

Annual Report on Adoption Activity

2017-2018



THE LONDON BOROUGH



Bromley Council's Adoption Service believes that every child has the right to a permanent, secure and loving family which embraces their individual needs and differences, including their culture and identity where this is possible.

Mission
Statement

CONTENTS:

- 1. Key Messages & Introduction**
- 2. Early Permanence**
- 3. Children with an Adoption Plan**
- 4. Children Placed for Adoption in 2017/2018**
- 5. Children Made Subject to Adoption Orders**
- 6. Adoption scorecards**
- 7. Panel**
- 8. Recruitment and Approval of Adopters**
- 9. Adoption and Post Adoption Support Services**
- 10. Disruptions, Complaints & Allegations and Compliments**
- 11. Adoption Consortium**
- 12. Adoption Performance 2017/18 in a Snapshot**
- 13. Developments and Ambitions for 2018/19**

1. Key Messages

Following the Ofsted inspection in 2016 a number of areas were identified within the adoption service that required improvement and represented a challenge to the Local Authority (LA). Mainly children were not always being considered for adoption in a timely way and the average time for children to be matched was delayed. Also the model of fostering for adoption was not being used in Bromley.

There has been a noticeable change in the pace of improvement delivery from April 2017 to date which includes increased management capacity and oversight, an established early permanency scheme and much improved timescales for children.

Adoption performance has significantly improved in the last financial year, both in terms of timescales, number of children placed for adoption and adoption placement support.

There were 22 looked after children placed for adoption in the year 2017/2018, compared to 8 children placed for adoption in 2016/17.

Introduction

The purpose of the document is to report on the activity of the adoption service, fulfilling obligations in the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) to report to the executive side of the local authority. It will include performance and developments in Bromley's delivery of adoption services; how the Council is compliant with key national minimum standards and the service offered to those seeking to adopt and those affected by adoption through the provision of adoption support. This report details the work of Bromley Council Adoption Service from 1st April 2017 to end of March 2018.

Adoption is one of the most important and significant decisions that can be made for a child. Bromley Children's Services wants every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For those young children who cannot remain or return safely to their birth families, adoption offers them the best opportunity to experience a warm and loving family environment throughout life.

The adoption of children from care has a high profile nationally, with 2016 highlighting key adoption reforms being implemented. "*Putting Children First: delivering our vision for excellent children's social care* (July 2016)", sets out the programme of reforms to children's social care over the next four years. A critical development is that all Councils are required to combine their adoption functions. This changing and challenging landscape will see Bromley form part of a Regional Adoption Agency within the next couple of years.

The Adoption Service is responsible for recruitment, assessment, approval and support of adopter's pre and post-order, family finding for looked after children with an adoption plan and post-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 Children in Care Teams. The team manages domestic and step parent adoptions; birth parent counselling; post placement and post adoption support and a range of intermediary services. The function of assessment of intercountry adoption applicants is subcontracted to 'The Intercountry-Adoption centre'.

2. Early Permanence

2.1. As part of our local authority's continuous improvement plan, early permanence for children has been a main focus.

A weekly Legal Gateway Panel was created last year and is responsible for hearing all new cases; with the capacity to hear 5 cases at each Panel. This is chaired by the Head of Safeguarding Service and is attended by legal and Group Managers from the fostering, adoption and the Quality Improvement service.

The key aims of the Legal Gateway Panel are:

- To provide management oversight and scrutiny of all cases where a Legal Planning Meeting has been requested by Children Social Care (CSC)
- To provide senior Children Social Care management overview of cases involving children who are at risk of harm and need safeguarding
- To provide consistent oversight and scrutiny in the management of the threshold criteria and the decision whether or not CSC should commence care proceedings or consideration of safe alternatives to issuing proceedings
- To ensure effective early case planning, timely interventions and pre-proceedings assessments

2.2. As a member of the Legal Gateway Panel, the Group Manager for Adoption offers consultancy and advises in relation to the process for early family finding for adoption. The Group Manager for adoption membership to this panel also ensures management oversight and early allocation of permanence cases for adoption.

Similarly for the membership of the Early Permanence Panel. This meets fortnightly and focuses on children and young people entering care in Bromley to scrutinise care plans and ensure high quality and expedience; to ensure that all aspects of care arrangements, permanency and contingency plans are in place. All children and young people coming into care are presented between 6-8 weeks after accommodation. The panel is chaired by the Head of Adoption and Fostering and Adoption and legal and Group Managers from Fostering, Adoption and Connected Persons are also in attendance

2.3. Bromley are proud to be the first London borough to be awarded the '*Working towards Quality Mark*' in Early Permanence and are now benefiting from focal work on consolidating the Early Permanence service.

2.4. Fostering for adoption is becoming an established early permanence practice in Bromley, reflected through five placements made so far (2 placements made in the financial year 2016/2017 and 3 fostering for adoption placements made in the year 2017/2018).

2.5. Fostering for adoption and dual approval /temporary approval as foster carers was also evident in last year's practice. One Bromley adopter was temporarily approved as a fostering for adoption carer for a specific child in the financial year 2016/2017, and in the year 2017/2018 we had one Bromley adopter temporarily approved fostering for adoption carer for a specific child and a further 4 adopters were dually approved via our new Joint Adoption and Fostering Panel.

3. Children with an Adoption Plan

- 3.1. There were 13 children with an Agency decision for adoption in 2017/18, of which 7 were male and 6 were female. Of this cohort, there was one sibling group of 2 to be placed together and 1 child to be placed together with an older sibling who had had the adoption plan agreed in the previous financial year.

The ages of this cohort of children when an adoption decision was made were as follows:

Age	Number
Under 12 months	9
1	1
2	0
3	0
4	1
5	1
6	1

- 3.2. In terms of their ethnic backgrounds, of the cohort of 13 children:

- 10 were of White British heritage
- 2 of White and Black Caribbean heritage
- 1 of Black British heritage

- 3.3. There was a decrease in the number of ADM adoption decisions granted with 13 in the year 2017/18 compared to 21 ADMs in 2016/17 and 23 in 2015/16.

- 3.4. There is also a decrease in the number of sibling groups requiring a placement together in 2017/18, comparing to previous years and an increase in the number of children under the age of one. Bromley undertakes a comprehensive Together or Apart assessment in circumstances where separation of siblings may be required to determine the best permanence option. In this cohort there were some historic cases of sibling groups together with more young children in 17/18 than previous years.

- 3.5. Of the cohort of 13 children who had adoption plans agreed in the year 2017/18,
- 1 was placed and subsequently adopted within the same year 2017/18
 - 7 were placed for adoption within the same year 2017/18
 - 2 children had the decision reverted (1 returned home and 1 had the care plan changed to Long term fostering due to no Placement order being granted)
 - 3 were still waiting to be placed for adoption at 31st March but had already been linked to prospective adopters

4. Children Placed For Adoption in 2017/2018

Adoption performance has significantly improved in the year 17/18, both in terms of timescales and also number of children placed for adoption.

Following an Adoption diagnostic of our performance, a Family Finding Lead role was created in September 2017. This is a senior practitioner with dedicated role in family finding for children with adoption plans from early stages of the child care planning.

The Family Finding Lead undertakes the family finding in house and nationally for all cases where adoption is the plan, or likely to be the plan/ early family finding, working closely with practitioners from other teams, services or partner agencies.

4.1. There were 22 Bromley looked after children placed with prospective adopters during the year, compared to 8 in 2016/17.

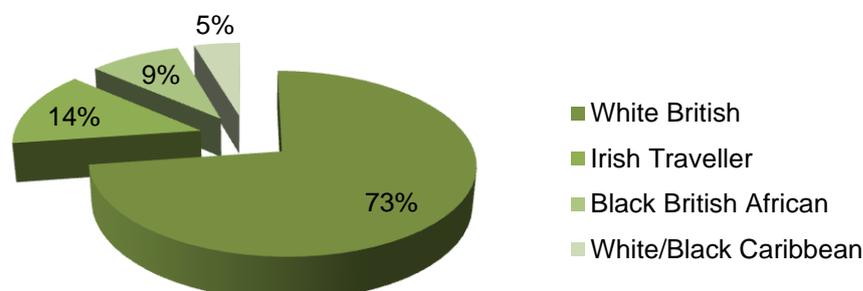
In this cohort of 22 children there were 4 sibling groups and 14 individual children.

In terms of gender, there were 12 male and 10 female children, with the eldest being 6 year old and the youngest 7 months at the time of adoption placement.

4.2 In terms of ethnicity out of the 22 children placed:

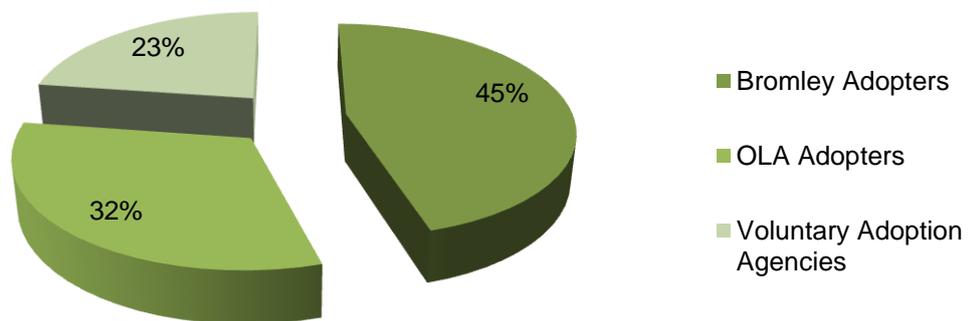
- 16 were of White British heritage
- 3 were of Traveller Irish Heritage
- 2 of Black British/African heritage
- 1 of mixed White and Black Caribbean heritage

Ethnicity of children placed for adoption 2018/19



- 4.3. Of the cohort of 22 children placed for adoption, 2 had been initially been placed with their carer as fostering for adoption placements (one at birth and the other child at the age of 11 months).
- 4.4. In terms of placement provider, of the cohort of 22 children, 10 were placed with Bromley adopters, 7 were placed with adopters from other local authorities and 5 were placed with adopters from voluntary adoption agencies under inter-agency arrangements.

Placement Providers



- 4.5. As at 31 March 2018, there were 8 children in total waiting to be placed for adoption (3 who had adoption plans agreed in 2017/18 and another 5 children whose adoption plans had been agreed prior to April 2017). This was an improvement from the previous year, as 19 children were waiting for an adoption placement on 31 March 2017.

Family finding status at 31st March 2018 for the 8 children waiting for adoption placement was:

- Actively family finding for 4 children
- Not family finding for 3 children as a family had been found, but not yet formally matched at panel
- Not family finding for 1 child as a match had been confirmed at panel but was awaiting conclusion of Placement Order appeal

5. Children Made Subject to Adoption Orders

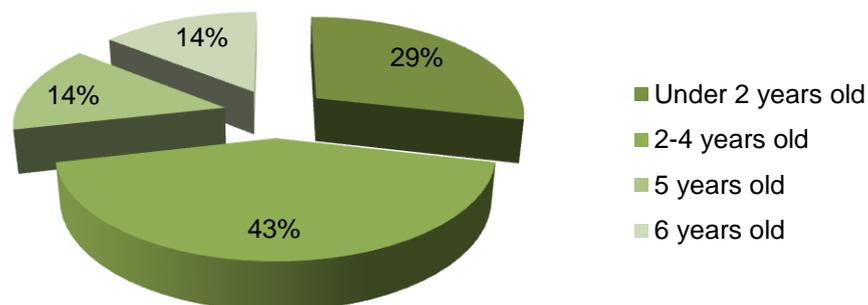
5.1. 14 children were made subject to Adoption orders in 2017/18. This is 10% of children being looked after with 2% less than last year and below the national average of 15%.

5.2. Out of the 14 children subject to an Adoption order:

- 4 children were under the age of 2 years
- 6 children were aged 2 to 4 years inclusive
- 2 children were aged 5
- 2 children were aged 6

Chart Displaying % of Children's Age at Adoption Order

Age of Children Subject to an Adoption Order



Out of the 14 children, the eldest child was aged 6 years and 11 months at the time the Adoption order was granted and the youngest child was aged 14 months.

5.3 Of the 14 children cohort:

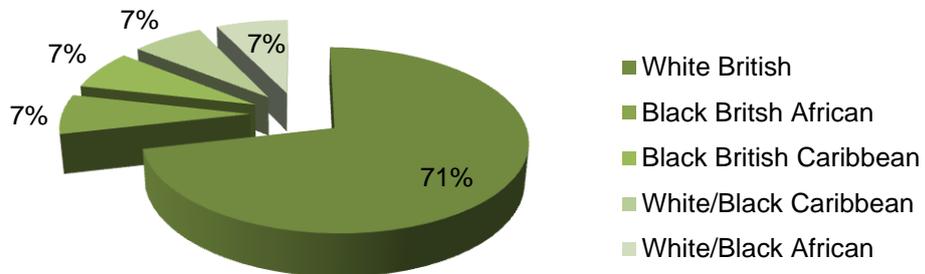
- there was one sibling group of 2 adopted together and 12 individual children
- 6 of the children were female and 8 were male
- 8 of the children had been placed for adoption within the year 2017/18

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

- 10 were of White British heritage
- 1 of Black / British African heritage
- 1 of Black British Caribbean heritage
- 1 of Mixed – White/ Black Caribbean heritage
- 1 of Mixed – White/ Black African heritage

Chart Displaying % of Ethnicities of Children Adopted

Ethnicity of children subject to an adoption order



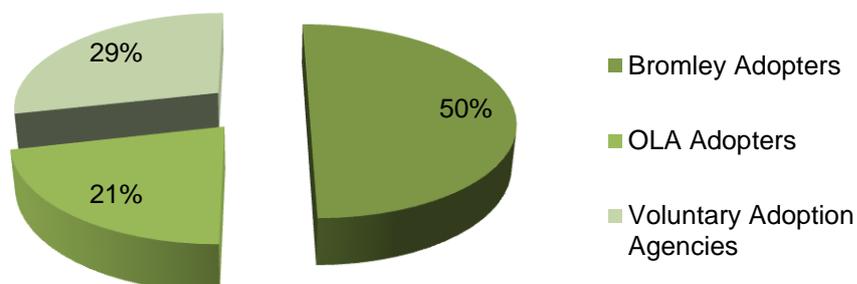
5.5. Bromley has been more successful at achieving adoption for older children and those from a BAME background. Bromley has improved its success rate at placing children of a BAME background for adoption and out performs other local authorities. 52% of Bromley children being adopted are BAME.

This is better than England at 8% and significant improvement on the 2017 3 year performance of 8% (Adoption score card 2017).

In terms of placement provider, of the 14 children adopted in the year 2017/18,

- 7 of the children were adopted by Bromley adopters
- 3 were adopted by adopters from other local authorities
- 4 were adopted by adopters from voluntary adoption agencies

Placement Providers of children subject to an adoption order



6. Adoption scorecards

The Adoption Score card shows that timescales for children being adopted in Bromley are also improving from a low starting point:

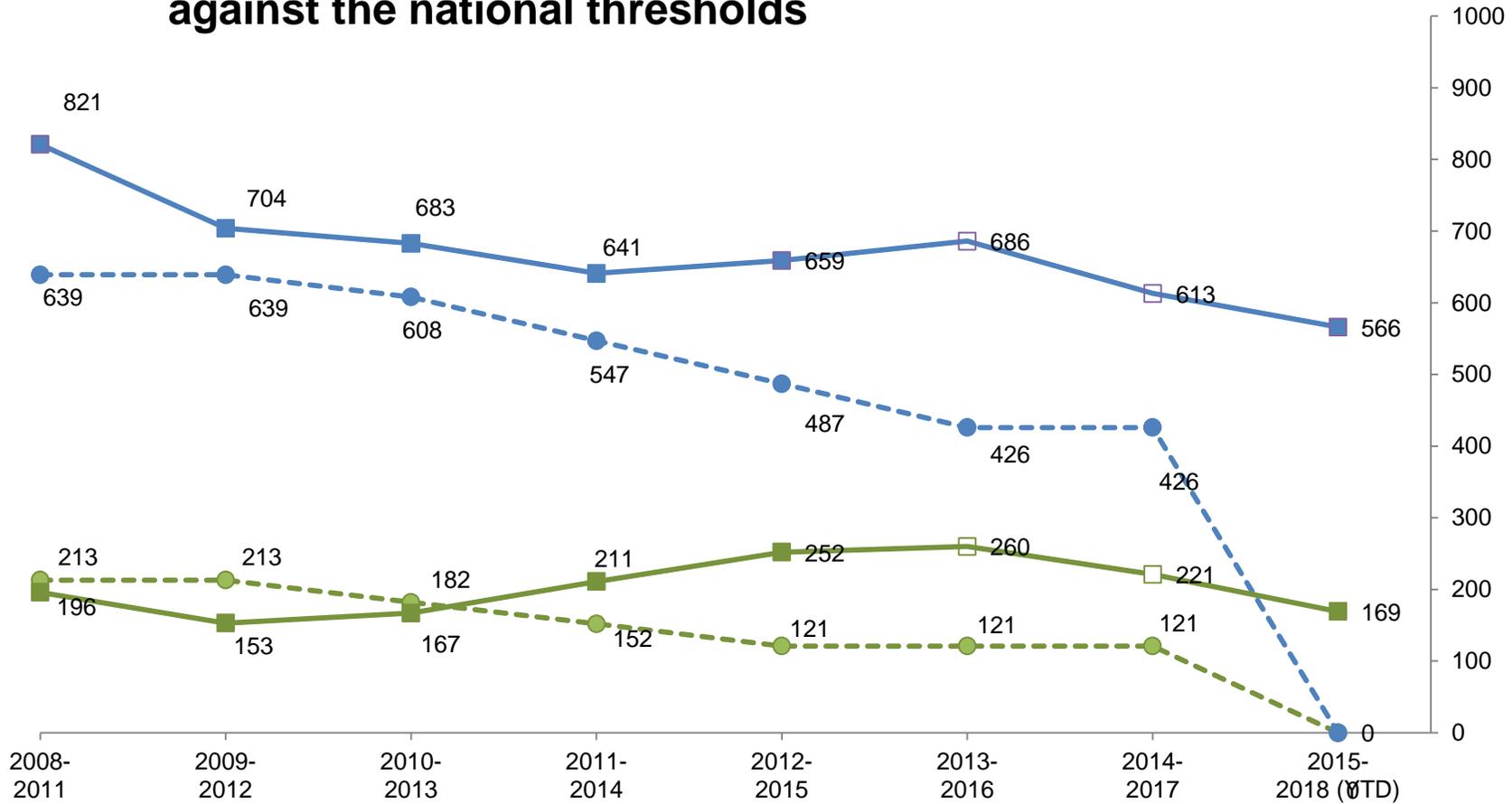
A1: 448 days average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (2017/18), this is better than national 520. (*3 year average 566 (2015/18)

A2: 141 days average time between a local authorities receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (2017/18), better than national 220 (*3 year average is 169 (2015/18) which is a significant improvement on 22)

A3: 43% (2017/18) of children wait less than 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family better than national 47%

The published scorecards continue to be affected by legacy cases and a specific long adoption timeframe of a 15 year old adopted in 2015/16.

Adoption Scorecard indicators for Bromley, against the national thresholds



- Bromley's 3 year average - child entering care and moving in with adoptive family
- National threshold for average time from the LA receiving court authority to place a child and matching with adoptive family
- National threshold for average time from child entering care to moving in with adoptive family

7. Panel

- 7.1. A new Joint overarching Adoption and Fostering Panel was created in January 2018 to ensure that decisions relating to children, prospective adopters and foster carers are not delayed as the joint panel will meet at least every fortnight.

Our new Joint Panel works in line with Adoption and Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Adoption and Fostering and allows for the dual approval of adopters as foster carers under the early permanence scheme.

- 7.2. New panel members with a wide range of personal and professional experience in the fields of adoption and fostering have been appointed on the Joint Panel's Central List.

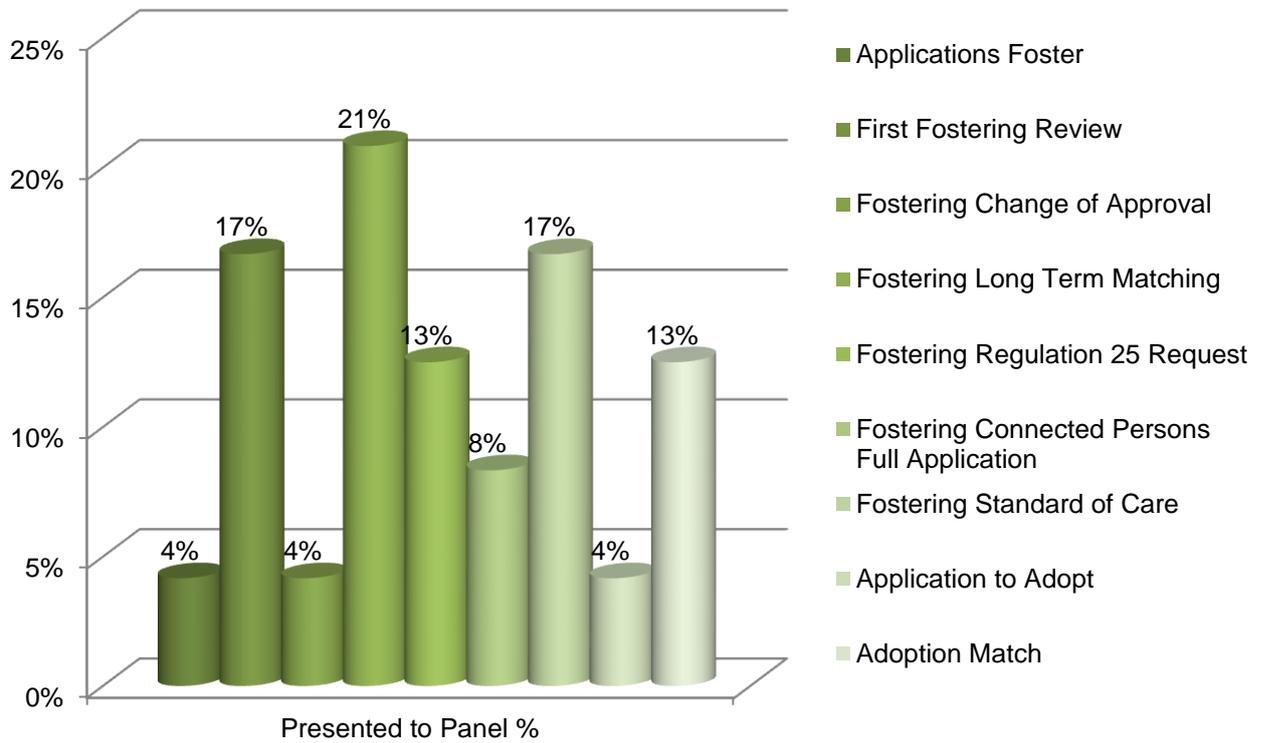
Induction training and professional development courses were offered to panel members, training jointly with the adoption social workers.

- 7.3. The adoption panel have a quality assurance role to support and challenge performance within the adoption service. Quarterly meetings commenced in 2017/18 with the management group, independent chair and vice-chairs as well as other key staff to facilitate good communication between the panel and the agency to focus on continuing improvement.

- 7.4. The panel is served by a fulltime Panel Adviser also a manager in the Permanency service and who is responsible for effective operation of the Joint Panel, agenda setting, the quality assurance of panel papers (including CPR's) 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.

- 7.5. Bromley Joint Panel takes place every fortnight and alongside fostering matters, it also recommends prospective adopters and prospective early permanence carers for approval; matches of approved adopters with specific Bromley children; and the suitability of relinquished children for adoption. The final decision, in all of these cases, based on the panel's recommendation is made by the Agency Decision Maker, the Director of Children's Social Care. The Chart below shows cases presented to the Joint panel since set up in January 2018.

Cases Presented to Panel 1st Jan 18 - 31st May 18



8. Recruitment and Approval of Adopters

- 8.1. Our Recruitment Strategy has been refreshed to increase and maintain a diverse pipeline of adopters to reflect service and national need. The early permanence scheme was incorporated in the recruitment strategy.
- 8.2. Two experienced Senior Practitioners in the adoption team have been leading on Recruitment and Preparation of adopters, working closely with recruitment leads from our consortium partners, to ensure unified, consistent and co-ordinated recruitment activities, information sessions and Stage 1 and Stage 2 preparation groups.

Information sessions and Preparation Groups for adopters were held regularly throughout the year in partnership with two South Adoption Consortium partners Greenwich and Lewisham.

- 8.3. Early Permanency featured in our adopter recruitment and assessment. This is discussed with prospective adopters at point of enquiry and throughout the process: information pack, information session, Stage 1 and 2.

Our prospective adopters with an interest in Fostering for adoption attend the training run by Coram BAAF during their assessment and their family and friends can access the Information group run by Lewisham adoption team, one of our consortium partners.

- 8.4. Bromley's experienced adopters continue to contribute delivering these sessions, offering prospective adopters an opportunity for individual discussion and learning from their adoption experience. Last year we set up an Adopter Forum/ Steering group where adopters contribute directly to our recruitment strategy, publicity materials and adoption practice developments in general.

- 8.5. The number of approved adopters has been maintained from last year, with 9 approved last year, 4 of which were dually approved.

Our need to recruit and develop adopters able to adopt harder to place children and BME remains crucial which includes older children and sibling groups.

- 8.6. Adopter approval timelines is improving for the year 2017/18 but this will require consistent review and rigorous management oversight to maintain appropriate pace and challenge for adopters. A Recruitment Checklist management and reporting tool is used to review progress for adopter assessment on a weekly basis. The ambition is to work within the timescales for the adoption process of 6 months from beginning to end.

Intercountry Adoption

The Adoption Team is responsible for providing a service to people living within the borough that wish to consider inter-country adoption and the work was last year undertaken by the Inter-country Adoption Centre (IAC) through the membership arrangements we have with them.

There has been more activity in inter country adoption last year with 2 children placed for adoption.

The adoption team is also responsible for providing support to applicants waiting for a match, which last year included children being matched and adopted from Bangladesh and India.

9. Adoption and Post Adoption Support Services

9.1. Adoption support offered to adoptive families has been to a high standard and we have been making good use of adoption support fund to access services for adopted children and their families.

A new 5 day a week duty system for both adopter recruitment and support which was introduced in 2017/18 has definitely contributed to offering a prompt, timely and consistent support to our prospective and approved adopters.

9.2. In 2017/2018, the service received 61 requests for adoption support which resulted in full adoption support assessments being conducted. Some of these resulted in successful Adoption Support Fund applications for funding independent therapeutic resources to support families with complex needs.

A total of 43 applications were made to Adoption Support Fund in 2017/18 and funding of £133,014 secured which enabled us to purchase various resources for our adoptive families. This included Family therapy, specialist assessments, sensory integration programme, therapeutic parenting courses, family mediation provisions, play therapy, music therapy. In addition the post adoption support team provided family mediation, therapeutic life history work.

9.3. A successful annual picnic event was held in the summer of 2017 attended by adopted children and their adoptive families. Feedback from the event was extremely positive with adoptive parents having an opportunity to network and children engaging and participating with other adopted children.

Other adoption support services and developments in 2017/18

Video-intervention to promote positive parenting (VIPP):

Three members of our adoption support team are being trained on Video-intervention to promote Positive Parenting (VIPP) via the Tavistock to support with clinical intervention for our children and their families In going forward, VIPP will support adoptive placements of children aged 0-6 either pre or post-order.

Theraplay:

Our adoption support therapeutic practitioner is trained in 'Theraplay' and has offered these services to our adopters. They have been highly effective post order when difficulties in bonding have occurred.

Workshops for adopters:

The team had eleven workshops on offer for 2017/18. These included: Contact, Communicating with children using playful approaches, Transitions, Explaining to children the journey to adoption, Legal workshop, CAMHS services explained, Education workshops, Social Media, Explaining traumatic histories, Re-constructing life history books and How to care about your own adult relationships

The uptake on the workshops for Bromley adopters was minimal last year and this reflects the fact that our adopters do not reside in Bromley and families understandably utilise services in the local authorities in which they live. The details of the workshops are now circulated to We Are Family (adopter support group, South London area) along with local consortium members to extend the offer of the adoption workshops to our consortium adopters.

Education Support

Educational support to adopters is provided by Bromley's Head Teacher of Virtual School for Children Looked After. The Virtual Head supports adoption via workshops and consultations with adoption service to support adopters in accessing the right educational provision for Children Looked After.

Additionally the Adoption Support Fund has been used to provide play therapy resources in schools and this has reduced the need to access Pupil Premium Plus fund being used.

Post Adoption Contact

The letterbox arrangements are managed as part of the post adoption support duty system. At 31st March 2018, the adoption team were managing 563 letterbox contact exchanges for 228 children.

The duty social worker provides the initial point of contact for information, advice and support to all those involved in indirect contact between adopted child and their birth families. If counselling or intensive support is required a designated social worker will be allocated for further work.

There were 14 adopted children with direct contact arrangements in place with birth families members in 2017/18. 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.

Contact arrangements require a great deal of time and sensitivity from the service. The post adoption social worker prepares adoptive family members and birth family members to ensure the best possible outcomes from these contacts. The contacts are emotional and require sensitivity and empathy on the part of the adoption social worker. Direct contacts are an important piece of work for the child as it assists

identity formation, reinforces important attachments made to significant people and promotes the cultural identity. Direct contacts continue until the child is 18 or until either party requests a review to either increase or changing contacts arrangements to better meet the needs of the child.

Work with Birth Families

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. We offer a counselling service to birth parents affected by adoption to help assist them with loss and separation. As part of this work we offer advice with letter writing and at the end of the continuum, preparation and support for *Wishing Well Contact* or with direct contact should there be a plan for this to occur post-adoption. During 2017/18, 19 birth parents received birth parent counselling and support.

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 successfully reunited three adopted adults with their birth family members in 2017/18.

Any birth relative who requests an intermediary service is allocated an adoption worker who provides them with support and advice.

Last year we have established a support group to include all birth relatives who have been affected by adoption. This support group takes place on a monthly basis and is facilitated by a member of the team. It is envisaged that speakers will attend the group as identified by the group members.

Birth Records Counselling

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 17 new referrals from adopted adult's during 2017/18. This is a very important part of the continuum of the adoption process and for many adopted people (particularly for those who were adopted before 1975) as they were informed that they would never have contact with their birth family members. Often this group of people are not even aware of their birth name nor have even seen a photo of their birth parents. This part of the service is a life changing and emotional journey for individuals who have been separated for many years without contact since early childhood.

The waiting time for this service has significantly reduced in 2017/18 to immediate allocation for a service. People adopted before 1975 are given priority because of the possible age of their birth parents if they wish to locate them.

Adoption Allowances

A Finance officer was appointed in the service last year who has been undertaking all Adoption allowance reviews, overseen by the Adoption Group Manager.

A number of 77 adoption allowances were reviewed in 2017/18. This was primarily to pay regular adoption allowance payments in relation to adopted children. There were in addition to one-off payments made towards the costs of introductions and settling in allowance.

This payment is reviewed annually and is means tested.

10. Disruptions, Complaints & Allegations and Compliments

- 10.1. One placement disrupted during 2017/18, compared to none in the previous year.
- 10.2. There was a slight increase in complaints with 5 in 2017/18 compared to 3 in 2016/17, and 2 in 2015/16.
- 10.3. There were no allegations in 2017/18.
- 10.4. A log of compliments was maintained in the last year. Various compliments were recorded from adopters, foster carers, birth parents, Judges or other professionals.

11. Adoption Consortium

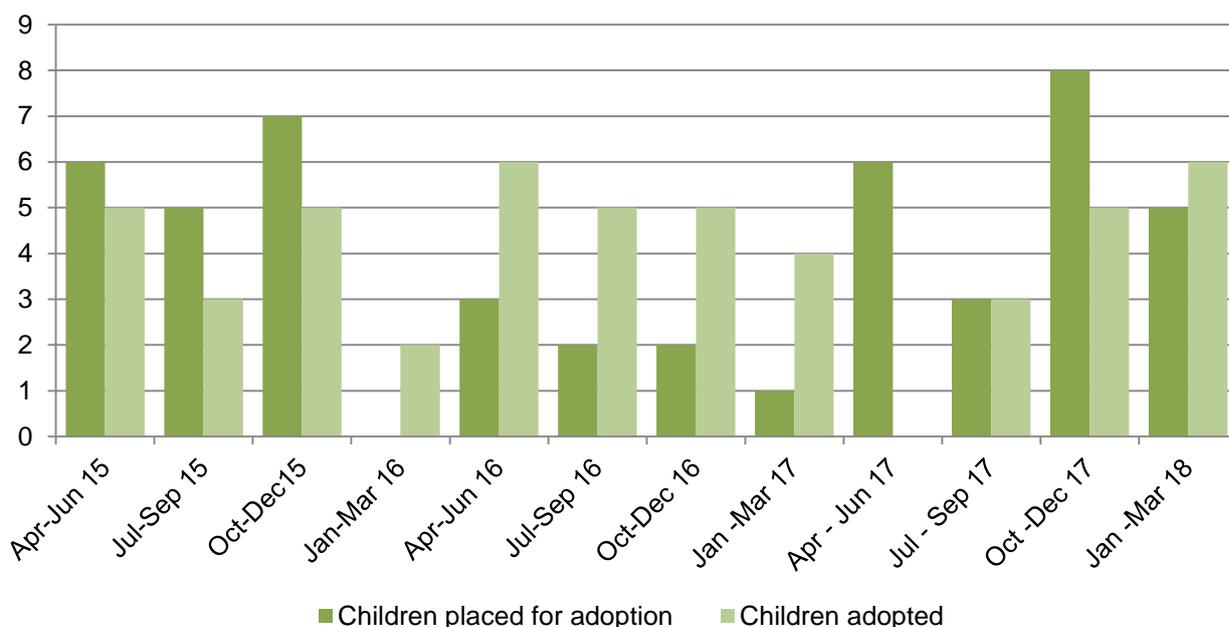
- 11.1. The South London Consortium comprises of seven local authorities Bromley, Croydon, Wandsworth, Greenwich, Lewisham, Lambeth, Southwark and four voluntary agencies Coram, Mosaic, Diagrama and TACT. The consortium aims to maximise placement choice for children and to minimise delay in family finding across the consortium authorities by sharing prospective adopters. We are working closely with each other and sharing family finding/ profiling events or staff training and conferences.
- 11.2. The quarterly management meetings 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.
- 11.3. Approved adopters are added to national database Link Maker under our the consortium section thus ensuring that family finding workers have access to a wider pool of adopters for the children they are finding families for.
- 11.4. A steering group has been established and led by our colleagues in Southwark to develop the early permanence scheme across the Consortium, along with training and support groups available to fostering for adoption carers and led by Coram BAAF.
- 11.5. The key aim as a consortium is for effectiveness of collaboration in matching children to adopters to maximise early placement of children for adoption and to offer a range of adoption support activities through specific partnerships amongst members. This includes:
 - Joint Preparation groups
 - Joint-bids to the Adoption Support Fund
 - Early Permanence training for workers
 - Design and promotion of pan-London events and training
 - Support to '*We Are Family*' group
 - Early Permanence Steering Group
 - Early Permanence Friends and Family
 - Black Adopters Support Group
 - Family finding events

12. Adoption performance and comparative data

Children data- 2017/18 compared with 2016/17 data:

- Decrease in Adoption Orders granted – 14 Adoption Orders granted in 17/18 compared to 20 Adoption Orders in 16/17
- Increase in the number of children placed for adoption – 22 children placed for adoption in 17/18 compared to only 8 children in 16/17
- Decrease in the number of ADM decisions granted - 13 ADMs for 17/18 compared to 21 ADMs for 16/17
- Decrease in children waiting to be placed for adoption – 8 children with an ADM adoption approval not placed on 31 March 18, compared to 19 children on 31 March 17
- Decrease in the number of children adoption ceased to be the plan – 3 children in 17/18 compared to 8 children in 16/17

Children placed and adopted by quarter



Adopters – 2017/18 compared with 2016/17 data:

- Equal number of Adoption Orders granted – 17 Adoption Orders granted in 17/18 and 16/17
- Decrease in adoptive families having a child placed – 9 adoptive families had children placed in 17/18 compared to 11 in 16/17
- Decrease in the number of adopters waiting to be matched - 5 adoptive families approved/not matched at 31st March 18 compared to 8 adoptive families at 31st March 17
- The number of adopters approved was the same – 9 approved in 17/18 and 9 in 16/17
- Increase in the number of applicants in assessment – 15 applicants in stage 1 or 2 at 31st March 18 compared to 8 applicants at 31st March 17

13. Developments and Ambitions for 2018/19

- Continuously reviewing internal monitoring and review processes and systems to scrutinise if they could be more effective and efficient to support us in fulfilling our service's objectives.
- Continue to work closely with adoption stakeholders to develop our Adoption services and improve social work practice.
- To continue to further reduce the timescales for children with an adoption plan and for adopter approval; we aim to improve our Adoption scorecard and be within the top 10% nationally.
- Maintain a pipeline of adopter recruitment by assessing adopters that are reflective of service and national need.
- Create a Life Story and Birth Families Support Worker Role in the adoption service; the aim of the role is offer the continuum of Life story work service from early permanence to post- adoption and to ensure that the birth family's voice is heard across our services (from the start of process Early permanence and follows through to Court team/ Children Looked after services and Post-adoption), to offer information and support to birth families.
- Working closely with CORAM BAAF and partner agencies to use their expertise to further develop our Early permanence service and achieve the *Full Quality Mark in Early Permanence*.
- To continue to develop our new Clinical Services with the support of CORAM Gateway. In June 2018 Bromley was the first London borough to commission the CORAM gateway into their Adoption Service, this led to a clinical psychologist placed within the team for 2 days a week with an aim to increase this to 3 days a week from October 2018.
- Continue to raise standards within our Adoption services.
- Aim for an 'outstanding' adoption service, by working in partnership with the Regional Adoption Agencies to look at best practice and service delivery to ensure we continue to move forward in the right direction and achieve our status as an 'Outstanding' adoption service.
- A significant development and announcement in the Queen's Speech of June 2016, is a requirement that all Councils combine their adoption functions. Bromley is currently reviewing their adoption service in response to the transition to a regional adoption agency by April 2019 and will continue to do so in the year 2018/19.