

From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services
Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 16th November 2021

Subject: Adoption Partnership south east Performance Update - November 2020 – May 2021
Adoption Partnership south east Business Plan 2021 - 2022
Adoption Partnership south east Adoption Panel Chairs Report November 2020 – April 2021

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This paper provides an update on the progress made since the development of Adoption Partnership south east, a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) consisting of the London Borough of Bexley, Kent County Council and Medway Council. The paper includes information about the recently published 'National Adoption Strategy, Achieving excellence everywhere'.

Recommendations: Members of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee are asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the interim report.

Introduction.

- 1.1 The RAA was launched on 1st November 2020 and a legal partnership agreement, signed off by all three local authorities, is in place and outlines in detail the arrangements.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of child and adopter activity in the first seven months and outlines practice developments which have taken place or are in progress.
- 1.3 The report includes two appendices; a detailed Business Plan April 2021 - March 2022 and an Adoption Panel Chairs report covering the work of the four adoption panels between 1st November 2020 – 30th April 2021

Body of the Annual Report and Business Plan

2.1 The interim report focuses on:

- Governance of the RAA
- The child's journey - Achieving permanence for children via adoption in the RAA
- The adopter's journey – Recruitment activity and adoption panels activity
- Adoption support – Achieving permanence for children post placement

- Participation & engagement with adopted children and young people
- An overview of the budget
- Practice development
- National Adoption Strategy

2.2 This Business Plan attached (appendix 1) set out how Adoption Partnership south east intends to deliver its services to ensure timely progression for children whose care plan is adoption and the support that we aim to provide to them, their birth, and adoptive families. It outlines Management and Leadership of the service to ensure the workforce is appropriately equipped to meet the requirements.

2.3 The adoption Panel Chairs' report adheres to National Minimum Standard 17.2 "that adoption panels provide a quality assurance feedback to the agency every six months on the quality of reports being presented to the panel."

4. Conclusion

4.1 The interim report outlines the transition from Kent Adoption Service to Adoption Partnership south east and demonstrates that the RAA is successfully delivering adoption services across the region. It enjoys a relatively stable workforce and staff have adjusted to the changes well and are positive and feel part of their team and the service.

4.2 The Service is looking to consolidate the developments it has made thus far and work towards making further improvements, to ensure children's adoption plans progress as swiftly as possible and they are secure in their adoptive families for the duration of their childhood and beyond.

5. Recommendation(s)

Recommendations: Members of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee are asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the interim report.

6. Background documents

6.1 Adoption Partnership south east Performance Update November 2020 – May 2021 including:

- Adoption Partnership south east Business Plan 2020 - 2022 Appendix 1
- Panel Chair Report November 2020 – April 2021 Appendix 2

7. Contact details

Lead Officer

Caroline Smith
Assistant Director of Corporate
Parenting
03000 415 091
Caroline.Smith@kent.gov.uk

Lead Director

Sarah Hammond
Director Integrated Children's
Services
(East)
03000 411 488
Sarah.Hammond@kent.gov.uk