

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

27 September 2021

Update on Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Coast to Coast

Report of Paula Gibbons, Head of Service, Adopt Coast to Coast

1. Purpose of the Report

To update Together for Children's Corporate Parenting Board on the progress of the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Coast to Coast since its virtual launch on the 1st April.

2. Background

Together for Children and Adopt Coast to Coast are working in partnership as a regional adoption agency alongside Cumbria and Durham County Council's to provide adoption services in their geographical footprint through a hub and spoke model. Though Together for Children/Sunderland continue to have statutory responsibility for their adoption service (as do the other spokes), the Head of Service is accountable for the performance, service improvements and delivery of the agreed outcomes across the 3 spokes as detailed under the partnership arrangements. As lead for quality assurance across all aspects of adoption practice the Head of Service is ensuring the development of consistent practice to achieve our vision:

Children will achieve their full potential within a loving and secure family, and everyone affected by adoption will receive a high-quality innovative and sustainable service.

3. Responsibilities in Adopt Coast to Coast

Hub

The Head of Service has responsibility for the day to day coordination of Together for Children's Adoption Service to ensure the implementation of the agreed joint plans, policies and strategies approved by the Governance Board.

Communications and Marketing Officer – lead for centralised recruitment activity. Year 1 budget is £40K. Supported by new website, Facebook and Instagram.

The new enquiries and outcome system records interests in adoption and automatically allocates to relevant spoke.

Telephone number hosted by Durham.

Spokes

The 3 spokes, Together for Children, Cumbria and Durham continue to provide their current adoption services from first contact.

4. Performance

Spokes combined performance in 2020/21

- 78 Prospective adopters approved
- 24 Prospective adopters in stage 1*
- 23 Prospective adopters in stage 2*
- 18 Prospective adopters approved and not linked*
- 57 Children with ADM/SHOPA*
- 36 Children with Placement Order and no link/match*
- 11 Children with Placement Order for 6 months or longer*
- 20 Children who were placed via FfA/Concurrency
- 130 Children matched
- 60 Children placed via interagency agreement

*as at 31st March 2021

5. Recruitment Activity

- A range of pre and post launch activity has been undertaken to raise awareness of the Adopt Coast to Coast branding as distinct from that of the spokes. The Adopt Coast to Coast website, Facebook and Instagram accounts have had reasonable footfall. In the month of April there were 4624 page views to the website and 986 new users. By mid-June Facebook had 275 followers and Instagram had 105 followers.
- By 17th June 2021, 100 enquiries had been reached.
- The telephone number has had 60 calls and the reasons for these calls are being monitored to improve service delivery.
- Recruitment that has focused on actual children with a plan of adoption (though anonymised) has been incredibly well received and a campaign for a group of 3 brothers with plan of adoption agreed by Together for Children had a reach of 14,607 people via Facebook and it was shared by 117 people.

6. Key priority areas for 2021/22

- To establish Adopt Coast to Coast as the 'go to' agency for those interested in adopting
- To continue to monitor brand recognition to ensure it is recognisable alongside and separately to the LA partners
- To continually review the outcome of marketing activity to ensure best value and best return on investment
- To ensure the prospective adopters' journey is reviewed and streamlined through review and sharing of best practice
- To establish a regional adopter engagement group
- To establish early linking and matching
- To work across the partnership to develop the after adoption support offer

7. Recommendation

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note the contents of this update.