



**London Borough of Bromley
Education, Care and Health
Services
Children's Social Care**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON ADOPTION ACTIVITY
2013-2014**

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1. BROMLEY ADOPTION AGENCY

- 1.1 The London Borough of Bromley is a registered Adoption Agency (known as Bromley Adoption Agency). The work of Bromley Adoption Agency is governed by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and associated regulations, The Children and Adoption Act 2006 and associated regulations, and is subject to the Adoption Agencies Regulations (AAR) 2005, 2011, 2012, 2013 and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) 2011.
- 1.2 Adoption agencies are also subject to Ofsted inspections, the last inspection of the Bromley Adoption Agency was carried out in 2009 and the service was judged as 'good'.
- 1.3 This report sets out the structure, functions and the activity of the Adoption Agency during 2013 – 2014. It shows that adoption performance is good and is improving.

2. BROMLEY ADOPTION SERVICE

- 2.1 The Bromley Adoption Service is a borough wide service managed within the Social Care Division of Education, Care and Health Department. It has developed close links with other borough wide services and key stakeholders. The work of the Adoption Service contributes to improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough.
- 2.2 The Adoption Service is responsible for all the adoption work undertaken within the Department. This involves domestic, inter-country and step-parent adoption; birth parent counselling; post placement and post adoption support and a range of intermediary services.
- 2.3 The Adoption Service, sits within the Education ,Care and Health Department and has an Adoption Assessment and Family Finding team and a Post-adoption Support team. The Adoption Service has a total of 11.0 FTE managerial and social work staff. Additionally the team has 2.0 FTE administrative staff who offer day to day business support to staff and also administer the letterbox contact arrangements and archiving of files.
- 2.4 The managerial and social work staff within the Adoption Service take lead responsibility for different aspects of the service, namely recruitment and preparation of prospective domestic adopters, family finding for looked after children with an adoption plan and adoption support services. The team provides a duty service for prospective adopters and offers consultancy on adoption matters to social workers from the Referral & Assessment, Safeguarding and Looked After Children Teams.

- 2.5 During 2013/14, due to Deputy Group Manager in Post- Adoption team remaining vacant, the Group Manager directly managed staff that have a dedicated role in providing post adoption support services including letterbox, support to direct contact arrangements and independent support to birth families affected by adoption. One of the adoption support senior practitioners in the team acted as nominated Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA) for the agency. Other adoption support senior practitioners in the team take a lead role in providing other services such as birth records counselling and adoption support work.
- 2.6 During 2013/14, the Deputy Group Manager- Assessment and Family Finding team acted as the Agency Adoption Adviser and directly managed the staff involved in family finding for children with an adoption plan, adopter recruitment, assessment and approval and supporting adopters post-placement / pre adoption order, Inter-country adoption and step-parent adoption assessments.
- 2.7 One of the adoption senior practitioners in the Assessment and Family Finding is the nominated Stage 1 Lead for adopter recruitment and training. Other team members take lead roles in providing other services such as inter-country and step-parent adoption.
- 2.8 The Adoption Agency Advisor plays a key role in ensuring the effective running of the Adoption Panel, providing a quality assurance role in relation to reports being prepared for panel and for providing specialist advice to staff within Safeguarding and Looked after Children Teams in relation to adoption work.
- 2.9 There have been significant & challenging legislative changes to the adopter approval process in the last year. The revised statutory Adoption Guidance issued in February 2011 and further amended in late April 2011 and again in July 2013, with a new Chapter 3 on work with prospective adopters, has framed the adoption work undertaken this year.
- 2.10 In order to implementing the new legislative framework, our agency have put new adoption assessment and approval processes in place and revamped all the forms, information packs and the format and frequency of the learning and training workshops to comply with the reduced timescales for adopters' training and assessment.
- 2.11 During 2013/14 Bromley continued to be a member of the South East Adoption Consortium. The Group Manager and the Deputy Group Manager attended the quarterly meetings of the Consortium Managers as well as representing Bromley at the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and London Councils quarterly meetings for adoption and fostering agencies.

2.12 During 2013/14 the adoption records were migrated onto CareFirst (locked down to the adoption agency to comply with the Adoption regulations). All team members were trained in using CareFirst. Managers have put in place CareFirst reporting arrangements to support improved performance monitoring.

3. CHILDREN WITH AN ADOPTION PLAN AND AWAITING A MATCH/PLACEMENT

3.1 As at the beginning of the financial year (**1st April 2013**), **40 children were subject to an adoption plan and waiting for an adoption placement**. Their plans for adoption were approved in the Adoption Panel and via the Agency Decision making mechanism which was brought into force in November 2012.

3.2 Out of the **40 children awaiting a placement** at the beginning of the financial year 2013/14, 27 children had their adoption plan approved in the year 2012/13 whilst the other 13 children had had their adoption plan approved in the previous year 2011/2012.

3.3 Out of the cohort of 40 children, **5 children had significant levels of special needs**, with three of them being case managed in the Children with disabilities team.

3.4 In terms of the children's ethnic background, out of the 40 children:

- 32 were of White British heritage
- 3 of other White background
- 3 of mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage
- 1 of mixed White and Black African heritage
- 1 of Black African heritage

3.5 **In the cohort of 40 children, there were:**

- **6 sibling groups of two** (12 children)- where the siblings required a placement together
- **2 sibling groups of three** (6 children)- where the siblings required two separate placements (2+1) due to children's varying needs
- **1 sibling group of four** (4 children) requiring a placement together
- **18 individual children**

3.6 A Further **18 children** became subject to Adoption plans in 2013/2014;

In the cohort of 18 children, there were:

- **2 sibling groups of three** (6 children)- where the siblings required a placement together
- **12 individual children**

3.7 In terms of the **children's ethnic background**, out of the 18 children:

- 10 were of White British heritage
- 6 of mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage
- 1 of other White background
- 1 of Black British heritage

3.8 In terms of **children's age**, the youngest child in the cohort of 18 was aged 5 months at the time the decision for adoption was made and the eldest child in the cohort was aged 8.

3.9 Of the **total of 58 children with an adoption plan and awaiting an adoption placement** we worked with during the year 2013/14 (18 new decisions and 40 carried over from 2012/13):

- **26 children were matched with an adoptive family** during the year 2013/14 (of which 25 children were also placed with their adopters during the year and 1 child was awaiting placement as on 31st March 2014)
- **13 children had their adoption plan rescinded** during 2013/14 as follows:
 - 8 plans were rescinded where Court did not make the placement Order (1 sibling group of four, one sibling group of three and 1 individual child)
 - 4 plans were rescinded as these were historical cases where the Court did not grant the Placement order or the child's care plan had changed and the adoption plans for the children had not been rescinded
 - 1 plan rescinded as child's had achieved permanency through long term fostering
- **19 children were actively being found an adoption placement** as at 31st March 2014.

3.10 At the end of the financial year 2013/14 (*31st March 2014*), a number of **19 children** were subject to an adoption plan and awaiting to be found an adoption placement. These were carried over onto the year 2014/15.

3.11 **In the cohort of 19 children, there were:**

- **1 sibling group of three (3 children)** where the siblings require a placement together
- **16 individual children**- these includes 8 children who were originally are part of sibling groups and for which, due to their competing needs, family finding had to be sought for them individually

3.12 In terms of **children's ethnic background**, out of the 19 children:

- 11 were of White British heritage
- 4 of other White background
- 3 of mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage
- 1 of Black British heritage

4. CHILDREN MADE SUBJECT TO ADOPTION ORDERS

4.1 **Fourteen** children were made **subject to Adoption Orders in 2013/14**. This was a decrease from seventeen who were subject to Adoption Orders in the previous year. The decrease is accounted for by court delays and delays in the legal process and completion of the required Court reports.

4.2 A new process has been agreed between the Adoption and the Looked after Children teams and our legal department in order to avoid unnecessary delays in the future. Performance is being monitored by managers.

4.3 **Out of the 14 children subject to an Adoption order:**

- 2 were sibling groups of two (4 children) and 10 were individual children
- 7 children were placed with adopters within the same financial year, 2013/14 and 7 were placed with adopters in the preceding year 2012/13
- 3 children had significant level of special needs and were adopted by their foster carers (1 sibling group of two and 1 individual child)

4.4 In terms of the **children's age**, out of the 14 children:

- 6 children were aged 12-23 months
- 6 children were aged 2 to 5 years
- 2 children were older than 5 years

4.5 Out of the 14 children, the eldest child was aged 9 at the time the Adoption order was granted and the youngest child was aged 14 months.

4.6 In terms of **children's ethnic background**, out of the 14 children:

- 10 were of White British heritage
- 2 were of Asian / British/ Bangladeshi
- 1 of Black British Caribbean heritage
- 1 of Mixed - White/Asian

5. CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION IN 2013/14

5.1 There were **27 Bromley looked after children placed with prospective adopters during the year**. This was an increase by 17 comparing to the previous year.

5.2 In the cohort of **27 Bromley children placed with adopters**, there were 6 sibling groups of two (**12 children**) and **15 individual children**

5.3 **Out of the 27 children placed:**

- **16 children** were placed with in-house Bromley adopters; this included 4 of the sibling groups of two (8 children)
- **4 children** were placed with Consortium approved adopters
- **3 children** were placed with other local authorities' approved adopters under inter-agency agreements; this included one of the sibling groups of two
- **1 child** was placed with Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) approved adopter
- **3 children** were placed for adoption with their foster carers

5.4 In terms of **children's ethnicity**, out of the 27 children placed with adopters:

- 23 were of White British heritage
- 1 of mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage
- 1 of mixed White and Black African heritage
- 1 of Black British heritage
- 1 of Black British Caribbean heritage

- 5.5 Out of the 27 children placed in the year 2013/14, a sibling group of two had been matched to their adopters in the preceding year 2012/13 with their placement taking place in the year 2013/14.
- 5.6 **Out of the 27 children placed in the year 2013/14:**
- **7 children** were granted the Adoption order during the year
 - **20 children were in their pre-adoptive placements as 31st March 2014** and we are working with them and their adopters to ensure they achieve permanency through adoption order in 2014/15
- 5.7 A further number of **9 children** (2 sibling groups of two and 5 individual children) from other local authorities were placed with **7 of our Bromley approved adopters** during 2013/2014 as part of inter-agency agreements.
- 5.8 Four out of the nine children were placed by our Consortium partner agencies and two out the nine children were granted an Adoption Order during the financial year.

6. PROFILE OF ADOPTERS

- 6.1 The number of **adopters approved during the year was 18 units** which was an increase by four compared to the previous year.
- 6.2 Out of the 18 adopter approvals, three of these completed the assessment and approval process under the new Two Stage process which came into force on 1st July 2013.
- 6.3 There were also a number of **17 units approved adopters as at 31st March 2013 awaiting for a match**; these were carried over into 2013/14.
- 6.4 The **ethnicity** of the total pool of 35 adoptive units (new approvals and carried over from the previous year) was:
- 45 White/British
 - 7 Other White background
 - 2 Black Caribbean
 - 6 Black African
 - 2 Asian Indian
 - 1 White Irish
- 6.5 The **relationship status** of total pool of 35 adoptive units (new approvals and carried over from the previous year) was:

- 7 single adopters
- 27 heterosexual couples
- 1 same sex couple

6.6 Out of the **total pool of 35 adoptive units** (new approvals and carried over from the previous year):

- **12 adoptive units were matched and placed in-house** with 16 Bromley children
- **4 adoptive units were matched and placed with 4 children** from our **Consortium** partners
- **3 adoptive units were matched and placed** with 5 children from **other local authorities from the UK** (2 sibling groups of two and 1 individual child)
- **1 adoptive unit was matched to a Bromley child** at panel with the placement planned to take place in the year 2014/15
- **1 adoptive unit was de-registered** at panel as no longer meeting the adoption regulation requirements to be an approved adopter
- **14 adoptive units** were left in our pool of approved adopters as at 31st March 2014; these were **carried over into the 2014/15** financial year

6.7 During the year 2013/14 the Assessment and Family Finding team have also supported **4 Bromley adopters** who have had **7 children** (3 sibling groups of two and 1 individual child) placed with them in the previous year through inter-agency agreements. All but one sibling group of two were granted an Adoption Order by 31st March 2014.

6.8 The new inter-agency placements started in the year and the adopter support inter-agency placements supported in the team during the year 2013/2014 have generated an income of £129,380.17.

6.9 There were **six** new initial step-parent adoption enquires in 2013/14.

7. NATIONAL ADOPTION STANDARDS TIMESCALES

7.1 The Adoption Agency is required to monitor its performance against a range of timescales. The timescales relate to the decision to place a child for adoption, assessing and approving prospective adopters and the proposal to place a child with particular adopters.

7.2 Scorecards were introduced as part of a new approach to address delays in the adoption system, as set out in [‘An action plan for](#)

[adoption: tackling delay](#)'. These scorecards allow local authorities and other adoption agencies to monitor their own performance and compare it with that of others.

7.3 Out of the **fourteen children subject to Adoption Orders**, a number of nine (**64%**) were **placed with adopters within the 12 months of approval of their adoption plan**.

7.4 **Adoption Scorecards:**

A1. The average time taken from entering care to moving in with adopters in days- the scorecard threshold indicator is 547 days.

Our agency scorecard in relation the above 14 children is 559

A2. The average time from Placement Order being granted to being matched in days- the scorecard threshold indicator is 152 days.

Our agency scorecard in relation the above 14 children is 230

A3. The number and percentage of children taking less than 20 months from entering care to moving in with adopters.

Our score card is: 9 children took under 20 months from entering care to moving in with adopters = 64.3%

7.5 Of all the **18 adoptive families** who were approved during the year

- **1 unit had waited between 3-6 months** between the date of their application and the date of their approval decision,
- **16 units waited between 6 - 12 months** between the date of their application and the date of their approval decision,
- **1 unit waited between 12 + months** between the date of their application and the date of their approval decision,

8. THE ADOPTION CONSORTIUM

8.1 The South East Adoption Consortium comprises Bexley, Medway, Bromley, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and Kent. The consortium aims to maximise placement choice for children and to minimise delay in family finding across the consortium authorities by sharing prospective adopters.

8.2 The quarterly management meetings attended by the Adoption Group Manager and Deputy Group Manager are used to clarify and develop policy and practice issues across the consortium. The sharing of local practice guidance and procedures facilitates good working relationships and avoids duplication of work across the consortium. A

key theme of the discussions during 2013/14 has been the implementation of the new Two Stage assessment process and the planning of Consortium Adoption Activity Days in partnership with British Association for Fostering and Adoption (BAAF).

- 8.3 Approved adopters are added to the consortium database after their approval thus ensuring that family finding workers have access to a wider pool of adopters for the children they are finding families for.
- 8.4 There have been practitioner meetings during 2013/14 where social workers meet to discuss issues related to adoption practice.

9. RECRUITMENT AND PREPARATION OF ADOPTERS

- 9.1 The Adoption Service received **185** enquiries to the duty service throughout the year.
- 9.2 **Ten** Information session evenings were held throughout the year (this was an increase by 4 compared to the previous year). The sessions were run together with two of our South East Adoption Consortium partners (London Borough of Bexley and Medway Council) and were all attended by prospective adopters (**45** Bromley prospective adopter units attended in total).
- 9.3 The Information events received considerable support from Bromley's experienced adopters offering prospective adopters an opportunity for individual discussion and learning from their adoption experience.
- 9.4 The Adoption Assessment and Family finding team held **four sets of preparation groups** during 2013/14 (this was an increase by one set compared to the previous year). **Fourteen Bromley prospective adopter units** attended in total. Three of these sets of training (of 2 days each) were run in partnership with London Borough of Bexley and Medway Council as part of the new Two Stage Assessment and Preparation process.
- 9.5 A further **four sets of Stage 1 Workshops on Attachment and Loss** (of 1 day each) were run in partnership with London Borough of Bexley and Medway Council. **Thirteen Bromley prospective adopter units attended in total.**
- 9.6 Our Recruitment Strategy aims to secure the approval of sufficient prospective adopters to respond to the anticipated needs of Bromley children requiring adoption in the immediate future, and as part of the national shortage of adopters.
- 9.7 During 2012/13, the Assessment and Family finding team continued to strive towards recruiting more adopters for older children and sibling groups. These two areas remained a priority for the recruitment target

for 2013/14, putting more energy into focusing on current children waiting for adoptive families and children who are in the early stages of the adoption planning process. By focusing on these specific areas of recruitment, the Adoption Team ensured that any purchase of inter-agency placements was targeted on the 'harder to place' child.

- 9.8 Bromley have recruited families who live outside of the borough as well as families who live in the borough during the year 2013/14. However out-of-borough placements are in most cases more suitable for Bromley children with an adoption plan as opposed to in-borough placements as to reduce the possibility of members of the birth family coming in contact with adopted children or establishing their whereabouts.

10. INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

- 10.1 The Adoption Team is responsible for providing a service to people living within the borough that wish to consider inter-country adoption. Through membership of the Inter-country Adoption Centre (IAC) additional information on inter-country adoption; preparation groups for first and second time adopters and training is provided.
- 10.2 During 2013/14 there **were three country specific enquiries** about inter-country adoption which resulted in initial interviews but did not lead to any further assessments. Each country specific enquirer must be given up to date advice and information about their chosen country. This must be researched as criteria for applicants can change. In addition to country specific enquiries, general enquiries about the Inter-country adoption process were addressed, including statistical enquiries for the Department for Education (DfE).
- 10.3 Our adoption service is also responsible for providing support to applicants waiting for a match. Support was given to one adopter awaiting a match from China during the year 2013/14. This adopter subsequently withdrew as an inter-country adopter due to changes in her circumstances and was de-registered at adoption panel and removed from the DfE list of inter-country adopters.

11. ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

- 11.1 Since the implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 there has been a legal duty on the local authority to provide adoption support services to both adoptive families, adopted children, adopted adults and birth relatives.
- 11.2 There has been an ongoing increase in the demand for such services, as well as an increase in the complexity of such cases.

- 11.3 There have been additional stresses placed on the adoption and post adoption support services due to a lack of capacity within the local CAMHS services to meet demand of specialist adoption focussed therapeutic input to adopted children and their families. Children who are looked after have priority if they meet the criteria for a service. Once adopted, the families must meet the criteria for the general CAMHS service. This area of need has been raised locally with health commissions and also at the London Adoption Board Strategic and Operational groups
- 11.4 All the staff within the Adoption Team is involved in some way with adoption support cases including contact work, work with adopted adults and adoption support undertaken by assessing social workers immediately post-placement.
- 11.5 The service also provides a duty service to respond to enquiries from adoptive families. These may be from Bromley adopters, adopters from other agencies living in the borough or adopters that have relocated into the borough. Some enquiries involve signposting to other services whilst others involve a more intensive assessment of adoption support services.
- 11.6 The post-adoption support team delivered four and co-presented one developmental workshops during 2013/14 and it is envisaged this will increase in 2014/2015. The annual picnic event was held in the summer which was attended by 180 adults and children from adoptive families.
- 11.7 Our agency has embedded the *Adoption Passport: A Support Guide for Adopters* in the adopter information, preparation and support work (a copy of the Adoption Passport is included in the Adoption Information pack). The Passport sets out the support services adopters can expect including:
- Paid adoption leave at similar rates to maternity and paternity leave
 - Priority access to social housing, and access to additional support to cover a spare room whilst adopters wait for their child to arrive in their new home;
 - Priority admission for school places, including Academies and Free Schools
 - A range of adoption support services , including access to counseling, information and advice for both adoptive parents and birth parents.
 - Access to in house training workshops to assist adopters to meet the needs of their adoptive children.
 - Financial support, priority access to social housing and social activities for adoptive families.

- It is a statutory duty to undertake Post Adoption Needs Assessment when requested.

12. EDUCATION SUPPORT

- 12.1 Support to adopters around education comes from the Looked After Children Virtual School and from Bromley's Parent Partnership worker.

13. POST ADOPTION CONTACT

- 13.1 Almost all children being placed for adoption retain some form of contact with their birth families and the Adoption & Children Act 2002 emphasises the importance of supporting such arrangements. This area of work continues to be a significant pressure for the service and one which merits a high level of input as contact managed well can be a critical factor in the successful placement and emotional well-being of the adopted child. It is clear that arrangements for contact have to be kept under review and may need to change and adapt as the child gets older or if there are significant changes within the birth family network.
- 13.2 As at 31st March 2014, **439** letterbox contact arrangements were in operation with 572 exchanges for **195** children. The letterbox coordinator provides the initial point of contact for information, advice and support to all those involved in this indirect contact between adopted child and their birth families. If counselling or intensive support is required they will be allocated for further work.
- 13.3 During 2013/14, the service worked with **53** children in adoptive families where direct contact arrangements with birth families were in place. The contact was mostly with siblings, but there is an increase in the number of direct contact arrangements involving both birth parents and grandparents. Each child will have one, two or more direct contacts annually with one or more parties, total currently 90 contacts. These arrangements continue until the child is 18 or until either party requests a review of arrangements.

14. WORK WITH BIRTH FAMILIES

- 14.1 It is the responsibility of local authority adoption agencies to ensure that birth families affected by adoption have access to independent advice, information and support when the plan for the child becomes adoption. This is provided in Bromley through referral to the adoption support team.
- 14.2 The take up of this service is low and this reflects the fact that birth families are often still in dispute with the local authority about the plans for adoption at the time they are referred. Birth families are also

provided with details of agencies who can offer support other than the local authority but experience suggests that some birth family members only feel able to take up this type of support sometimes years after the adoption has concluded.

- 14.3 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced the provision of an access to information and intermediary service for birth relatives of adopted adults (to complement that existing for adult adoptees) which would trace the adoptee and seek their views on contact. The Adoption Team have limited resources to meet the needs of this service and volume is being carefully monitored to establish demand.
- 14.4 Any birth relative who requests an intermediary service is provided with support and advice and their details are added to the allocation list. There were five such enquiries in 2013/2014.

15. BIRTH RECORDS COUNSELLING

- 15.1 The local authority has a legal responsibility to provide a birth records counselling service, and an access to information (ATI) service, which may lead to an intermediary service and possible reunion. There were **24** new referrals from adopted adults during 2013/14. The waiting time has significantly reduced to two months in 2013/14 for this service although people adopted before 1975 are given priority because of the possible age of their birth parents if they wish to locate them. The adoption support senior practitioners take the lead role in providing this service.

16. ADOPTION ALLOWANCES

- 16.1 The total expenditure on Adoption Allowances during 2013/14 was £398,135. This was primarily to pay regular adoption allowance payments in relation to adopted children. There were in addition one-off payments made towards the costs of introductions and settling in expenses.

17. TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY

- 17.1 Staff within the service were involved in delivering information sessions for prospective adopters or post adoption support training to approved adopters. Follow up training for newly approved adopters on attachment, contact, and explaining adoption to children was also delivered by team members. Specific guidance and advice has been provided to the Safeguarding teams and LAC team staff on the preparation of child's permanence reports and permanency planning.
- 17.2 During 2013/14 the adoption team has attended 39 Permanency Planning Meetings held by the Safeguarding teams and Looked After

Children team and also offered consultancy and advice on adoption issues on .

- 17.3 All Adoption Team members have access to relevant training in order to maintain and update knowledge and skills.

18. ADOPTION PANEL

- 18.1 It is the responsibility of the service to ensure the effective running of the Panels. The Agency Advisor is responsible for effective operation of the Adoption Panel, agenda setting, the quality assurance of panel papers and takes a lead in the recruitment of panel members. Panel contributes significantly to the positive work of the Safeguarding and Social Care Division in planning for children and providing a key quality assurance role.
- 18.2 The Bromley Adoption Panel has met 13 times throughout 2013/14 and heard and made recommendations on a total of 44 cases (this includes adopter and matching cases).
- 18.3 The Panels have met as planned and have been quorate. Panel is kept up to date with practice and legal developments by the advisors to Panel.
- 18.4 During 2013/14 the service has ensured that Panel members' records are maintained to National Minimum Standards, and that all members of the panel benefited of training, have been subject to an annual review and that their DBS checks were current. We have also reviewed the Adoption panel Central list and recruited four new panel members: adopter, birth-parent and social work representatives to comply with current Adoption Agencies Regulations.
- 18.5 During 2013/14 the adoption panel have developed and implemented good practice and quality assurance tools- for example adoption panel feedback and quality assurance forms.
- 18.6 The Panel also established Foster Carer attendance. Their contribution was extremely valued at panel in 2013/14, informing the decision making process in matching cases.
- 18.7 Designing and adoption panel leaflet remains an area of development for the year 2014/15.

19. DISRUPTIONS

- 19.1 No placement disrupted during 2013/14 prior to the final adoption order being made.

20. COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS/ALLEGATIONS

- 20.1 There were no complaints received by the Adoption Team in 2013/14.
- 20.2 No allegations of misconduct against staff nor allegation relating to child protection against adopters were received during the year.

21. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- 21.1 In January 2014, Bromley adoption agency, together with two of our Consortium partners (Bexley and Medway) entered a partnership with "After Adoption" to provide the SafeBase parenting programme as part of a planned adoption support strategy to benefit children placed for adoption by the three local authorities. Bromley will be able to access support for seven adoptive families through the SafeBase Parenting Programme each year for the three years (concluding 31 January 2017).
- 21.2 Adoption Activity Days are an innovative addition to the existing range of family finding and matching practices and allow for adopters to directly meet a range of children waiting to be adopted in a prepared, supported, safe and fun environment. During 2013/14 Bromley adoption agency, together with four Consortium partners (Bexley, Medway, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove) worked in partnership with BAAF to facilitate three *Adoption activity day* events to benefit children from consortium. Two events were planned for 204/15 and one in spring 2015.
- 21.3 An area of development for our Adoption and Fostering Service for 2014/15 to ensure local policies and procedures are in place to enable and support **Foster to Adopt** placements.
- 21.4 The new adoption statutory guidance places a greater emphasis on reducing the length of time children wait for adoption matches/placements. **Foster to adopt** was introduced from 1st July 2013 which has its advantages and challenges. *Fostering for Adoption* places a child, during the period of temporary local authority care, with adopters who are also approved as foster carers. If the court then agrees that the child should be adopted and the adoption agency approves the 'match' between the carers/ adopters and the child, the placement becomes an adoption placement.
- 21.5 An analysis of our enquiries in the financial year 2013/2014 suggest that the largest number of enquiries were generated via the website.

21.6 Reviewing and updating our adoption pages on Council's website remains an area of development for 2014/15. The website appears to be the first place many enquirers access to find out information for adoption and its current design/ pages on adoption do not fully support Bromley's adoption recruitment drive.

22. FUTURE REPORTS

22.1 Standard 25.6 of the National Minimum Standards 2011 requires the Adoption Agency to produce a six monthly report on adoption activity to the Agency Executive, to:

- Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency
- Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users
- Satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

22.2 Arrangements are in place that a report be presented to the Executive Working Party for Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting on a six monthly cycle with an annual report being presented to the Care Services Portfolio Holder following scrutiny by the Care Services PDS.

22.3 In addition, it is a requirement under standard 18.3 of the National Minimum Standards that the Adoption Agency approves and annually reviews the Statement of Purpose and children's guides. The annual report to the Portfolio Holder following scrutiny by the Care Services PDS will satisfy this requirement.