adoptive parents they will reach out for support during the parenting of a child or young person through adoption.

As an organisation Adoption Counts are committed to embedding the Black Lives Matters ethos and challenge to us within our work in the Recruitment and Assessment of adopters who can truly meet and understand the needs of children who are from a Black or minority ethnic heritage. Most staff and Adoption Panel members have accessed the Black Lives Matter training. This is shaping delivery of service with prospective adopters and the matching of children.

Preparation Training for prospective adopters is now delivered face to face. The teams in the Recruitment and Assessment to focus on Initial visits. This piece of work was undertaken in relation to addressing allocation timescales and meeting the needs of prospective adopters. Timescales of Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments are being scrutinised by separating out initial visits.

In relation to contact in adoption we focus on 'open' adoptions as a starting point for children with their birth family. Messages from research tell us how we can weave in the prospect for children being able to retain contact with their families if in their best interest.

At present as a management team, we are looking to develop a first stage system in relation to matching children to adopters who can meet their needs at an early stage using data held on the system by using the children's matching criteria in relation to their individual needs against adopters' skills and abilities.

3.4 Adoption Panel

Submission of reports to panel by the teams continue to be achieved in a timely way, with a robust, dedicated panel administration team supporting this process. This ensures there are no delays in approvals of adopters and children being matched with their adoptive parents to achieve their permanent outcome. 172 items were heard by Panel in this time period. Panel member

diversity reflecting our children's individual identity on our central list is part of a national initiative from the RAA's alongside local recruitment. Ethnic diversity of our panel membership will be surveyed in 2022-23.

For Manchester children where we have a high representation of children from a Black and mixed ethnicity heritage we are actively recruiting from the Black community.

3.5 Adoption Support

Adoption Support remains integral to our delivery for adopted children, new adoptive families, birth families and adopted adults, recognizing the life-long journey of adoption. We remain committed to supporting children and their new families from the early transition stages of a placement through to the making of an Adoption Order. Thereafter we recognize that new challenges may emerge requiring varying levels of tailored support to ensure successful outcomes for children. Adoption Support is available to all families until their child is 21, or 25 if they have additional needs.

Adoption Support is delivered by Adoption Counts specialist team in partnership with Adoption Psychology Service. This is a specialist multi-agency partnership created with CAMHS, and includes clinical psychologists, education psychologists, psychiatrist, specialist OT, couples psychotherapist, and therapeutic social workers. This is based on the I-Thrive model, which details universal services, getting help, getting more help, and risk support.

All individuals and families seeking support are offered an adoption support assessment within 4-12 weeks of approaching the agency. 223 families from Manchester received support last year, 45 of whom were new families approaching the agency. 88 were adopted adults seeking access to their birth records. Assessments identify the appropriate support for families, and this could range from access to universal adoption services (parent education events, family events, peer support activities, online resources through Adopter Hub now called CATCH), through to identifying specialist therapeutic interventions tailored to their family. This demonstrates steady demand across the region with continuing pressure placed on social workers who have high caseloads.

From September 2021 a dedicated early-stage adoption transitions clinic was piloted by APS, for professionals involved at the initial stages of the adoption planning process. This clinic has been extended based on successful outcomes identified at review of the pilot in January 2022. The goal of the clinic has been to enhance the application of the University of East Anglia's 'Moving to Adoption' Model for children and families with more complexity, and to identify and mitigate adoption disruption risk factors through specialist support at the earliest opportunity.

If a specialist therapeutic intervention is required (either assessment or therapy) and this cannot be delivered in-house, we seek funding from the Adoption Support Fund. During this year there were 113 applications to the

Adoption Support Fund for children living in Manchester. This drew down £368,442 funding which was used to fund therapy for children and their families. This includes therapeutic parenting support and groups, DDP and family therapy, play and other individual therapies, and specialist sensory integration support, among others. This is comparative to other years where support continues to be needed by many adoptive families at different stages of their lives.

Risk support is offered by specialist adoption support social workers in partnership with the Local Authority, schools, and CAMHS. A small number of families need intensive support and specialist assessments can be completed in-house or commissioned to identify the right services for families. 39 referrals were received into Adoption Psychology Service, 11 of which were for Manchester children who received education support and specialist consultations and assessment or intervention.

47 adopted adults from Manchester approached the agency for support to access their adoption records (41 were already being supported by the service). These were responded to by a group of specialist workers (1 FTE) and can involve a waiting period while historic records are located and sensitively shared. This is a steady demand and we have worked hard to support a number of individuals who have waited a lengthy period following the pandemic.

Adoption Support also offered a Letterbox Service, to support exchange of information safely between birth and adoptive families, to promote their child's identity. There were 392 Manchester families exchanging information in this period, some of which are multiple exchanges within the year to several birth family members. We were invited to participate in a pilot project run by Link maker, who are developing an online letterbox service. This was going to start in Spring 2022, but the start has been delayed allowing for more preparation time nationally.

Support for birth parents is commissioned externally through PAC-UK and this includes individual counselling and support for birth relatives, along with a birth mothers' group which meet in person to offer mutual support.

Service developments continue with training opportunities offered to social workers from the Adoption Psychology team, along with systemic peer support sessions to consider the most challenging situations. Evening workshops for parents continue to be offered online with a return to in-person events trialled. The transitions clinic was evaluated and will be rolled out permanently.

3.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

- More rigorous challenge around children's family members being ruled out as potential carers for a child at an earlier stage in care proceedings.
- Early Permanence Planning for children and unborn children to be supported with regular and updated training.
- Life Story Books and Later in Life Letters backlog to be addressed.

- Focus on recruitment within the Sufficiency Plan of adopters for children from a Black or mixed ethnicity background for children who wait longer in Manchester for an adoptive family.
- Ensure the diversity of the Agency's Panel Central List members is more representative of the children being matched.
- Quality of CPR's to be incrementally improved with support prior to SHOBPA.
- Thematic review of those children who wait over 12 months for an adoptive family.

4.0 Governance and Future Opportunities

Adoption Counts will continue to report to the Board on a three-monthly basis to ensure management decisions are considered strategically with priorities for children being monitored and results measured.

5.0 Conclusion

Manchester Children's Services and Adoption Counts to focus on early permanence for children with a permanence plan of adoption being tracked for a potential adoption care plan. To increase sufficiency for those children who wait longer and to ensure that their CPR's are written in a child focussed quality way at first time of writing. Finally, to ensure that children who have been adopted from Manchester receive their life story books and later in life letters in a timely way.

6.0 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to: -

- (1) Read and consider the content of the action plan.
- (2) Recommend any aspects of consideration, amendment or clarification as required.

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MANCHESTER

Adoption Service – Annual Report

01.04.2021 – 31.03.2022

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This report fulfils the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report to the “executive side” of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.

It is important to note that data and information within this report is accurate as of 31 March 2022. Plans for children are dynamic and develop every day and the picture will have changed at the point that this report is read.

2. Working with Manchester Council

Since going live in 2017, Adoption Counts has undertaken to discharge Manchester’s responsibilities as an Adoption Agency. The working relationship between the local authority (LA) and the RAA (Regional Adoption Agency) has been fundamental to the success so far of the partnership working. The established processes to maintain the good working relationships and the communication necessary. In addition, The Assistant Director of Children's Services sits as a member of the Adoption Counts Board. The Head of Service with a link to adoption is a member of the six weekly Operations Group meetings which provides an important opportunity for operational issues to be raised and shared with equivalent manager from the other partner LAs and with the senior managers in the RAA. Head of Service Permanence also meets regularly with the Operations Manager and Team Manager. This ensures a shared ownership of the agenda, and a range of issues are discussed with positive communication and outcomes as a result.

The RAA Head of Service and the Operations Manager linked to Manchester meet twice a year with the Assistant Director to discuss performance over the period and any issues or themes that may be arising. This meeting is very much a two-way dialogue, with Manchester ensuring that the RAA is fulfilling its responsibilities as well as the RAA being able to offer feedback to the LA about any emerging themes or issues in care planning or working together.

Adoption Counts feeds into Manchester’s permanence tracking of their children, from the information collated at Adoption Counts tracking meetings when requested. There is always the opportunity for Service Managers from Manchester to join the tracking meetings. Adoption Counts recognises the importance of maintaining positive working relationships within Manchester and continues in working with the senior management team offering advice, guidance, and support in relation to any adoption related issues.

The tracking meetings focus upon:

- Children now adopted to ensure that life story books and later life letters are received
- Children placed for adoption but not yet adopted to track the progress of placements and the timeliness of adoption order applications
- Children where a family has been identified to ensure that there is no avoidable delay in the shortlisting and matching process and through into the planning of introductions and placement

- Children subject to a Placement Order where a family has not yet been identified. This cohort is rigorously discussed to ensure that the family finding strategy is being carried out effectively and is the forum for escalation of agreements regarding family finding within the RAA, other LAs or in the voluntary sector.
- Children in care proceedings where there may be a plan of adoption as their final care plan. These children are tracked closely both in the LA and the RAA to ensure that there is timely progression of the plan from Agency Decision that they Should Be Placed for Adoption, through profiling and the identification of a family.
- Children under the Public Law Outline where there may be a plan of adoption should care proceedings be initiated.

The RAA tracking meeting enables any children of concern to be escalated and discussed with Manchester managers. This can range from children adopted but with no life story work or later in life letter, to children waiting for care planning decisions to be implemented and is also used to provide updates about children for whom family finding has not been successful and these children wait longer for a permanent family.

We are currently tracking 221 children upon our tracker. There is no doubt that the efficacy of these meetings is improved when care planning feedback is received from the LA verbally or on the recording system as this ensures a robust joint approach. We are continuing to track 25 children where later in life letters and/or life story books are outstanding. Workers have also been identified to complete this work.

The team manager in the RAA linked to Manchester attends the monthly tracking meetings and she, alongside the dedicated family finders, work in the Manchester office base alongside some of the social work teams, attend legal gateway meetings and final care planning meetings to provide advice and a view where required.

Priorities for Manchester's children over this reporting period were highlighted as CPR (Childs Permanence Report) quality to be improved, Later Life Letters followed up in a timely way, early permanence training package to be introduced to Manchester social workers. Also high on the agenda, Black Adopter Recruitment, Black Lives Matter Training and a Race and Ethnicity Group set up, Initial Visits Process reviewed.

3. Performance

3.1 Children made Subject to Should be Placed for Adoption (SHOBPA) decisions

Number of children made subject to SHOBPA decisions per month							
Manchester	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
	7	7	0	2	2	0	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	6	2	4	0	1	3	34

All 34 children who had a SHOBPA (should be placed for adoption) decision agreed within this period were the subject of Court proceedings. The decision that adoption would be in the

child's best interest was made following the local authorities final care planning meeting with all other permanence options being ruled out.

Thirteen of these children are in a sibling group of two children and three in a sibling group of three (5 x 2 sibling groups and one sibling group of 3).

Three of these children were placed in a FFA (fostering for adoption) placement.

The number of SHOBPA decisions agreed as part of the children's care plan in this time period last year has fallen by approximately 25%.

3.2 Children subject to Placement Orders

Number of children made subject to Placement Orders per month							
Manchester	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
	3	4	3	1	4	3	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	3	1	4	1	0	4	31

Twenty three of the children who were granted Placement Orders (PO's) within the period have subsequently been placed with their adoptive families, including three sibling groups of two and a sibling group of three.

Twelve of these children were placed with families within the A2 threshold of 121 days, Placement Order to matching approved by the ADM.

Eleven children placed outside the A2 threshold:

Child	Placement Order	A2	Comments
BH	20/05/2021	139	PO granted May 2021,B placed with adoptive family 13 days above the threshold.
MM & AP	22/10/2021	143	Final hearing heard in two parts. Birth Father applied to appeal the PO. Adoption Psychology were also involved in placement plan. The A2 figure was 17 days above the threshold.
FN	16/08/2021	172	FN transitioned to FFA carers (as foster carer at end of life) 22 November 2021. Matching Panel 22 Nov 2022.
OS	20/01/2022	173	Initial concerns of O. being diagnosed with FASD also needed adoptive family who would consider unborn sibling. These factors impacted on family finding.
LR	01/12/2021	177	L. placed with Adopters who had adopted LR's half sibling. Updated assessment needed to be completed.

Child	Placement Order	A2	Comments
IRH	30/04/2021	185	IR has a heritage of WB and Black Caribbean and has a genetic medical condition. This does make IR a child who could potentially wait longer for a match with an adoptive family. Two shortlisted family did not want to progress because of IR's genetic condition and impacted on family finding. Match for IR agreed October 2021.
RS	02/08/2021	202	October 2021 adoptive family visited and progressing to match with R. then met with medical adviser and felt they could not continue. January 2022 adopter identified (WB Male adopter) Matched February 2022.
S-R R	13/05/2021	203	PO granted May 2021. As a sibling group of three S D & D are children who could potentially wait longer for a family. Adoptive family shortlisted 18 Oct 2021 and ADM agreed at Panel 25 Nov. 2021.
D-M R-B	13/05/2021	203	As above
D B	13/05/2021	203	As above

There has been a slight decrease in the number of Placement Orders for Manchester children in comparison with the last two years:

- 31 PO's in 2020-2021
- 17 PO's in 2021-2022

3.3 The Numbers of Children who had a Change of Plan in the Period

There were 11 who had a change of care plan, five to long term foster care and six to SGO in this period.

SA & SA	Two siblings moved to long term foster care with their older siblings.
BB	One placed with maternal grandmother on SGO and with mum on a CIN basis.
SMC	Adoptive placement disrupted and returned to previous foster carer.
RK & NK	Two siblings SGO granted to their foster carers.
RS	Adoption placement disruption, followed by change of foster home.
KF & KF	Guardian disagreed with plan of adoption for two siblings and children placed with maternal grandmother on SGO.
ILT	Judge did not agree PO and placed with paternal aunt on SGO.
NKRG	Final Hearing concluded with Care Order with a plan of long term foster care.

3.4 The Numbers of Children who had a Change of Plan in the Period or who wait longer than 12 months

NZ & MF	Adopters withdrew following matching ADM due to ongoing proceedings. Awaiting de-Shobpa
KM	Birth family contested proceedings, foster carers fast-tracked for assessment
TK	Connected persons assessments of relatives abroad; foster carers assessed but not approved.
CO & JO	Protracted adoption allowance discussions for foster carer adoption
JB	Protracted adoption allowance discussions for foster carer adoption
LP	Awaiting revocation of Placement Order

Manchester and Adoption Counts are scheduled to complete a thematic review for those children who wait more than 12 months after Placement Order for an adoptive family. (Currently eleven children in Manchester have been waiting 12 months or more). This will report will be available in the next six-monthly report. Learning and actions from these children's journey will be focussed into early planning for children.

3.5 Number of Children Placed for Adoption during period.

Number of children placed for adoption per month							
Manchester	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
	1	8	5	6	2	1	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	2	2	1	3	1	4	36

Thirty-two children were placed with Adoption Counts adopters and four children with interagency adopters.

This is an decrease of 8 children from 2020-2021. Seven children were placed with adopters approved outside Adoption Counts in this period.

The 36 children placed for adoption during this period, the average A1 measure is 547 days and the A2 is 150 days. This was impacted considerably by two children, LM and MB, who had an A1 figure of 1201 and 1043 days, and an A1 figure of 600 and 364 days respectively. LM required a therapeutic foster home prior to adoptive placement. MB had a previous disruption during introductions.

Twenty-four children were placed with adoptive parents were above the A1 threshold of 426 days. This included two sets of sibling groups of three, and a sibling pair.

Eighteen of the children were placed above the A2 threshold of 121 days.

Child	Placed in adoptive Placement	A1	A2	Comments
JB	30/04/2021	841	146	J's maternal uncle requested ISW assessment during Court proceedings which was supported by J's Guardian and the Courts this was negative however, impacted on the A1 figure. A2 figure above the threshold by 20 days.
PF	04/05/2021	431	63	PF was placed in an adoptive placement which disrupted after nine months. Adopters later asked for adoption to go ahead however this was not supported by the LA.. Match with new adopters agreed at Panel August 2022.
SMC	06/05/2021	840	161	S. has suffered significant trauma in her life and was separated from her two siblings on joining her adoptive family. (Adoptive placement later disrupted). A2 40 days above the threshold.
LM	11/05/2021	1201	600	Following the granting of a PO L. was cared for by a WRAP foster carer who then expressed her wish to adopt L. (financial support was agreed). October 2020 foster carer no longer felt able to adopt L. therefore family finding commenced for an adoptive family. Matching agreed in March 2021 for L. with her adoptive family with AC approved adopters.
HF	24/05/2021	587	113	Significant court delays in relation to FH. Additional delays in confirming paternity as putative father was recalled to prison. Birth father requested a cultural and religious match which was considered during family finding. A2 was below the threshold.
RM & RMC	25/05/2021	859	215	R&R are a sibling group boy and girl (twins) aged 3 of Black Caribbean/white British heritage, they were children who potentially waited longer for a family.
BBG	03/06/2021	720	145	Court dates re-timetabled and adjourned 2020 as mother in hospital and a request for viability assessment on aunt. This had an impact on A1 figure.

Child	Placed in adoptive Placement	A1	A2	Comments
EOA	04/06/2021	567	328	Cultural match was considered in family finding which impacted on timescales. Early link identified however did not progress. Interagency placement made which was a cultural match for E.
ONPV	10/06/2021	496	171	O. was a one year-old boy with a Vietnamese heritage, a nationwide search for a cultural match was undertaken for O. and achieved.
AG	16/06/2021	443	70	A1 figure impacted by Finding of Fact in Court proceedings which impacted on FH. A2 achieved below threshold.
HS	21/06/2021	363	139	1-year-old boy A2 139 18 days above the timescales. Initially adopters of older sibling considering H. however, decided not to proceed.
CDW	11/07/2021	607	84	FH postponed due to delays in confirming paternity, and consent not provided for sickle cell testing. The final hearing was later adjourned and judgement delayed due to judge being off sick. Interagency adopters identified as geographic restrictions in family finding.
FB LH	02/08/2021	537	111	At time of SHOBPA FB was 6 years and LH was 14 months old. FB had had three placement moves. There had been a number of connected persons assessments which were all negative. A FoF hearing took place. CAMHS, sibling and psychological assessments were made, and a final contested hearing was held 4 months after SHOBPA.
MB	18/10/2021	1043	364	Two placements with adoptive families disrupted. MB had to return to be cared for by different foster carers and needed to be allowed time to settle into new foster home prior to re-commencing family finding. At this point in his life a further assessment of his needs took place due to trauma and change.
BH	19/10/2021	829	139	Court timetabling rescheduled for BH as assessment of parents ordered. PO granted May 2021.

Child	Placed in adoptive Placement	A1	A2	Comments
IRH	18/11/2021	680	185	<p>IR has a heritage of WB and Black Caribbean which does make her a child who could potentially wait longer for a match with adoptive parents.</p> <p>Cared for in a parent and baby home and PAMs assessment needed.</p> <p>IR needed genetic testing for Micro deletion</p> <p>Court delay escalated with legal December 2021.</p> <p>Two shortlisted family did not want to progress because of IR genetic condition and impacted on family finding. Match for IR agreed October 2021.</p>
ERKB	13/12/2021	707	244	<p>EB has a heritage of Black African and his mother has enduring mental health needs which does make him a child who would potentially wait longer to be matched with an adoptive family.</p> <p>SGO with grandmother changed to a plan of adoption SHOBPA agreed February 2021</p> <p>IA funding agreed and identified adopters in London.</p> <p>June 2021 - Two shortlisting meetings and two prospective families withdrew.</p> <p>September 2021 further shortlisting meeting</p> <p>ER matched at Panel November 2021.</p>
S-RR D-MR-B DB	17/01/2022	538	203	<p>Court proceedings consolidated with youngest child DB. Birth parents allocated ISW assessment in care proceedings for their children.</p> <p>PO granted May 2021.</p> <p>Adoptive family shortlisted 18 Oct 2021 and ADM agreed at Panel 25 Nov. 2021.</p>
FN	07/02/2022	338	172	<p>FN transitioned to FFA carers (as foster carer at end of life) 22 November 2021.</p> <p>Matching Panel 22 Nov 2022.</p>

Child	Placed in adoptive Placement	A1	A2	Comments
LA	28/03/2022	435	73	Birth father capacity assessment concluded he needed PAMS assessment. L. had a comprehensive assessments of needs as part of care proceedings. A1 figure 9 days above threshold.
GB-B	28/03/2022	525	83	Court timetabling caused delays in achieving A1 timescales. March 2022 SHOBPA A2 figure below the threshold.
RS	29/03/2022	558	202	R. is of Black African heritage and birth mother has severe and enduring mental health, also potential direct contact. FH May 2021. Visit with potential adoptive family in London Matching panel booked 7 Dec 2021 however, prospective family met with MA and decided they could not continue with the match. January 2022 visit family white British male adopter match agreed February 2022.

Manchester and Adoption Counts will ensure opportunities to secure legal permanence for children via adoption are considered at the earliest opportunity by monitoring the A1 and A2 figures.

3.6 Number of children adopted

Number of children made subject to Adoption Orders per month							
Manchester	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
	8	5	4	6	5	2	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	1	4	2	2	5	6	50

For the 50 children adopted, the average number of days for A1 503 which is 77 days above the threshold.

Twenty-two children were outside the threshold including LM and ZL with an A1 figure of 1201 and 1774 respectively.

The average A2 figure for these children is 147 which is 26 days above the threshold. Fifteen children were outside the threshold including LM and KJ whose A2 figures were 600 and 682 days respectively.

Child	Date Adoption Order Granted	A1 426	A2 121	Comments
KJJR	23/04/2021	574	29	Additional connected carer assessments in care proceedings completed. Consolidated Care Proceedings with D younger brother.
KJ	11/05/2021	814	682	Relative adoption in America legalities took some time and contributed to delay for K..
LB-B	19/05/2021	618	275	L. is of black African heritage and would be a child who potentially waits longer to be matched with an adoptive family. Birth mother has severe and enduring mental health. Mothers support in care proceedings needed advocate which delayed IRH. Geographical considerations also impacted on timescales in relation to risks highlighted with birth family. One family withdrew prior to matching.
KC	28/06/2021	461	92	Full connected persons assessment case needed to take place, deferred twice at SHOBPA. Adult brother then did not want to be assessed.
C-RL-Q	30/06/2021	730	87	Birth mother had positive PAMs assessment and C. returned home February 2019. PWP did not succeed and an application for PO made. CQ matched with adoptive family June 2021.
EL-Q	30/06/2021	730	87	As above
DK	05/07/2021	678	78	SHOBPA November 2019 then social worker sickness absence. Court retimed tabled. Final contested hearing 24.01.2020 with ISW appointed. Concluded August 2020.

Child	Date Adoption Order Granted	A1 426	A2 121	Comments
MJN-Mc EN-Mc	06/07/2021	866	411	<p>Care plan for the siblings changed from brother and sisters to be placed together.</p> <p>M. has features associated with FASD Family launched a Facebook campaign therefore geographical considerations needed for an adoptive family outside GMC.</p> <p>Family shortlisted November 2019 however withdrew due to birth family risk.</p> <p>January 2021 family identified and Panel May 2021.</p> <p>Children moved July 2020. Covid impacted on the timescales of transition.</p>
LO	14/07/2021	638	236	<p>L. has complex emotional needs and cerebral palsy with global development delay therefore a child who waits longer for a match with adoptive family.</p> <p>Matched April 2020 moved in with adoptive family June 2020 due to covid restrictions.</p>
RLM	26/07/2021	628	344	<p>R has complex emotional needs due to early trauma, cared for by therapeutic foster carers. R had two moves in foster homes, one a WRAP placement.</p> <p>Adoption Psychology completed an assessment re: potential diagnosis of autism. Family finding on hold during this period.</p> <p>PO granted January 2019.</p> <p>Adoption Panel re: match with adoptive family November 2022.</p>
SO	17/08/2021	538	182	<p>SHOBPA delayed re impact sibling assessment.</p> <p>PO granted Sept 2019 Match to adoptive family Nov 2019.</p>
RRLC	25/08/2021	500	147	<p>FH 26 May to 17 Jun 2020 as contested hearing. Further delayed for judgement therefore Court delay. PO granted 4 August 2020</p> <p>Matching Panel December 2020.</p>

Child	Date Adoption Order Granted	A1 426	A2 121	Comments
LB	06/09/2021	558	181	L has a micro deletion and developmental delay therefore would be a child who potentially waits longer to be matched with an adoptive family. Matched in March 2021 and placed with family June 2021. Covid impacted on transition timescales.
EOA	12/11/2021	567	328	Cultural match was considered in family finding which impacted on timescales. Early link identified however did not progress. Interagency placement made which was a cultural match for E.
ZL	22/11/2021	1774	173	Care proceedings concluded November 2016 with a CO and home with mother. PWP ended and Z. cared for by foster carers. SHOBPA January 2020 An assessment of Z's needs took place re: autism diagnosis.
HF	10/12/2021	587	113	Court re-timetable and as mother not able to attend assessment sessions. SHOBPA 19 May 2020. Birth father in prison and awaited release to be assessed. IRH 21 September 2020 then Judge had no availability until 21 Feb 2021. Manchester contested and hearing moved to Jan 2021 and PO granted.
SAM	28/01/2022	607	62	Birth family explored in Pakistan. SHOBPA 14 Jan 2020. FH adjourned until screening of further family member. FH May 2020 then father granted ISW assessment. PO granted January 2021.

Child	Date Adoption Order Granted	A1 426	A2 121	Comments
LM	09/02/2022	1201	600	<p>Proceedings delayed as identifying birth father and other family members.</p> <p>PO granted 2 August 2019.</p> <p>L. moved to another foster home. Further assessments as her foster carer wanted to apply non-agency.</p> <p>CAMHS assessment completed for L. re: therapeutic support.</p> <p>Foster carer change of circumstances therefore did not pursue adoption application.</p> <p>Active family finding commenced October 2020 and family identified Jan 2021.</p>
CDW	22/02/2022	607	84	<p>C. of mixed heritage WB/Pakistani and diagnosed with sickle cell anaemia therefore, potentially a child who would wait longer to be matched with a family. During COVID C. needed to shield due to his condition.</p> <p>SHOBPA delayed re DNA testing of potential birth father, his paternity was confirmed and assessments completed on him and family members.</p> <p>FH November 2020 did not go ahead as prison could not accommodate father attending Court.</p> <p>Judgement 19 Feb 2021</p> <p>Delayed to judges availability.</p> <p>PO granted 25 March 2021.</p>

Child	Date Adoption Order Granted	A1 426	A2 121	Comments
MM	15/03/2022	970	446	<p>M. in foster care with two older siblings however care plan to place separately.</p> <p>SHOBPA delayed due to sibling assessment and psychological assess of children's individual needs.</p> <p>Martin has global development delay and tested for Cerebral Palsy.</p> <p>Returned to ADM December 2020</p> <p>Plan of dual search foster care and adoptive family.</p> <p>Shortlisting re: matching 15 Jan 2021.</p>
KM	17/03/2022	845	509	<p>Full assessment of maternal grandfather who cares for older sibling therefore Court re-timetable.</p> <p>SHOBPA 6 Oct 2020</p> <p>IRH 16 Nov 2020</p> <p>FH 22 Feb 2021,</p> <p>Maternal grandfather contested.</p> <p>PO granted 26 February 2021.</p> <p>Foster carer wished to be considered and progressed non-agency adoption.</p>

COVID-19 has continued to have an impact upon general court timetabling and care proceedings for a number of the children have taken longer. A number of hearings have been deferred, there was an increase in the number of birth parents applying for leave to contest the adoption placement and adoption orders, also family members coming forward to be assessed at a later stage in proceedings. This therefore has had an effect upon the overall timescales.

3.7 Early Permanency

Three children were placed in an early permanence placement during this period. The children were placed with carers temporarily approved by Manchester's Agency Decision Maker as foster carers under regulation 25A of the Care Planning Regulations.

Number of children placed in a Foster to Adopter placement							
Manchester	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	
	1	1	0	0	0	0	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	0	1	0	0	0	0	3

4. Quality of Reports

CPRs (child permanence reports) are audited as routine by the relevant Adoption Counts Team Manager prior to SHOBPA consideration and then again by either the Team Manager, Family Finder or Senior Practitioner before matching panel. This is to ensure that CPRs are graded as being 'Good' as a minimum and that the final report is submitted to panel rather than reports still requiring amendments. The CPR is then graded by the panel considering the match.

Thirty-nine child permanence reports (CPR's) audits have been completed during this period. Of those:

Rating	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	In Need of Improvement	Total
SHOBPA	1	9	0	29	39
Panel	5	30	3	1	39

CPR reports presented to adoption panel consider gradings at the child's match, as opposed to the gradings prior to matching panel from the team Managers. This was due to, on occasion, there being a discrepancy between an auditor's grading compared to that of panel. The figures presented above are based on panel gradings, given their independence and impartiality.

Support and training is offered to support children's social workers in completing children's CPR's. This includes specific training that can be delivered to teams, one to one support with social workers and advice with a robust quality assurance system with the ADM and Panel Adviser to SHOBPA. As can be seen by the figures above, the improvement of children's CPR's from SHOBPA to Adoption Panel is significant, with increased focus on achieving good quality CPR's for SHOBPA should see these gradings improve over the next 6 months.

Recruitment of Adopters

5.1 Approvals

There were 48 families approved as adopters during the first six months of this year (1.4.21 – 30.9.21) and 39 families approved as adopters during the last six months of this year (1.10.21 – 31.3.22) 87 families approved in total. This is a decrease of 17 families from the year before when 104 families were approved.

At the end of the period (31st March 2022) there were 40 families in Stage One, 11 in between Stage One and Stage Two, and 35 in Stage Two; a total of 86 families in the assessment process. There were 88 families in the assessment process at the end of last year so this evidences the level of business is maintained at a relatively consistent level. This is positive and is a strong position from which to enter the new year.

Enquiry numbers have significantly increased with 593 in first 6 months of year and 835 during second half of the year, 1428 for the full year. This is 454 more than the previous year where there were 974 enquiries in total. This is the largest number of enquiries we have ever seen and is significantly higher than usual. From the feedback we have collated, the increase in enquiries seems to be due to our social media campaigns alongside the messages from the #YouCanAdopt campaigns. It is worth noting that a high percentage of the enquiries are just asking for information packs and not proceeding with an assessment, this could indicate that they are not yet ready to proceed but are exploring adoption earlier than they perhaps would have in the past.

Source	Enquiries
Online	643
Local Council referral / website	58
Social Media	67
Recommendation from friend / relative	11
Other	11
Outdoor Advertising	3
Event /info Stand	1
Radio	4
Second Time Adopters	7
Previous Adoption Enquiry	30

Numbers of initial visits have decreased, with 96 taking place in the first 6 months of the year, 77 during the last six months, so 173 in total. This is a decrease of 41 from the previous year (2020 – 21) when 215 initial visits took place and 181 in the year 2019 – 20. This is a decrease of 41 from the previous year. In line with this, we undertook a consultation to restructure our recruitment and assessment service to assist in allocation of work within timescales at the enquiry stage. From February 2022 we have changed our structure to incorporate an initial visit team with identified social workers completing all initial visits. We will continue to review the effectiveness of this. It is also worth noting that as the number of applications in progress

at the end of year is very similar to that of previous year, the decrease in initial visits does not seem to have had a negative impact on the number of applications received since then.

Registrations of Interest received (the formal application to be assessed as prospective adopters) have also decreased, 59 in first 6 months, 64 in second part of the year, 123 in total from 150 the previous year (2020 – 21). It is possible this decrease could be influenced by the gradual lifting of the Covid restrictions i.e. people taking holidays, travelling, weddings, building work, IVF, etc.

Our performance should still be viewed in the context of an ongoing national shortage of adopters. It suggests that the strategies implemented through our Recruitment and Marketing plan continue to be effective in terms of our adopter sufficiency, although of course we are not complacent and continue to strive to increase our numbers further. We will continue to raise the profile of our agency to achieve adopter sufficiency for our children across our five local authorities, with a surplus to generate income and offset the cost of inter-agency placements for our children who need them.

Monthly Adopter Sufficiency meetings continue with the Head of Service, the Operations Managers, the Recruitment and Enquiries Manager and the Marketing Officer meeting to plan and review our progress.

5.2 Referrals to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

No referrals were made to the IRM during this period.

5.3 Partner/step-parent adoption enquiries

Our Recruitment Team received 43 partner / step-parent adoption enquiries in the first six months of the year and 47 in the second half of the year, 90 enquiries in total. This is a significantly higher number than the previous year when 48 enquiries were received in total.

Whilst this may seem a big increase, pre-covid, 43 enquiries would have been an average number of enquiries for a 6 month period. It is likely the figures decreased last year due to the pandemic and national lockdown.

	1.4.21 – 30.9.21		1.10.21 – 31.3.22	
LA	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Cheshire East	13	30%	12	25%
Manchester	4	9%	8	17%
Manchester	10	23%	4	9%
Stockport	2	5%	5	11%
Manchester	6	14%	2	4%
Unknown/other	8	19%	16	34%
Total	43	100%	47	100%

Thirteen enquiries resulted in an office meeting taking place with a social worker, for information gathering and advice, in the first six months of the year. Fifteen enquiries resulted in an office meeting taking place in the second half of the year. 28 office meetings took place in total. This is more than double the amount during the previous year (12), again following the same pattern as noted with the enquiries due to the pandemic and lockdown.

	1.4.21 – 30.9.21		1.10.21 – 31.3.22	
LA	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Cheshire East	3	23%	4	27%
Manchester	3	23%	4	27%
Manchester	2	15%	4	27%
Stockport	4	31%	1	6%
Manchester	1	8%	2	13%
Total	13	100%	15	100%

Three applications were accepted during the first six months of the year, nine in the second six months, twelve in total.

	1.4.21 – 30.9.21		1.10.21 – 31.3.22	
LA	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Cheshire East	1	33.3%	3	34%
Manchester	1	33.3%	2	22%
Manchester			1	11%
Stockport	1	33.3%	2	22%
Manchester			1	11%
Total	3	100%	9	100%

5.4 Information events

Before the pandemic, these were held on a fortnightly basis at locations around the region. Since then, these events have been held 'virtually' on a weekly basis, where potential adopters watch from their own homes, without the need to be in close proximity of other people, and without the need to travel.

These have continued to be very successful indeed and we have continued to run these virtually with the potential for one a month in a venue for those families who would prefer that face to face connection.

5.5 Training groups

During the last 12 months, 3 day 'virtual' adopter preparation training groups have been held on a monthly basis, with additional tasks/modules being given to applicants to do in the evenings.

114 families attended these groups during this period, with 57 attending the first half of the year and the same number 57, in the second half of the year.

It is difficult to compare this to the previous year, due to the training during those periods being delivered by separate modules which the applicants did in their own time, then discussed with their social worker. In the year prior to that though (2019-20) 115 families attended.

Regular reviews of how the training is delivered have taken place and in line with the ending of covid19 restrictions a decision has been taken to re-start face-to-face preparation training in April 2022.

5.6 Marketing and Recruitment Campaigns

Our marketing activity increased during this period, compared with the previous year, in line with some lockdown and pandemic restrictions being eased. We continued with a high presence of digital and social media advertising, and also re-commenced our outdoor advertising (billboards, etc.), the Taxi skin, radio advertising, magazines specifically for certain communities/locations, leaflet drops, etc.

We also commissioned the Manchester Evening News. This has been very successful as not only was there targeted Facebook advertising, but there was also a high additional digital presence, adverts in the print editions of the paper, and we have two advertorials to use, hopefully using case studies of our own adopters.

The aim of the targeted Facebook advertising was to specifically reach out for members of the Black Community to come forward and think about adoption. This led to a noticeable increase in enquiries, as mentioned earlier. It did not result in an increase in people attending the information events, as many of those enquiries were at the very early stages of thinking about adoption, but it is hoped those enquirers will come back to us due to them now having our information.

The national #YouCanAdopt 'Black Adopters Campaign' took place this Summer, and the website and social media hashtag #YouCanAdopt was used widely. The aim was to raise awareness of adoption and bust myths around who is eligible to adopt; ultimately to increase the number of possible parents from the Black Community registering their interest in adoption. As we know, Black children traditionally wait longer to be matched with a new adoptive family, as well as older children, sibling groups, and those with complex health needs or disabilities.

Part of this campaign was the commission of Street Ambassadors; who went out in the community to raise awareness, address concerns and bust myths.

Additional marketing was booked for National Adoption Week, which took place for 12th – 18th October 2021. We ran our own advertising during the entire campaign period, to go alongside the national campaign, using the same message, content and useful podcasts, aiming to make Adoption Counts stand out amongst our competitors and drive applicants to our website.

5. Compliments, comments and complaints

Description – compliments
Feedback from an adopter who said how supportive and professional her supervising social worker had been. The adopter wanted to thank the supervising social worker for all her support, help, advice and friendliness throughout their adoption journey.
Feedback given by a prospective adopter who had contacted the agency to enquire about adoption. The prospective adopter said how the member of staff from the recruitment team had put them at ease and they appreciated her sensitivity when discussing difficult subjects.
Feedback given by an adopter regarding a family support worker in our adoption support service. The adopter stated: adoption is quite a journey and having people like yourself along the way make it so much easier. You have been the only constant contact in the whole process for us from start to finish and that has meant so much to us.
Feedback from an adopter regarding the letterbox support they had received. They advised this had been excellent and throughout the years the indirect contacts with their daughter's birth family have always been sensitively dealt with in a timely and insightful way.
Feedback given by an adopter regarding their supervising social worker. They stated their social worker has shared her knowledge and insight at every step, had been professional and yet caring and honest when necessary.
Description – complaints
A complaint from an adopter who had experienced an adoption disruption. The adopter expressed unhappiness regarding the levels of support and contact from the agency following the disruption. The complaint was not upheld.
A complaint from an adopter following a recommendation from the agency that the adopter was no longer suitable to adopt. The adopter raised concerns about the annual review process followed by the agency and the levels of contact maintained. The complaint was partially upheld.
A complaint from an adopter who wanted to know why the letterbox service for her daughter had not been reviewed. The complaint was not upheld.
A query was received from a enquirer's MP regarding the housing circumstances of an enquirer wishing to proceed with an adoption application. The query was answered and an initial visit completed.
A complaint from a birth parent who stated she was not receiving letters from her children. The complaint was not upheld.

6. Practice Developments in Adoption Counts

7.1 Family Finding

In order to support the priority of achieving permanence in a timely way for our children of black ethnicity we have worked in partnership with other regional adoption agencies across England and have taken part within a national Family Finding Profiling Event held over the weekend 22-25 October 2021. We profiled children of Black African/Caribbean heritage and mixed Black African/Caribbean heritage at this event.

Following feedback from our partner LA's, we have also formed a working group who have developed an early permanence training package which will be delivered to our LA colleagues to enhance awareness and understanding regarding early permanence options for children. This has now been finalised and training is available to all colleagues as required. General adoption training alongside early permanence training has been delivered to teams in Manchester.

We have continued to hold adoption picnics and have profiled children using a range of video clips. Adopters can access these video clips of children for a limited period via a secure Adoption Counts website on our SharePoint site. During this period we have held three picnics, 35 children were featured with 86 households attending resulting in 41 expressions of interest. Three matches resulted from these events for a sibling pair, a sibling group of three and a six year old. All children are now placed.

7.2 Recruitment and Assessment

We have six staff who are currently taking part in Adult Attachment style interview (ASI) training. One is an Operations Manager one Team Manager and four social workers. We aim to have the social workers accredited in the training and begin to offer ASI interviews for some of our families in assessment from July / August 2022. The attachment style interviews is a model of practice that that offers a conversational style interview which questions adoptive applicants about their current relationships with their partner (if a couple), family of origin and with two adults close to the applicants. The interview looks at general styles of relating to other adults in terms of self-reliance and how easy it will be for them to get close and be at ease in accessing help. This will be a clear indicator of how as adoptive parents they will reach out for support during the parenting of a child or young person through adoption.

As an organisation Adoption Counts are committed to embedding the Black Lives Matters ethos and challenge to ourselves within our work in the Recruitment and Assessment of adopters who can truly meet and understand the needs of children who are from a black or minority ethnic heritage. The black lives matters training has been accessed by all our staff and Adoption Panel members. This is shaping our delivery of service with prospective adopters and the matching of children as service Social workers are showing more confidence in evidencing the learning in the curious and open questions in the PARs (Prospective Adopters Reports) in the assessment and analysis of adopters being able to thoroughly explore their true understanding of diversity and the impact in parenting their child or children.

We are as a service developing Interactive Profiles for approved adopters as we are doing with children, which will allow the adopters to talk about their skills and abilities in offering a child permanence through adoption, what they can offer as a family.

The Preparation Training is delivered face to face by our social workers within the Recruitment and Assessment teams. We are currently reviewing the content of the training to cover all aspects of the adoption journey for the child, birth parents and adopters including adoption support as a priority for ongoing support throughout the years.

We have re-organised the teams in the Recruitment and Assessment to focus on Initial visits. This piece of work was undertaken in relation to addressing allocation timescales and meeting the needs of prospective adopters in:

We will monitor closely timescales on Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments if by separating out initial visits.

In relation to contact in adoption we focus on 'open' adoptions as a starting point for children with their birth family. Messages from research tell us how we can weave in the prospect for children being able to retain contact with their families if in their best interest.

At present as a management team we are looking to develop a first stage system in relation to matching children to adopters who can meet their needs at an early stage by the use of data held on the system by using the children's matching criteria in relation to their individual needs against adopters skills and abilities.

7. Adoption Panels

Information about panel will be covered in full in the Chairs reports. Adoption Counts are in the process of interviewing and appointing two panel chairs as we have one vacancy and one chair leaving.

8. Priorities

- More rigorous challenge around children's family members being ruled out as potential carers for a child at an earlier stage in care proceedings.
- Early Permanence Planning for children and unborn children to be supported with regular and updated training.
- Life Story Books and Later in Life Letters backlog to be addressed.
- Focus on recruitment within the Sufficiency Plan of adopters for children from a Black or mixed ethnicity background for children who wait longer in Manchester for an adoptive family.
- Ensure the diversity of the Agency's Panel Central List members is more representative of the children being matched.
- Quality of CPR's to be incrementally improved with support prior to SHOBPA.
- Thematic review of those children who wait over 12 months for an adoptive family.

Sheila Davies

Operations Manager

19.08.2022

Adoption Support
Adoption Service – 6 monthly & Annual
Report
01.04.2021 – 31.03.2022

Adoption Support

Adoption Support remains integral to our delivery for adopted children, new adoptive families, birth families and adopted adults, recognizing the life-long journey of adoption. We remain committed to supporting children and their new families from the early transition stages of a placement through to the making of an Adoption Order. Thereafter we recognize that new challenges may emerge requiring varying levels of tailored support to ensure successful outcomes for children. We have based our service delivery on a graduated approach, with our Adoption Psychology Service forming the foundation of our delivery.

In this past six months we have continued to deliver Adoption Support on a hybrid model, using virtual meetings and offering in-person visits and meeting as required. There has been some impact on the team from Covid-19 with periods of staff sickness.

Adoption Psychology Service

SERVICE OVERVIEW

The short-term funding for this service has been agreed by the board until March 2023, with negotiations with Clinical Commissioners to secure longer term funding on a joint basis moving forward. This process continues to be underway with our Greater Manchester and Cheshire East NHS commissioning colleagues.

This service was initially funded by the Centre of Excellence funding, which has since ended. The APS service has been mentioned in the Government publication *Adoption Strategy Achieving Excellence Everywhere (July 2021)* as an example of best practice.

The long-term ambition would be to increase the service delivery so that all children, not just those under the age of 12, can receive a service from this specialist team. A new element of funding has been announced by central government for all RAA's to bid to develop their own Multi-Agency Partnerships so we will seek clarity on whether this is relevant to our development plans.

1.1 The Adoption Psychology Team is an assessment, consultation and therapeutic CAMHS and Educational Psychology partnership service for adopted children, their parents, carers and workers. It is a partnership between Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, One Education and Adoption Counts. The service is multidisciplinary including clinical psychology, therapeutic social work, child psychiatry, Occupational Therapy and educational psychology. The information in this report relates to the CAMHS component of the service. The service is partly co-located with Children's Social Care which enables a co-ordinated approach to the mental health and emotional wellbeing and develops the skills of the social work teams through consultation, training and joint working. It is consultation and referral-based and offers timely and flexible appointments, currently mainly delivered virtually but with in-person observations and visits to children. The service sits alongside other services that support the child's home, care planning, relationships, health, education and hobbies. The iThrive model shows how the Adoption Psychology and Adoption Counts Adoption Support Service fit together.

i-THRIVE Model of Care – Adoption Support



1.2 AP Service outcomes

- Adopted children have good mental health
- Adopted children have healthy relationships
- Adopted children have stable placements
- Adopted children and their parents have a positive experience of care and support

1.3 Service Aims

- Children who have a Placement Order and an adoption plan are offered, where necessary, assessment and intervention to support decision making and make recommendations to inform their placement needs.
- Adopted children and families have access to assessment and interventions to improve their relationships, emotional and behavioural regulation and engagement with learning.
- Children and families placed in their adoptive placement can access group-based approaches as part of an early intervention package to enable families to have a good start on their adoption journey.
- Children who have been placed in their adoptive placement are able to access specialist assessment and intervention up to age 12.
- Adoption social workers, family finders and children's social workers can access Specialist Consultation for adopted children up to the age of 18 for advice and signposting.
- Prospective adopters and adoptive parents are offered training, consultation and evidence-based interventions to enhance their understanding and management of the psychological needs of children who have experienced abuse and neglect.
- Adoption Social Workers are offered training and consultation to enhance their understanding, assessment skills and knowledge of attachment, mental health difficulties and interventions

In October 21 to March 22, the Adoption Psychology team delivered:

- Evening workshop for parents about school transitions and education advice, and parenting understanding the neuro-sequential model

- Foundations for Attachment group – one (virtually) and another planned for January was rescheduled to take place in April. The course reached 10 parents, 8 children
- Theraplay informed parenting group – four groups took place, offering parent sessions followed by sessions jointly with children and their parents, in person reaching 28 children
- Training (CPD) for Adoption Counts social workers
- Consultations for transitions (21) and long-term work for professionals (46)
- 9 specialist assessments and 11 psychiatric assessments
- 39 direct referrals for support for children and their families

Further figures for the number of children receiving services, breakdown of LA, gender, school needs and so on are provided within the Adoption Psychology annual report, 2021-22. This can be read alongside this report to provide more detail.

Specialist Assessments were for children whose needs were highly complex, with a multi-agency approach using Education Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Psychiatry, and specialist OT services to assess and recommend the relevant support for children and their parents. This is a very limited service due to the available time, so we have targeted children whose complex needs are not likely to be met within an assessment delivered by an external provider. Costs for this work were claimed through the ASF, along with costs for sensory attachment packages of support.

Consultations continue to be a central part of the APS offer. Consultations are offered on a fortnightly basis for social workers, for Adoption Support, Family Finding and Recruitment and Assessment, and can include the LA social worker responsible for the child. These consultations offer advice on transitions into adoptive placements for children, especially those likely to have higher need, such as sibling groups, later placed children, or those with more significant trauma history. The transitions screening tool and supporting documents have been well received and used by workers. There has also been offered a telephone line to consider more urgent or quicker queries which can be swiftly discussed with the APS team.

The **Multi Agency Resource Panel**, continues to consider complex cases that require Adoption Support Fund (ASF) match funding from the Local Authority. This has enabled more consistent and transparent decision making across the region. The panel consists of representative multi-agency representatives from education, health and CAMHS backgrounds, which enables professional challenge and support to make the best use of resources in our agency.

1.4 Adoption Support Fund Applications

We have continued to access the ASF to provide additional therapy for adoptive families using the Adoption Counts portal, this has enabled families to receive specialist support that we would not have been able to provide in house or access from other universal services. There were 329 applications to the ASF in the 6 months between October and March 2022. The total value of the claims were £740,249, of which £65,216 was for specialist assessments.

LA's contributes £16,756 matched funding to "top up" the ASF fair access limit of £5000 per child.

LA	Number of applications	Amount	Applications with Match Funding	Amount of matched funding
Cheshire East	68	£220,615	3	£2,716
Manchester	57	£189,189	3	£7,154
Salford	15	£43,217	0	
Stockport	54	£170,064	3	£6,886
Trafford	32	£88,574	0	
Group Application	4	£28,590	0	
Totals	230	£740,250	9	£16,756

The Adoption Support Fund was renewed in February 2022. The delay in announcing this so late caused concern among providers and families, who were awaiting the opportunity to continue therapy. This has also caused a considerable increase in applications coming in between March-April and resulting in processing delays, in both our social work and business support teams, with workers completing an increased number of applications during this short period.

Comparison to previous 6 months and annual overview:

LA	Number of applications	Amount	Applications with Match Funding
Cheshire East	83	£286,203.51	1 for £3014.38
Manchester	56	£179,253.33	0
Salford	23	£85,061.25	2 totalling £3890.50
Stockport	50	£168,690.00	3 totalling £11,215.34
Trafford	43	£202,069.00	3 totalling £28,460.00
Group Application	1	£10,860.00	0
Totals	256	£932,137.09	£46,580.22

Total 456 applications in April 2021- March 2022, drawing down a total of £1,672,387.09 to support adoptive families in our region, and those we support who live across England.

1.5 Referrals / Enquiries for Adoption Support

The team currently hold 853 open cases. This is reduced from 960, with 34 of those closed being Access to Records.

These cases are:

465 (previous measure 553) adopted children with an allocated long-term social worker

185 (previous measure was 181) adopted children with an allocated First Response social worker

203 (previous quarter was 226) adults being supported to access their adoption records

Within these numbers:

72 (previous measure 38) children (some pre-adoption) have a Therapeutic Social Worker, this increase is reflected in the secondment to the post of a second therapeutic social worker, thereby doubling capacity

39 children (previous measure 40 children) allocated to our Education Advisor.

	Adoption Support	First Response	Access to Records	Total
Cheshire East	118	52	29	199
Manchester	91	44	88	223
Salford	45	12	23	80
Stockport	84	39	34	157
Trafford	92	30	12	134
Unallocated to an LA	35	8	17	60
Total	465	185	203	853

Active Adoption Support Caseloads by Local Authority

There has been a slight decrease in the number of families allocated to a social worker within Adoption Support. We have continued with our drive to close cases when possible and move families on to access universal services, and this has been a welcome change after the rising demand in the last two years. There will always be a core of families who require more long-term support, and these numbers continue to be steady.

We have again been able to reduce the number of open Access to Records cases (by 24), as the team are now dealing with applications faster than they are coming in. This reflects the positive investment in this team to 1 FTE post.

During October 2021-March 2022 the First Response team completed 55 adoption support assessments for families approaching the service for the first time. All families who have sought support have been assessed within 4-10 weeks of them approaching the agency, the time period has increased slightly since the last report, but with priority given to families who need more urgent assessments. This assessment identified the support families may require, and sources and puts in place relevant support, often accessing the ASF to fund this.

In the year we have completed 126 adoption support assessments for new families approaching the service for support. All families who are already allocated a social worker have the assessment reviewed every 6 months at minimum, although often this is more frequently given changing needs.

We have adjusted our process which is now that all social workers across Adoption Support complete initial "surgeries" for Adoption Support Assessments. This has reduced the pressure

within First Response and allowed families to start building relationships with their social worker from their early contact with the agency. This began in February 2022.

Social workers continue to support families whose needs range from support with therapeutic parenting, sensory and attachment needs, ranging through to those who have highly complex needs, who are at risk of CSE, missing from home, violence towards parents, and with complex mental health needs and disabilities. Very sadly we also have young people who are on the edge of care, or can no longer live with their adoptive parents and return to LA care. Liaison with LA services continues to be a challenge at times, with high thresholds for referrals. We are working on this area by liaising with local services and planning ways to improve communication and understanding between the LA intake workers, and Adoption Counts. Examples of this practice are the joint supervision offered within Stockport, and the forum within Cheshire East. Both of these are newly-instigated and should they prove beneficial we will offer these to our other LA partners.

The Letterbox team holds all letterbox referrals; the last count has increased substantially to 1,298 cases (cf. 1053 2020/21). This may reflect the increased focus on good practice within LA's and social work teams to encourage meaningful contact post-adoption for more children. The number of cases does not reflect the number of exchanges (for example, one family may write to several birth family members who write back, exchanging four or five letters twice a year).

We have chosen to be part of the pilot project called Letter Swap, which will create a digital platform for exchange of information from adoptive and birth families. This was planned for trial in the Spring but this has been delayed until later in 2022.

Adopted Adults

Our service to Adopted Adults is seeing improvement in waiting times for those who wish to access their adoption records. We created capacity by using hours available from other roles, to enable the 1 FTE equivalent (4 workers) who deliver this service across the 5 Local Authority areas. We intend to keep this capacity until a further reduction in wait times is seen.

We have again been able to reduce the number of open Access to Records cases by 34. This reflects a steady demand of new cases.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year total
Cheshire East	10	1	2	4	17
Manchester	17	10	11	9	47
Salford	1	7	5	4	17
Stockport	7	9	1	4	21
Trafford	3	2	1	0	6
General	2	6	5	7	20
Total	40	35	25	28	128

New Access to Records cases by Local Authority and quarter. Not reflecting older open cases, only new cases opened in each quarter.

New referrals for support

During the period we received 196 new referrals into the Adoption Support Service. These mainly come directly from families but some from schools and other social workers. We also

receive referrals from families moving into our area and those becoming our responsibility due to the three year rule.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year total
Cheshire East	10	13	9	19	51
Manchester	12	11	13	9	45
Salford	1	3	7	8	19
Stockport	14	11	16	6	47
Trafford	7	6	5	2	20
Unallocated to an LA	2	4	1	7	14
Total	46	48	51	51	196

New Adoption Support cases by Local Authority and quarter. Not reflecting older open cases, only new cases opened in each quarter.

Analysis

We have received 196 new referrals into the Adoption Support Service (compared to 183 in the previous period) showing a steady demand. There has been an increased number of Access to Records requests which has been met by the ATR team.

We are currently working with 467 allocated cases (excluding letterbox) which is a reduction from 553 from the previous six months. This is a result of the drive to close “dormant” cases where the worker was not actively involved plus reflecting the ability now for families to accept ending of work, now the pressure of the pandemic is reduced.

This reduction has enabled us to manage several additional areas of work:

- The renewal of the ASF fund, which resulted in high numbers of ASF applications processed by social workers and business support
- The restarting of evening workshops

The steady numbers of cases held within First Response demonstrates continued demand but there is a challenge in moving cases on to the long term team when the family requires higher levels of support and intervention. This is why we have changed the process to have all social workers across the Adoption Support team offer “surgeries”.

The Adoption Psychology team show a steady demand for their service and increased use of the transitions consultations. Letterbox demand remains steady and consistent across all areas, in numbers of cases, with a rising number of requests for support where there has been unplanned contact between adopted young people and their birth families. There has also been increased requests for support with planned direct contact, which reflects the drive within Adoption Counts to implement good practice and research around the benefits of contact for adopted young people.

Adoption Support Social Workers continue to hold high caseloads, with an average of 45 cases per FTE. The high level of need could be for a number of reasons, including;

- Families seeking support earlier
- Greater knowledge among adoptive families about the support available, promoted within the preparation groups
- Families requiring interventions that take longer and are multi-part, with perhaps two or more interventions identified

- Greater understanding of early trauma from workers and families, which takes a long time to support and heal

The team are a resilient and committed group of workers, who have worked hard to meet the needs of all adopted children in this period. At the last Board meeting an additional 2.5 workers were agreed (for one year) to enhance the adoption support offer and these are being recruited to currently, although we have not been able to identify candidates on our first round of recruitment.

The Operations and Adoption Support managers are focussing on how to support workers and how to reduce demand on staff who report feeling under stress, especially within First Response and the letterbox service.

Process

The first response model remains in place , to encourage better screening of calls and redirecting to universal services where appropriate . If a call is clearly adoption specific then advice ,support and counselling can be offered via telephone and may be all that is required.

If it becomes clear from discussion that there is a need to gather more detailed information then the family will be invited into a surgery appointment to conduct an Adoption Support Assessment. This could also be offered when a family requests a financial assessment or renewal of an adoption support allowance.

Of the referrals into the service for both Adoptive families 100% of adoptive families requiring an assessment / interview have been offered a surgery appointment within a 4-10 week timeframe. Some are prioritised if required (for example, edge of care, risk of exclusion, high stress in household).

All families can contact the First Response team and speak to a social worker on duty. This is available every day, during working hours so they have access to a skilled social worker to respond to queries and offer support.

Since boosting the Access to Records service, we now have FTE 1 worker (0.2 of which is through an agency worker) supporting adults within all five Local Authority areas.

This has since proved very beneficial, with adopted adults being able to access their records and waiting list being worked through. We now offer a reduced waiting time for those who approach the service, at 6-9 months wait and often adults are seen more swiftly (recently example of a service offered within 3 months, which includes period of time seeking the records and processing the information for the adult to receive).

The **Adoption Support team staffing establishment** is as follows -

Team Managers	2.3 FTE	3 staff
Adoption Support SWs	12 FTE	First Response 4.2 (agency 0.4) ATR 1 (agency 0.2) Long Term 7.2 FTE
FSWs	3.7 FTE	FSW's 2.9 FTE Senior practitioner 0.8 FTE
Therapeutic SW	2 FTE	2 FTE 1 seconded for 1 year

Universal services

The Adoption Support Team continue to offer access to Adopter Hub and some events as part of the “universal services” iThrive model. Adopter Voice have fed back how beneficial the Adopter Hub service has been to enable adoptive parents to access high quality, reliable information at a time that suits them. We have offered all adopters at every stage access to this resource and will continue to promote this at Stage One and onwards.

The first virtual evening workshop, on supporting children in education, took place in September, and was well received by parents and continued through October to March on topics such as life story, contact, and the neuro-sequential model (understanding trauma). A further training programme for parents is being created for the year ahead, some in person and others virtual events.

Adopter Voice has continued to offer a contact point for adopters who can connect with one another, and feed back to the agency about areas of practice, join training events, and participate in activities across Adoption Counts. This has offered in person events for new parents. Three consultation sessions have taken place seeking feedback for the organisation about the child’s voice, and life story work and letterbox. Information from these sessions was used to create the evening workshops.

Birth parent support continues to be commissioned through PAC-UK who offer support to those whose children have been removed through adoption, within the first two years. A group for birth parents has been developed in our region for parents who have lost children through adoption, with the aim of offering mutual support and ultimately supporting adopted children with positive contact arrangements.

1.6 Letterbox Service

The Letterbox team are holding all letterbox referrals; at the last count this was 1298 families.

We were invited to learn about a pilot project run by Linkmaker, who are developing an online letterbox service, which will enable families to upload letters and share these securely within the online system, having first been screened by Family Support Workers in Adoption Counts. This was going to start in Spring 2022 but the start has been delayed to allow for more preparation time nationally.

The Family Support Workers also undertake short pieces of work to assist families with adoption related issues, reducing the pressures of SW allocations, and this has started to support families awaiting therapeutic input.

Current number of Letterbox agreements per LA (in brackets are previous number)

Manchester	Salford	Stockport	Cheshire East	Trafford
392 (305)	342 (277)	264 (250)	147 (186)	145 (120)

1.7 Birth families

First Family delivered through PAC-UK are our current provider of support to birth families following a decision for their child to be adopted .

The clear and easy referral process is increasing the number of families who access the service. PAC-UK provide the annual figures from 2020-21 was 51 parents offered support. We are awaiting feedback from this last period.

Further detailed information is available in the PAC – UK annual report, which can be shared on request.

2. Practice Developments in Adoption Counts

Adoption Support

Adoption Psychology have delivered some on-line training and support for families, and recently have returned to a partial face to face group to deliver Theraplay informed support to newly placed families with their children. We are awaiting feedback from this. We have also returned to evening workshops, with the first being delivered in September 2021. This was well received by families and good feedback given about the benefit of the session.

Transitions work has been a focus and documents supporting good transitions, and a training event was delivered for the Family Finders and Recruitment and Assessment workers. This will support earlier intervention when a child is moving into an adoptive placement and has higher support needs or a likely need for more specialist support with (for example) relationships and behaviour during the transition.

A review of the MARP process has sought Local Authority decision makers' agreement to move to a process to enable more timely decision making when a child or family require more than the ASF £5,000 limit of therapy.

Adoption Psychology

During this period the Adoption Psychology team have maintained their connections with the team and families, delivering specialist assessments, consultations, therapeutic input for families and training for staff.

Training has taken place for the Adoption Support team, including education and transition, use of therapeutic support, and specialist input from a FASD service. Training and reflective sessions were also provided by our Educational Psychology service with a focus on school support and workers have reported a high level of satisfaction with the specialist training offered in the service, offering good CPD and encouraging staff retention who feel valued by investment in their skills and knowledge.

Transitions support continues for children moving from their foster care to prospective adoptive home. We have created a format to claim for some of this work from the Adoption Support Fund.

Systemic Peer Support sessions have been created by the Adoption Support Team managers, and therapeutic social worker, and these have been beneficial for workers to receive peer support with complex cases and consider alternative hypotheses around intervention and support. These were paused in February and March to enable the focus to be on the ASF renewals but will be reinstated for the team. A new workers support group has been beneficial in enabling several new team members to be mentored by those who have been more established, and again this increases confidence and team cohesion as well as staff retention.

Further details available in the Adoption Psychology annual report.

Kristen Roberts

Operations Manager, Adoption Support

Adoption Counts Adoption Panel
Adoption Panel Chairs 6 monthly report
(October 2021 to March 2022)

1. Introduction

This report is a biennial report completed in rotation by the Independent Panel Chairs for Adoption Counts. The statistics used in the report and the quotations from the Panel feedback process are supplied by the Admin Team and Panel Advisor for Adoption Counts. Thanks is expressed for their hard work in bringing the information together.

2. Overview of panels

The temporary arrangements for Panels brought about by the Co-Vid situation continues and Panels are still being held virtually. They are held every two weeks on Fridays; every three weeks on Thursdays; every six weeks on Wednesdays; every six weeks on Tuesdays. This pattern of timings is consistent with arrangements pre Co-Vid and the usual locations of Panels are used as a reference.

The various locations originally used reflect the geographical areas of the Local Authority partners in the adoption work we do and were intended to make for easy attendance of the adoptive applicants and the social workers. Although these issues became moot during Lockdown arrangements there remains an argument that locally delivered services are still important.

There are discussions about moving to a Hybrid arrangement with actual attendance for some Panel members with other participants still joining virtually. This will depend on the availability of rooms large enough to maintain a level of safe social distancing at the various sites previously used for Panels.

Panels are usually scheduled for mornings. The ideal is for 3 items per Panel although a maximum of 5 cases can be listed. However, because of the additional time taken to deal with certain cases care is taken to not list too many items such as Matching cases.

The frequency of panels supports the timeliness of approvals and matches. The timetabling of panel items is based on need, and therefore panel will be convened even if there is only one item to be presented. There remains the option to arrange additional Panels should it be required.

3. Panel membership

At the end of the reporting period at the end of March 2022 there were 53 panel members on the Central List. The make up is as follows:

3 Panel Chairs, 1 Vice Chair, 18 Local Authority and/or Adoption Counts Social Worker representatives, 21 Independent members, 4 Medical Advisors, 2 Elected Members, 2 Local Authority members [other than Social Workers] and 2 NHS members.

The 18 Social Workers are ; 11 from Adoption Counts, 2 from Manchester, 4 from Salford and 1 from Stockport. Neither Trafford or Cheshire East have Social Worker representation as Panel Members.

There are an additional 5 individuals in the process of being considered as new panel members.

Adoption Counts panels strive to have panel members from varied backgrounds, life and personal experiences and, whilst we have several adoptive parents and adult adopted people, it is recognised that it would be very helpful to have a birth parent who has had a child adopted.

The attendance and/or availability of Medical Advisors remains an issue on some occasions when there are serious or unusual medical conditions to be understood. If there was an issue whereby the Medical Advisor's input would be valued, queries can be sent to them prior to panel for advice. On occasion a Medical Advisor can attend at the beginning of Panel to give a summary of all cases scheduled that day. This is seen as an acceptable compromise

It has become increasingly difficult to recruit social workers from our 5 Local Authorities and we continue to push recruitment in these authorities. It is of particular concern that we don't have any representation from 2 of our partner Local Authorities.

Panel member appraisal

The appraisal process is currently underway. Appraisals will be completed via an electronic system, with a third of Panel members invited in for a face to face discussion. The face to face meetings may still be completed virtually due to Covid-19. All Panel members are given the option to attend their appraisal in via a Teams meeting or to complete them electronically. This has been done to ease the pressure on the Panel Advisor and Panel Chairs as previous appraisal became very lengthy and protracted given the number of panel members and their varied availability for an additional meeting outside of panel times. The next appraisal period will begin in September 2022.

Annual panel training

Panel members have opportunities to attend regular training sessions

Panel developmental days are January and June. The rationale for this is to avoid Easter holidays and a busy time for the agency, staff and panel members as schools return post long summer break in September

Panel Chairs also meet frequently to look at matters of consistency and common developmental issues

Adoption Counts have delivered training sessions on the topic of Black Lives Matters and the associated issues. There was an expectation that all panel members would attend this. Not all Panel Members accessed this training but will be offered the opportunity to attend future events as the Black Lives Matter training is continuously being embedded into practice within Adoption Counts and will be essential for everyone to attend.

The Panel Member Learning Library is still active and available to all panel members via SharePoint. This resource contains a wide variety of learning material such as policy and procedure documents, information leaflets, training slides, information re: adoption support; recruitment and assessment; and family finding. Panel members are required to keep a record of their reading and research which is to be reflected on and discussed during their appraisals to ensure continued professional development.

4. Panel Business

Cases considered by panels (October 2021 – March 2022)

Total No. of Panels	24	No. of Approvals	36
No. of Matches	38 #	No of children matched	43/45 ##
Breakdown by type:		Single children	32
		Sib group of 2	4 [5 if double counting]
		Sib group of 3	1

2 children were matched twice at Panel [K children]. So actually appeared at 38 Panels only 43 matched in reality.

Data

CPR / PAR

For the above period, 46 CPRs were presented to panel (this included 5 sibling groups of 2 and 1 sibling group of 3 and also includes SHOBPA) and 36 PARs

RAA data of quality of reports at final audit. All agencies					
Matches (and SHOBPA), 46 CPRs			Approvals, 36 PARs		
Outstanding	3	6.52%	Outstanding	1	2.77%
Good	29	63.04%	Good	33	91.66%
Satisfactory	6	13.04%	Satisfactory	0	0%
In need of improvement	8	17.39%	In need of improvement	2	5.55%

SHOBPA:

CPR Agency specific data per Local Authority- SHOBPA				
Agency	Outstanding	Good	In need of improvement	Inadequate
Trafford	0	0	2	0
Stockport	0	5	6	0
Salford	0	3	7	0
Manchester	0	5	9	0
Cheshire East	1	4	4	0

CPR Agency specific data per Local Authority – as a % out of total of reports				
Agency	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	In need of improvement
Trafford (2)	0	0	0	2 (4.35%)
Stockport (11)	0	5 (10.87%)	0	6 (13%)
Salford (10)	0	3 (6.52%)	0	7 (15.2%)
Manchester (14)	0	5 (10.87%)	0	9 (19.7%)
Cheshire East (9)	1 (2.17 %)	4 (8.7%)	0	4 (8.7%)

5. Panel scrutiny – timescales

Matches

A1 met	16 cases	37%
A1 not met	27 cases	63%
A2 met	28 cases	65%
A2 not met	15 cases	35%

Breakdown by LA

LA	No of children	A1 met	A1 not met	A2 met	A2 not met
Cheshire East	9	2 [22%]	7 [78%]	7 [78%]	2 [22%]
Manchester	14	4 [29%]	10 [71%]	4 [29%]	10 [71%]
Salford	9	3 [33%]	6 [67%]	7 [78%]	2 [22%]
Stockport	9	6 [67%]	3 [33%]	8 [89%]	1 [11%]
Trafford	2	1 [50%]	1 [50%]	2 [100%]	

Approvals

Of the 78 Adoptive families that were in S1 in the six months (this excludes those that left the process during S1 in the period):

- 5 were completed within 8 weeks (12.5%); 35 were completed of timescales (87.5%).
- For those that were ongoing at the end of the period, 12 were still within timescales (32%) while a further 26 (68%) were already out of timescales.

Of the 73 Adoptive families that were in S2 in the six months (this excludes those that left the process during S2 in the period):

- 12 were completed within 16 weeks (32%); 26 were completed of timescales (68%).
- For those that were ongoing at the end of the period, 27 were still within timescales (77%) while a further 8 (23%) were already out of timescales.

Comment

The statistics model used for A1 and A2 performance give only an average performance indication based on local and National trends. As such it needs to be used cautiously. However, there are 2 main conclusions to consider.

A1 performance is very much affected by Court timetables and the extent to which a case is being disputed. The LA and Adoption Agency cannot be in full control of this waiting period for children. A2 is when the Local Authority has got the go ahead to progress a plan for adoption via a Placement Order. In these cases performance is usually better.

A1 in this period is similar to the last reporting period [37% against 39% in the previous 6 months]. A2 performance is improved [65% against 57% in the previous 6 months]

The quality assurance process is thorough and CPRs are audited by the relevant Adoption Counts Team Manager prior to SHOBPA consideration and then again by either the Team Manager, Family Finder or Senior Practitioner before matching panel. This is to ensure that CPRs are graded as being 'Good' as a minimum and that the final report is submitted to panel rather than reports still requiring amendments.

There continues to be a small number of CPRs still requiring some additional work following submission as identified by the Panel Advisor and/or Chair. The bulk of these cases have had the suggested amendments completed in a timely manner allowing the case to be heard as per the schedule. Even these CPRs have told and explained the child's journey, but needed additional work to enable them to be appropriate for the adopters and adoptee to have as life time documents.

6. Attendee feedback

Both the social workers and adopters attending Panel are asked the following questions:, which are then graded from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent)

Feedback from evaluations

12 evaluations were completed for this half year.

Adopters	Adoption social workers	Children's social workers	Family Finders
0	7	0	5

Question	Percentage	Number	Score
Before attending panel were you clear about panel's function?	100%	12	5
Were you given sufficient notice about the date and time of panel?	100%	12	5
Were panels members introduced to you?	92%	11	5
	8%	1	4
Did panel members treat you with courtesy and respect?	100%	12	5
Did panel members seem familiar with your case?	75%	9	5
	25%	3	4
Were panel member's questions relevant to the issues they were considering?	100%	12	5
Were you given the opportunity to clarify points raised?	100%	12	5
Were the recommendations made by the Panel Chair clear?	83%	10	5
	17%	2	4
Overall gradings	42%	5	5
	33%	4	4
	25%	3	3

Additional comments made were as follows:

The Chair usually reminds prospective adopters that panel provides a recommendation and that the ADM will make a decision within 10 days, but forgot to do so on this occasion.

However, I'm conscious that we were the last item on the agenda, and I reminded the couple of this after panel.

I also felt that the couple had a lot of questions to answer, some of which were bordering on assessment questions. I'm not sure this would have been as obvious if they had received fewer questions, but I thought they got a pretty tough grilling. B also mentioned that she was surprised to receive 'two rounds' of questions; a reference to the fact that some panel members had two opportunities to ask them questions.

I was surprised to hear that some Panel members were not impressed with adopter's presentation. I thought they presented well and answered the questions that were asked of them succinctly and with feeling. I understand that other couples had been very animated earlier in the day, and panel did make it clear that adopters presentation would not effect their recommendation. However, I do not think it is necessary to comment on prospective adopters' presentation, particularly not in a negative way, as it has no bearing on the recommendation.

Everything in this case has gone smoothly so far. We were notified a week before about the time of panel and panel was on time. Thank you making probably my last panel such positive experience

This was my first Adoption Counts panel and it was a positive experience.

I was made to feel at ease, particularly after having a difficult start with my laptop volume.

I felt the PAR had been read fully and considered by each panel member.

Adopter feedback

It is disappointing that we received no evaluations from adopters, and needs further attention paid as to whether virtual panels have impacted on this. The plans to move to a hybrid Panel system should consider this. Prior to virtual panel, chairs would personally hand the evaluation form to the applicants, but it is worth further exploration about how as chairs we can encourage feedback in the virtual world, as this is an important part of our learning

Comment

Generally feedback panel received was positive.

However, the written feedback does not always corroborate with the scoring.

Feedback from some workers is that panel asks questions that are already covered in the paperwork. On occasion this may be to request an update on a report written some time ago. However it is a point to be looked at. It may be a particular issue when considering a Matching where there are a large number of reports written by several different social workers.

Some questions are posed from a genuine interest in the lives of the adopters and children but may not be essential for the purposes of the task of Panel on the day. This can also mean that Panels become seen as a quasi-management function. However, Panel are also charged with taking an overview of the performance of the Agency. Getting the balance right is challenging and should continue to be a focus of Panel Development sessions.

Consideration may be needed in asking the social workers more for clarification; rather than the adopters. Bearing in mind that adopters do not have to attend Panel and the guidance is clear that no negative conclusions should be made should they choose to not attend

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This has again been a busy and productive half year for Adoption Counts and for its children and families. The Agency has continued to deliver a high standard of service in the face of a global pandemic and the strains this has created for administrative and IT connectivity.

There has been some impact such as increased timescales for approvals, but this is down to a number of factors outside the agencies control, eg adopters taking breaks, families being impacted by Covid, uncertainty in relation to Furlough arrangements etc. However, as “covid recovery” continues, so timeliness will improve.

The agency needs to be congratulated on its continuing focus driving up quality to ensure that the services it delivers would be “good enough for my child.”

There are number of areas that have been identified that over the next half year will receive further attention and work :-

Embedding the learning of the Black lives matters training and implications for the families we approve and the children we place,

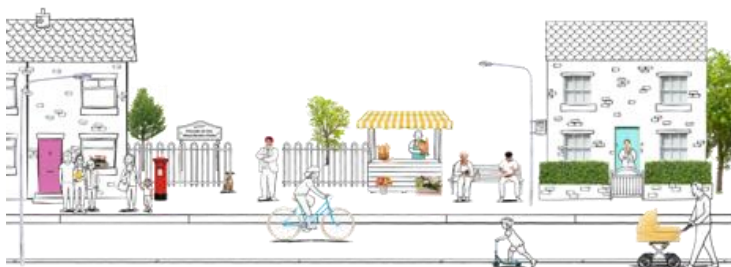
Ensuring that workers and panel are consistently exploring the lifelong implications of adoption, including more reflection on proposed contact arrangements and applicants’ openness to direct contact with birth parents.

- Driving forward more consistency in assessment as well as improving the quality
- Working with the partner agencies to improve both quality and style of CPRs
- Developing hybrid panels – bearing in mind comments earlier in the report
- Ensuring that all panel members share in the learning lessons from any disruptions. It may also be worth sharing with Panel members details of the learning from introductions which do not proceed as planned i.e. not formal disruptions as the child was never actually placed
- Further work with assessing social workers in relation to expectations of panel and to learn from them what would support them to improve quality of reports
- There is difference in timescales for children across the 5 authorities, and it would be helpful for Panel to have some understanding of this
- A more concerted effort to acquire feedback from prospective adopters. This could be achieved if a member of staff (not their assessing SW), made contact and gave them the opportunity to provide full feedback.

Finally, the current timescales around issuing papers to Panel members and the cutoff date for them to raise any concerns might be worth revisiting. The cut off of lunchtime on the day before a Panel gives little opportunity to involve presenting social worker with the opportunity to add to or amend reports. A consequence of this can be lengthy questions at Panel and an increased risk of needed to defer an item.

Martin Sadler
Independent Panel Chair

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Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub

Annual Report 2021/2022

Michelle Bernasconi Strategic Lead Complex Safeguarding

Claire McNicholls, Named nurse Safeguarding

Complex Safeguarding Hub

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- Overview of the Complex Safeguarding Hub
- Partnership Arrangements
- Governance, Accountability and Assurance Arrangements
- Performance and Outcomes
- Impact
- Priorities 2022/2023

Complex Safeguarding Hub

Page 99

- Multi agency co-located hub: Children's Social Care, Police, Health, Trusted Relationship Children's Psychologist, Adult Social Worker, Early Help Team, Missing teams, Probation, virtual links to Youth Justice, Education and Youth Providers.
- Provides joined up response to child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and county lines, serious youth violence and links to organised crime and children missing from home and care.
- The hub is intelligence led and provides joint work in managing the response to complex safeguarding and demonstrates good multi agency coordination and planning in response to emerging safeguarding threats.
- Daily risk meetings, mapping, safety planning, joint operations, specialist knowledge and expertise.
- Links into wider social work teams, and multi-agency partnerships
- Trusted relationship model and understanding of vulnerabilities and harm underpins the approach

Governance, accountability and assurance arrangements

Page 100

- Multi- layered and effective governance arrangements driven by the Complex Safeguarding Executive Partnership Group and Manchester Safeguarding Complex Safeguarding Subgroup.
- Learning from policy, practice, peer reviews, joint governance meetings, audits, feedback and performance information
- Scrutiny and accountability thorough the partnership arrangements.

- **Peer review feedback August 2022**
- Four young people's records selected and included an audit of records and conversations with key staff.
- **Findings:**
- Strengths
- Overall positive feedback regarding the strength of the partnership work.
- Good examples of joint working in relation to disruption and support.
- Flexibility and ability of the hub staff in supporting complex vulnerabilities.
- Timely response to health needs and 'think family' approach.
- Areas for further consideration:
- Capacity issues for the CS Specialist Nurse- a proposal paper to increase capacity is being considered.
- Timeliness and improving assessments by social workers - a renewed focus on timeliness of assessment by team managers is delivering improved performance.
- Use role of Trusted Relationship Psychologist more frequently – capacity now increased to offer more frequent case formulation
- Develop contextual approaches – mapping, places and support networks, contextual safeguarding pilot is underway.
- Mapping has influenced the SYV strategy and Engage panels will offer opportunities for further mapping in localities.

Profile of Referrals

Page 102

- Demand for a service from the Complex Safeguarding Hub remains high, 240 children were referred to the hub in 2021/22
- 54% related of referrals were concerns of child criminal exploitation
- 22% related to concerns of child sexual exploitation.
- The remainder is a combination of multiple exploitation including Threats to Life and harm caused because of serious youth violence
- Gender disparity with 72% of referrals related to boys and 28% related to girls, reflecting the higher number of concerns for CCE and SYV.
- Almost half the children referred into the Hub are aged 15/16 years and almost a quarter aged 17/18 years.

Profile of children open to the Hub

Page 103

- There were 102 children receiving interventions from the complex safeguarding hub at any one time throughout the year.
- Most children were living at home with family, providing the opportunity for preventative support and reduction in numbers of children becoming cared for.
- Over half of the children the CS Hub are being supported via Child in Need Plans and just over a quarter are 'Our Children'.
- 41% of children referred to the hub have additional needs including special educational needs and learning difficulties.
- Analysis of data demonstrates disproportionality in terms of referrals in relation to young people from Black and minority backgrounds.

Missing from home and care

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In 2021/22 there were 4,277 missing episodes reported that related to 1,350 children

- There were 2,684 Independent Return Interviews carried out during 2021/2022
- In August 2021, we held a focus group for young to establish their views on Return Home Interviews to help shape our service. This informed citywide briefings delivered to reduce repeat missing episodes.
- A parenting offer from the Children's Society has supported 47 parent/carers when children have gone missing.
- Subsequently, 92% of parent/carers reporting they are more confident in their parenting following support..
- Support for foster carers has included workshops from the Children's Society to 37 foster carers and residential staff, to raise awareness of the risks of missing from home and the indicators of exploitation

- Education, Training and Employment - Proportion re-engaged
- Where applicable, 66% of children and young people had re-engaged with education, training and employment).
- **An increase** when compared to 60% in 2020-21.
- Stable living arrangements
- 92% of children and young people were deemed to have a stable living arrangement/accommodation setting)
- **An increase** when compared to 86% reported in 2020-21
- Trusted Relationships
- 84% were reported to have made at least one trusted relationship during the time they were working with the team .
- **An increase** when compared to 75% reported in 2021-21.

Impact and outcomes

Page 106

- A whole family approach is well embedded within the hub with the Complex Safeguarding Early Help team delivering support and interventions to 41 families in the year.
- CSE Nurse has delivered 128 consultations in relation to children in the daily briefings and ensured there was robust information sharing across the health sector in relations to 870 children.
- **Impact statement: The complex safeguarding hub achieves improved safeguarding, and good outcomes for children and young people.**

Case study Operation Swing

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- G is a 13-year-old girl referred to the CS Hub, she had been groomed and sexually exploited by a man who had previously been in a relationship with her Auntie who was a young adult. The man had groomed the family into believing he was a trusted adult
- Investigations evidenced a pattern of behavior across several Local Authorities .
- Operation Swing coordinated the investigation across the various councils ensuring a joined-up approach to the victims and evidence gathering.
- A whole family approach has ensured Early Help and Adult services have supported G Mother and Aunt.
- G has developed a trusted relationship with her CS social worker and is now re-engaged with education. The family are supporting the prosecution and the perpetrator has been arrested.

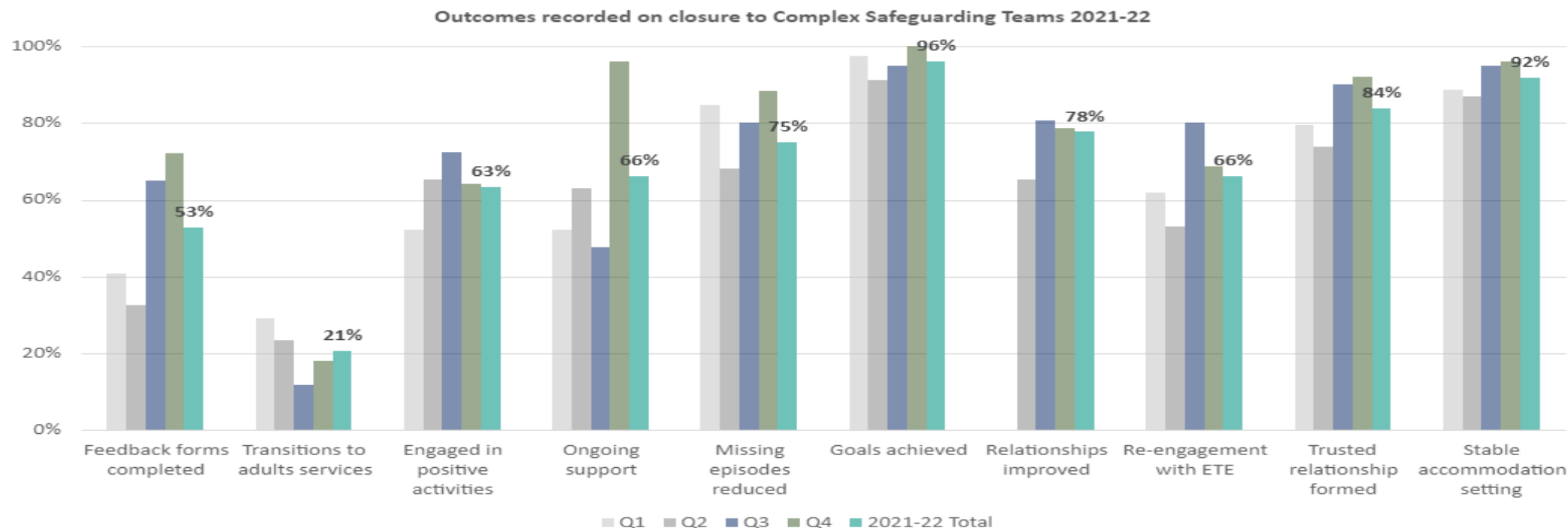
Disruption, Prevention and enforcement

Page 108

The complex Safeguarding Hub continue to deliver prevention, disruption and enforcement activity in relation to child exploitation and organised crime through joint operations.

- **CSH OPERATIONS**
- Op Luka: City Centre CSE
- OP Chalk: CSE investigation in Piccadilly Gardens
- OP Swing : CSE investigation involving multiple LA's
- OP Brock : CSE
- OP Darrowby: CSE
- OP Makespace: City Centre Policing Operation raising awareness/ training with hotel sector.

- In December 2021 an adult male was sentenced to 7 1/2 years for 4 counts of Sexual Activity with a Child.
- The perpetrator met his 14-year-old victim in Piccadilly Gardens in February 2020 and took her back to his flat where he committed several sexual offences against her.
- During the sentencing, the judge described him as a "sexual predator" who used his "manipulative behaviour to gain access to a vulnerable child for sexual purposes".
- The perpetrator was also given an indefinite Sexual Harm Prevention Order and will face deportation upon his release.
- The complex safeguarding social worker and police officer were both awarded commendations for their joint work and diligence in securing prosecutions.



Case closures 2021/2022

Outcomes recorded upon case closure to the complex safeguarding Hub

- The annual summary on the CS Hub demonstrates the work of the hub is complex and the model of partnership delivery is effective in preventing, protecting and disrupting exploitation.
- The trusted relationship model, the culture and approach in the hub are effective in achieving engagement and improved outcomes for children and their families.

Priorities 2022/2023

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- **Evidencing Impact:** Throughout 'Our Year' the hub will increase participation to ensure we can demonstrate impact and outcomes of our work including young people's experiences.
- **Equity, Diversity and inclusion** we will disparity in referrals for children from minoritized groups, children with additional needs and gender in balance.
- **Transitions:** joint work with colleagues in Adult Social Care, GMP and Health to develop a stronger offer for young people aged 18 at risk of exploitation. We will capture the 'voice of the young person' to inform the service delivery.
- **Achieving Change Together:** develop the ACT model to reflect a whole family approach.

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2022

Subject: Overview Report

Report of: Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

Summary

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Items for information
- Work Programme

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to discuss the information provided and agree any changes to the work programme that are necessary.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officer:

Name: Rachel McKeon

Position: Scrutiny Support Officer

Tel: 0161 234 4997

Email: rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk

Background Documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations made by the Committee, responses to them, if they will be implemented, and if it will be, how this will be done.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
8 January 2019	CYP/19/05 Youth and Play Services	To request the needs analysis ranking information for the 32 wards in Manchester.	A response to this recommendation will be incorporated into a future report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
9 October 2019	CYP/19/39 Skills for Life	To request that the Council work to ensure that, as far as possible, all settings are involved in Skills for Life, including independent schools, and that officers look into how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children are placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
6 November 2019	CYP/19/48 Youth and Play Services - Young Manchester	To request that clear information on the availability of toilet facilities, for example, in park cafes, be included on signage in parks.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
4 March 2020	CYP/20/16 Improving Children's Outcomes Through Collaboration and	To request further information on how the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust is dealing with smoking around its hospital sites and to note that the Executive Member for Children and	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Paul Marshall, Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
	Working in Partnership in a Locality	Schools will circulate a briefing note on work that is already taking place to address smoking in pregnancy.		
22 July 2020	CYP/20/26 Manchester's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	To request that school governors be included in the plans for schools and that CAMHS and the support on offer be included on the agenda of a future Chair of Governors briefing.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To ask officers to consider how Councillors could help with this work and to circulate a note to the Committee Members on this.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Julie Heslop, Strategic Head of Early Help
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To request that the Early Help Project Manager provide information on the number of families, in relation to the presentation slides on areas of the city and the sustainability of impacts.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Ed Haygarth, Early Help Project Manager
9 February 2022	CYP/22/11 Annual Virtual School Head's Report	To arrange a visit to Wetherby Young Offender Institution and Barton Moss Secure Children's Home, in conjunction with the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.	These visits are being arranged, in discussion with the Committee Chairs.	Rachel McKeon, Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
20 July 2022	CYP/22/36 The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and well-being	To request data on the ethnicity and geographical spread of CAMHS referrals, in order to be able to identify any gaps.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Al Ford, Director of CAMHS/Rachel McKeon, Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer
7 September 2022	CYP/22/41 School Attendance in Manchester	To request that a breakdown of attendance data by school be circulated to Members of the Committee.	A response to this recommendation was circulated to Members by email on 19 October 2022.	Ed Haygarth, Statutory Lead, Attendance and Exclusions

2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions published on **31 October 2022** containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.

Register of Key Decisions:

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
School Admission Arrangements 2024/25 (2022/09/22A) To agree that the council undertakes consultation to gather views on its arrangements and the change in back office process from the current 3, to 1 time per year for the removal of details from schools waiting lists	Executive	19 Oct 2022		Report to Executive D2 - Changes to School Admissions Policy	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education a.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk
Proposal for a new secondary special school (2022/09/22B) To agree that the Council undertakes consultation to gather views on the plans to develop a new special high school as a first step towards identifying a provider for the new school. To delegate responsibility to the Director of Education in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services to progress the publication of a specification for the new school and invitations to sponsor based	Executive	19 Oct 2022		Report to Executive D2 - Development of a new special high school	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education a.corcoran@manchester.gov.uk

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
on the outcomes of the consultation; and identify a preferred sponsor for the new school to be recommended to the DfE.					

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme – November 2022**

Wednesday 9 November 2022, 2pm (Report deadline Monday 31 October 2022)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Update on the 2023/24 budget position	To receive a report on the Council's anticipated budget position for 2023/24, the budget process and draft proposals for any services in the remit of this Committee.	Councillor Akbar Councillor Bridges	Carol Culley/ Paul Marshall	
Annual LADO Report	To receive the annual report of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Annual Adoption Report	To receive the annual adoption report.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Complex Safeguarding	To receive an update report on complex safeguarding work.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.	-	Rachel McKeon	

Wednesday 7 December 2022, 2pm (Report deadline Monday 28 November 2022)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Youth and Play Commissioning	To receive a report on plans for the commissioning of youth and play provision.	Councillor Bridges	Neil Fairlamb/	Executive Report

			Jaffer Hussain	
Early Years Buildings	To receive a report on the structural condition surveys for Council-owned Early Years building and future works.	Councillor Rahman Councillor Bridges	Richard Munns Amanda Corcoran	To invite the Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee
Post-16 Education	To include sufficiency in the post-16 education sector, the destinations of year 11 leavers and data on young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
School Attainment	To receive a report on school attainment.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Overview Report		-	Rachel McKeon	

Wednesday 11 January 2023, 2pm (Report deadline Friday 30 December 2022)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Ofsted Update	To receive an update on progress in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services (ILACS) of Manchester's Children's Services.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Our Year	To receive an update on Our Year, including the transition to 2023 and the journey to becoming a UNICEF UK Child-Friendly City.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
School Governance	To receive an update on school governance.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran/ Ruth Bradbury	
Overview Report		-	Rachel McKeon	

Wednesday 8 February 2023, 2pm (Report deadline Monday 30 January 2023)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
2023/24 Budget Report	Consideration of the final 2023/24 budget proposals that will go onto February Budget Executive and Scrutiny and March Council.	Councillor Akbar Councillor Bridges	Carol Culley/ Paul Marshall	
Provision of Services by One Education	To receive a report on the provision of services by One Education.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See March 2021 minutes
SEND Annual Report	To receive the SEND Annual Report.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Overview Report		-	Rachel McKeon	

Wednesday 8 March 2023, 2pm (Report deadline Monday 27 February 2023)

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Overview Report		-	Rachel McKeon	

Items To Be Scheduled

Item	Purpose	Executive Member	Strategic Director/ Lead Officer	Comments
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Green paper	To receive a report on the SEND Green Paper.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Locality work with Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO)	To receive a report on locality work with MLCO.	Councillor Bridges Councillor T Robinson	Paul Marshall	
Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024	To receive an annual report on the progress of this work.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2020 minutes
Lyndene	To receive a further report on Lyndene in 12 months' time.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See March 2021 minutes
Update on wellbeing and mental health and support for schools and settings and education for children unable to attend school due to ill health	To receive a further report on this and to invite a representative from CAMHS to this meeting.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Midgley	Paul Marshall	See September 2021 minutes
Youth and Play	To receive a further report on Youth and Play commissioning arrangements at an appropriate time.	Councillor Bridges	Fiona Worrall/Neil Fairlamb	See October 2021 minutes
Adoption	To receive a report on adoption which includes what difference the move to Adoption Counts has made in	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2021 minutes

	providing stable adoption placements for Our Children and what happens when an adoption breaks down.			
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Alternative Provision	To receive an update report in approximately 12 months' time.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See December 2021 minutes
Elective Home Education (EHE)	To receive a report on EHE. To include up-to-date figures on children who are not in school, including those whose parents have chosen EHE, with a breakdown by areas of the city.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See January 2022 and October 2022 minutes
School Attendance and Attainment	To receive regular reports regarding attainment and attendance.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Health Visiting	To consider health visiting at a future meeting.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Midgley	Paul Marshall	See March 2022 minutes.
Manchester Sensory Support Service Commission	To receive an update report at a future meeting.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See March 2022 minutes.
Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) Education	To receive a report on PSHE education in schools.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Thriving Babies and Care	To receive a report on thriving babies and care. To include information on fetal alcohol syndrome.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall/Sean McKendrick	See July 2022 minutes

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