

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 December 2013

Subject: Adoption Agency Six Month Report

Cabinet member: Councillor Laura Mayes - Children's Services

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

The Adoption Statutory Guidance requires Adoption Agencies to monitor their performance and provide reports to the executive of the Local Authority every six months about children who are in the care of their local authority and who are waiting to be placed with adoptive families. Wiltshire Council is a registered Adoption Agency, approved by the Department for Education (DfE).

The Adoption Agency six month report and accompanying appendices outline the work and provide detail on the performance of the Adoption Agency from the 1st April to the 30th September 2013. This report follows on from the Adoption Agency annual and 6 monthly report presented to Cabinet on 18th June 2013.

Wiltshire's Adoption Service is included within the Safeguarding Improvement Plan (SIP).

A robust Permanency and Adoption Improvement Plan (PAIP) has been in place since May 2012, recurrently scrutinised at the Safeguarding Improvement Board (SIB) and the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Operational Group (SLOG).

Wiltshire Adoption Service was inspected by Ofsted in March 2013 and the overall effectiveness was judged to be 'Adequate'. To achieve an 'Adequate' judgement Wiltshire was able to evidence that every standard and requirement had been met. Inspectors reported that '*Wiltshire Council provides an effective, well managed and improving service*'.

The Adoption Service continues to improve. Mark Gurrey Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Improvement Board, at the most recent Board meeting commented:

"There is clear evidence of real progress in the delivery of the adoption function by the Council, both in terms of more children being placed, more quickly and improved recruitment of adopters"

Evidence of improvement can be measured by the considerable increase in the number of children adopted this year (27) and the number of applications to adopt which within the first 6 months of this year has almost matched the whole of last

year's figure.

An increase in the number of Should Be placed For Adoption (SBPA) decisions evidences that decisions to seek adoption for the most vulnerable of children are being made in a timelier manner therefore optimising opportunities for babies and younger children to have the best possible chance in life.

Proposal

That the contents of the Adoption Agency report are noted and accepted.

Reason for Proposal

The 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance and the 2011 Adoption Minimum Standards place a requirement on local authority adoption services to ensure that the executive of the Council receives a written report on the management, outcomes and financial state of the adoption agency to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users. They must also satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration (Minimum Standard 25.6; Statutory Adoption Guidance 3.3, and 5.39).

**Carolyn Godfrey
Corporate Director**

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 December 2013

Subject: Adoption Agency Six Month Report

Cabinet member: Councillor Laura Mayes - Children's Services

Key Decision: No

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Executive of the Council is satisfied that the Adoption Agency is effective and achieving good outcomes for children, young people and service users, as required by the 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance and the 2011 Adoption National Minimum Standards.
2. This report details the activity within the adoption agency for the period 1st October 2012 to 31st March 2013. The purpose of the report is to consider the adoption service's capacity to meet demand for adoptive placements, to detail services provided to prospective adopters and the provision of adoption support services. The report will also look at the role and function of Wiltshire Council Adoption Panel.
3. It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted and accepted.

Background

4. Wiltshire Council is a registered Adoption Agency, approved by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide services, which include:
 - deciding whether a child should be placed for adoption
 - approving people as prospective adoptive parents
 - 'matching' children with suitable adoptive parents
 - arranging the adoption of children
 - supporting adoptive placements before and after the making of an Adoption Order
 - assisting adopted adults to find out information about their adoption
 - assisting birth families wishing to seek information about an adopted relative

5. The work of the Adoption Agency is underpinned by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the 2005 regulations informed by this Act. The aim of this Act is to improve outcomes for children needing adoption. It brought adoption legislation in line with the Children Act 1989 and placed adoption support provision onto the statute for the first time.
6. The Adoption Agency Annual Report was presented to Cabinet on 18th June 2013.
7. Cabinet noted the significant improvements made to the service in a relatively short period of time and paid tribute to the adoption and fostering teams who made this possible. In terms of the data presented, Councillor Mayes commented that decisions made must always be in the best interests of the child. The Leader of the Council added that the Council would always look for a permanent home solution.
8. (a) That Cabinet notes and accepts the contents of the Adoption Agency report and;

(b) That the Council endorses the Ofsted recommendations Action Plan as set out in Appendix 3 of the report presented.

Reason for decision

9. The 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance and the 2011 Adoption Minimum Standards place a requirement on local authority adoption services to ensure that the executive of the Council receives a written report on the management, outcomes and financial state of the adoption agency to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users. They must also satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration (Minimum Standard 25.6; Statutory Adoption Guidance 3.3, and 5.39).

Main Considerations for the Council

10. A Permanency and Adoption Improvement Plan was developed in May 2012. The Head of Service for Children in Care and Lead Commissioner for Looked After Children provide regular progress reports to both the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Operational Group (SLOG) and Safeguarding Improvement Board (SIB). At the most recent Safeguarding Improvement Board meeting, the Independent chair of the Board, Mark Gurrey, commented: *“There is clear evidence of real progress in the delivery of the adoption function by the Council, both in terms of more children being placed, more quickly and improved recruitment of adopters.”*

Adoption Scorecard

11. The latest Scorecard was published in September 2013 and is attached as Appendix (1). The Scorecard reports on activity for the period 2010 to 2013.
12. The Scorecard reports that the average time between Wiltshire receiving a court order to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family was 169 days compared to the national average of 210.
13. Similarly, the average time from a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family was 673 days compared to the national average of 647. This figure is still above the national average, but an improvement on last year's figure of 750 days.
14. Although improvements across the Scorecard can be evidenced, these figures can and will fluctuate as Wiltshire continues to find adopters for children who are more difficult to place because of complex health needs or challenging behaviour.

Adoption Improvement Grant

15. Key priorities for consideration to be funded from the Adoption Improvement Grant include addressing our highest priority needs i.e. those children who are waiting for adoption through a high profile recruitment campaign; accessing voluntary and other agency resources; development of robust adoption support services in accordance with the government's adoption support passport initiative; and the overall strengthening of services. Front door knowledge and skill, legal support and advice, administration, and adoption panel capacity are also included.

Ofsted Inspection

16. On the 5th of March 2013, Wiltshire Adoption Service was subject to Ofsted Inspection. The framework for the inspection followed the journey of the child and timescales as set within the Adoption Scorecard.
17. The report commented that Wiltshire provides an "effective, well-managed and improving adoption service". The report also stated that outcomes for children are "rapidly improving" and 85% of children are now placed within 12 months of a decision that they should be adopted.
18. Six recommendations were made following the Inspection. Progress against the recommendations is as follows:

1.1. Virtual Education Services for adopted children

"Ensure that children are supported to achieve their educational potential; in particular, continue to develop virtual education services to include adopted children (NMS 7.1)" Ofsted 2013

The Virtual School Officer (VSO) for Adoption took up post at the beginning of September 2013. Case work to date has been crisis intervention, including 1 situation to prevent a permanent exclusion. The VSO is working closely with the Educational Psychologists for Adoption and the Adoption team and will be part of the development of the training programme for schools and other professionals, as appropriate.

In addition, the VSO has responsibility for delivering E-Safety to looked after and adopted children and young people, together with carers and adoptive parents as required.

1.2. Life story books and later life letters

“Promote consistent quality and timeliness of life story books and later life letters; in particular, ensure that both are delivered to the adopters within 10 working days of the adoption ceremony (NMS 2.7 and 2.8)” Ofsted 2013

‘Life Story’ and ‘Later Life Letter’ training courses have been delivered to staff with a total of 32 staff attending.

The Adoption Support Team has increased the number of staff trained to deliver these courses to adoptive families (adults and children). IROs have been reminded to monitor the progress of life story work in reviews.

1.3. Recruitment records

“Ensure that the agency retains records of recruitment and suitability checks; in particular that records are kept of telephone verification of references (NMS 21.1)” Ofsted 2013

Wiltshire Council have designed a comprehensive record of recruitment and suitability checks, including telephone verifications of references for all relevant employees within children’s services. To achieve this goal, an interactive spreadsheet has been developed to hold all the required information including DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, DBS review dates, right to work in the UK, references, reference verification records, CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and professional qualifications. The spreadsheet will alert managers when data is incomplete or if a DBS check is due to expire.

The spreadsheet is securely stored in a shared folder with restricted access, for the service managers to complete and for few named managers to review.

A training process has begun for managers completing the spreadsheet which will be completed by December 2013. A system to audit the future completion of the spreadsheets is in place.

1.4. Personnel files

“Ensure that personnel files are well ordered and can be easily audited to show that files contain evidence of identity checks and all the other

requirements of Schedule 3 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 (Regulation 11 (3) (d), Schedule 3 and NMS 21.3)” Ofsted 2013

Since 2006, Wiltshire Council has stored all employee records electronically in secure and easy to access folders. For pre-2006 employees, a project is well advanced to scan and store employee records for people working with children, into electronic format. We have accessed old microfiche employee records which have been scanned and stored electronically. By using a clear file-naming convention, the electronic employee information can be easily accessed.

The original paper employee records are currently stored securely. Employee folders are stored in numbered boxes alphabetically and there is a document confirming all employee folders in storage with the box number that they are stored in.

Should any pre-2006 employee information still be missing, the integrated spreadsheet will clearly identify any gaps in data. This will alert local service managers to take remedial steps to ensure all required safeguarding employee data is evidenced again and re-recorded.

1.5. Statement of Purpose

”Ensure that the Statement of Purpose contains all the information required by Schedule 1 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; in particular, the name and address of the service's manager (NMS 18.1 and Regulation 2, Schedule 1)” Ofsted 2013

Wiltshire Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and updated. It is now fully compliant with NMS 18.1 and Regulation 2, Schedule 1 and is available on the Wiltshire Council website.

1.6. Children’s Adoption Guide

”Ensure that the children's guide to adoption contains a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 2 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; in particular, a summary of the complaints procedure and contact details for the office of the Children's Rights Director. (Regulation 3 and NMS 18.5)” Ofsted 2013

In order to be compliant with Regulation 3 and NMS 18.5, the Children’s Adoption Guide is to be revised. As an interim measure and with their consent, we have utilized Devon County Council’s children’s guide and have inserted Wiltshire Council’s Children Service complaints procedure and contact details for the office of the Children’s Rights Director.

Contingency has been made from within the Adoption Reform Grant to produce our own children's guides. Plans have been made to work together with the Voice and Influence Team to achieve this and it is expected that the guide will be available from December 2013.

The 2011 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Adoption-NMS.pdf>

The 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g0072314/guidance>

The latest Adoption Ofsted report can be accessed in full <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/SC050059>

The amended Adoption Service Statement of Purpose March 2013 can be accessed via <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/adoption-statement-of-purpose-v7-27-02-13-feb-2.pdf>

Wiltshire Council adoption website <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/healthandsocialcare/adoption.htm>

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Cabinet

17th December 2013

Subject: Adoption Agency Six Month Report

Cabinet member: Councillor Laura Mayes - Lead Member for Children's Services

Key Decision: No

Adoption Agency Six Monthly Report 1st April 2013 to 30th September 2013 Introduction

1. The 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance and the 2011 Adoption Minimum Standards place a requirement on local authority adoption services to ensure that the executive of the Council receives a written report on the management, outcomes and financial state of the adoption agency to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users. They must also satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration (Minimum Standard 25.6; Statutory Adoption Guidance 3.3, and 5.39).

Background

2. Wiltshire Council is a registered Adoption Agency approved by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide services, which include:
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 - supporting adoptive placements before and after the making of an adoption order
 - assisting adopted adults to find out information about their adoption
 - assisting birth families wishing to seek information about an adopted relative
3. The work of the Adoption Agency is underpinned by the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and the 2005 regulations made under this Act 2005. The aim of this Act was to improve outcomes for children needing adoption, it brought adoption legislation into line with the Children Act 1989 and placed adoption support provision onto the statute for the first time. The work of the adoption agency therefore spans the whole of children's social care services.

Adoption staff and key members

Name	Designation
Carolyn Godfrey	Corporate Director
Terence Herbert	Associate Director Children's Social Care
Lin Hitchman	Head of Children in Care
Owen Evans	Adoption Team Manager
Alison Lewis Debbie Harper	P/T Assistant Team Manager Adoption – Adoption Support P/T Assistant Team Manager Adoption – Recruitment & Assessment
Sarah Dainty	Concurrency Officer
Adoption Recruitment and Assessment Charlotte Gilbertson Leonie McKenna Denise O'Connor Vacant Post Pauline Fairman Jane Priborsky	Qualified Social Worker Qualified Social Worker P/T Qualified Social Worker P/T Qualified Social Worker P/T Qualified Social Worker P/T Qualified Social Worker
Adoption Support Vacant Post Vacant Post (temp in post until 13 December 2013) Vacant Post (0.5 FTE) Ann Mazzotta Catherine Bull Danielle DeSilva (temp 12 month post)	Qualified Social Worker Qualified Social Worker P/T Qualified Social Worker Unqualified Social Worker Unqualified Social Worker Unqualified Social Worker

4. All the Managers, Adoption Social Workers and Adoption Support Co-ordinators hold the minimum social work qualification and have had a minimum of 2 years' experience in children and families social work or a closely related field.

Adoption Services Provided

5. As an Adoption Agency, Wiltshire provides a range of adoption services to children needing adoption, prospective adopters, adoptive parents, birth parents, birth families, adopted adults and the general public.
- The Adoption Team recruit, train, assess and provide support to prospective adoptive parents.

- The Adoption Team provides a counselling service for adopted adults who wish to find out information about their adoption.
- The Adoption Team, through a contract with a Voluntary Adoption Support Agency (VASA), provides an intermediary service for birth relatives and adopted adults who wish to trace each other.
- The Adoption Team provides a consultation service to the childcare teams on matters relating to adoption placements.
- The Adoption Team, through a contract with an external provider offers a full range of services to step-parents who wish to adopt, including the preparation of a report for court.
- The Adoption Team, through a contract with PACT offers a full range of services to inter-country adopters including adoption support.

Adoption Support Service

6. The Adoption Support Service has a range of services in place to support adoptive families and their children including counselling, advice and information, workshops/support groups, family days and events, an annual conference, a newsletter, financial support and links with Wiltshire's Educational team and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).
7. The service also has links with various independent adoption support agencies and is in the process of developing a parenting course for Wiltshire adopters and special guardians.
8. Wiltshire have a contract for adoption support with PACT (Parents and Children Together) this compliments in-house adoption support services and is a flexible contract to allow the agency to respond to complex and varied support needs appropriately and effectively.
9. Contact is promoted as a positive experience for the child and as maintaining an important connection with the child's past for their future identity. An allocated adoption social worker provides support to birth relatives and adoption support provides support for adopters. An independent social worker specialising in birth relative support is offered to birth parents or other relatives who are losing a child/ren to adoption. This worker is provided through PACT. Birth parents, siblings and grandparents are offered individual and occasionally group work.
10. Wiltshire Council supports ongoing contact arrangements as required. There is a designated worker within the adoption team who manages direct contact arrangements post-adoption.
11. The Adoption Support Service facilitates both direct and indirect contact (through the post-box service) between birth families, children and significant

others.

12. The adoption service provides post adoption counselling and support for adopted people living in Wiltshire. Learning from this informs current practice development.
13. PACT provides an intermediary service for adopted Wiltshire residents, and an intermediary service for birth relatives who are care leavers and have an adopted sibling. Individual work and some group work is offered for young people touched by adoption.
14. The Adoption Support service has developed Life Story work and provided workshops for staff, adopters and birth family to ensure that all adopters have a high quality life story book for their child and all adopted children have their life history recorded in an accessible, high quality and flexible format.
15. The Adoption Support Service undertakes assessments of need for adoption support, including financial support. The Adoption Support Service also undertakes assessments of need for Special Guardianship support services.
16. There are two Adoption Support Co-ordinator posts, each covering half of the county. They are responsible for ensuring that every child being placed for adoption has an Adoption Support Plan in place and for ensuring that any of the parties to adoption are provided with an assessment for adoption support services, if requested.
17. They each line-manage an Adoption Support Worker, whose role is to provide practical support to adopters. There will be additional service pressures during 2013/2014 as the government implements the adoption passport initiative whereby adopters may be eligible for paid adoption leave, priority access to social housing, priority admission for school places and support services including counselling. Wiltshire has planned for the increase in demand for adoption support using the adoption improvement grant, however this has also been flagged up as an ongoing service pressure post 2014 and plans will be put in place to ensure we are able to cope with increased demand.
18. The Adoption Post-Box service is managed by the Adoption Support Co-ordinators and continues to grow; almost every adopted child has some form of ongoing contact (direct or indirect) with birth relatives. The Post-Box service acts as the channel through which communications flow between the adoptive family and the birth family.
19. There are currently 203 active post box arrangements

There are currently 37 direct contact arrangements. Of these:

- 20 are with birth parents
- 11 with siblings
- 6 with grandparents/extended family members

The Service to Prospective Adopters

20. The procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters are set out in detail in our Adoption Agency procedures, which are available on the Adoption Service Website. All enquiries regarding adoption are welcome; the adoption team operate an open and inclusive enquiry process. All enquirers speak with a specialist adoption worker. There is access to information about adoption and to the adoption team via an enquiry line, via the website or via direct office number.

Adoption Service Performance 1st April to 30th September 2013

21. This report outlines statistical information gathered during the course of the last six months. It will then move on to consider the partnerships Wiltshire has with other key agencies and how as a collective, the needs of children and their birth families and prospective adopters are met.

Adoption Panel statistics 1st April to 30th September 2013

Service Activity

22. The chart below outlines year on year activity within the adoption team and provides detail regarding activity 1st April to 30th September 2013. Included in the statistics is the information required to be presented to the 'executive' members in accordance with Adoption National Minimum Standard 25.6:

- Number, type and age of children waiting for an adoptive placement
- How long they have been waiting
- Agency's responsiveness in relation to applications to adopt (set against timescales outlined in chapter 3, paragraph 1)
- Progress in relation to recruitment
- Number of children placed for adoption since the last 6 monthly report
- Number of children who have experienced disruptions

Children:

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Should be Placed for Adoption					
Legal Status at That Time					
	Section 20	1	4	9	10
	Interim Care Order	11	22	26	13
	Care Order	3	1	2	0
	None			1	0
	Total	15	27	38	23

23. The six monthly return figures demonstrate a significant increase in numbers of children where Should Be Placed for Adoption (SBPFA) is considered the

appropriate way forward. This is as a result of clearer care planning and timely decisions being made by the Agency Decision Maker. Activity thus far indicates that we will surpass last year's figure:

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Should be Placed for Adoption					
Ethnic Origin					
	White British	15	24	27	20
	Mixed/Other	6	3	11	3

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Should be Placed for Adoption					
Age					
	0-12 Months	6	5	13	10
	12-24 Months	6	4	7	3
	2-4 Years	2	15	13	4
	5-10 Years	1	3	5	6
	11 Years and Over	0	0	0	0
	Total	15	27	38	23

24. The table below denotes improvement in the care planning process, the age of children at the point where the decision to proceed to adoption has reduced.

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Children Matched					
Age					
	0-12 Months	4	2	4	4
	12-24 Months	3	5	7	5
	2-4 Years	6	10	11	4
	5-10 Years	7	2	5	1
	11 Years and Over	0	0	0	0
	Total	20	19	27	14

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Children Matched					
Ethnic Origin					
	White British	18	17	22	10
	Mixed / Other Ethnicity	4	2	5	4

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
SWAC Matches					
		0	1	3	4

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Nat. Adoption Register Matches				
	0	0	1	0

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Children Matched Out Of County				
	3	0	4	5

Details of children Adopted		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Children for Whom Adoption Achieved by Age at Adoption Order					
Aged					
	0-12 Months	0	1	0	1
	12-24 Months	2	2	5	5
	2-4 Years	6	12	7	15
	5-10 Years	6	2	2	5
	11 Years and Over	1	0	0	1
	Total	14	17	14	27

26. There were 14 Adoption Orders granted during 2012 to 2013, this was a reduction on the 17 Orders granted the previous year. This year for the period 1st April to 30th September 2013, 27 Adoption Orders have been granted. Children adopted range from children who have become looked after during 2012/2013 and those children who have been waiting longer due to complex health, sibling groups or challenging behavior.
27. The data suggests that we are improving timescales for the younger children who have recently become first looked after. Of the 5 children who first became looked after in 2012, 4 of the 5 were aged 1 at time of adoption, and 1 of the 5 children was 9 months old at adoption. In all 5 cases, the number of days between care and placed (Indicator A1) was below the England 3 year average (ranging from 0 days to 454 days, England 3 year average 647 days). In all 5 of these cases, the number of days to Match (Indicator A2) was low (ranging from 0 days to 40 days, England 3 year average 210 days).

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Adoption Order by Ethnic Origin of Child					
Ethnic Origin					
	White British	14	15	14	21
	Mixed/Other Ethnicity	0	2	0	6

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	1/10/12 to 31/3/13	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Rescission of Decision to Place for Adoption					
	5	5	1	0	0

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	1/10/12 to 31/3/13	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Formally placed for Adoption					
			27	18	12

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	1/10/12 to 31/3/13	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Formally Placed for Adoption within 12 Months of Decision that they Should be Placed for Adoption					
	12	13	25	13	9

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	1/10/12 to 31/3/13	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Disrupted placements					
			1	1	0

Adopters:

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	1/10/12 to 31/3/13	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Applications to adopt					
Number received			74	45	61
Written information sent within 5 days			50	29	56
Invited to information session within 2 months			34	18	54
Information received by Panel within 6 weeks of PAR being completed			26	15	14
Panel recommendation made within 8 months of receipt of formal application			22	13	14

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Adopters Approved				
	20	17	27	16

28. It is expected that Wiltshire will reach the target set of 50 approved adopters for the year 2013/2014. Although the figure of 16 has been the number achieved so far this year, many more adopters are being assessed and are at different stages of the assessment and approval process.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Adopters Approved; Ethnic Origin				
Ethnic Origin of Individuals				
White British	38	29	54	29
Mixed/Other Ethnicity	2	2	0	3

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Approved Adopters; Relationships of Adopters					
	Single	0	2	0	0
	Married/Co-Habiting	19	15	27	16
	Civil Partnership	1	0	0	0

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Approved Adopters that Have Withdrawn					
		1	0	0	0

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Rescission of Approval by Panel					
			3	3	0

		2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	01/4/13 to 30/9/13
Brief Assessments					
		1	0	0	0

29. As at 30th September 2013 there were 37 approved adoptive families, of these:
- 15 were waiting for placements
 - 13 had Wiltshire children placed with them
 - 9 had children from other agencies/local authorities placed with them
30. As at 30th September 2013, there are 62 children in Wiltshire where adoption is the likely way forward:
- 0 – 5 years: 46 children,
 - 6-9 years: 15 children
 - 10+ years: 1 child
31. These children will currently be at varying stages of the care planning process and of course not all children will go on to be adopted. This can be for a number of reasons for example legal challenge, change of care plan or circumstance. However as assessment and permanence planning for children continues to improve, the number of children requiring adoptive placements will rise.

Quality Assurance

32. The Independent Safeguarding Unit (ISU) Service Manager has implemented a robust monitoring system in respect of permanence planning.
33. Compliance with permanency policy is now routinely monitored via Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) supervision. In addition the Service

Manager undertakes a dip sample of LAC second reviews in supervision for all IROs and Chairs.

- All 'drift' cases identified are discussed in IRO supervision and social workers are informed of cases where lack of progress has been identified.
- Any child without a permanency plan at the second review immediate alert to team manager.
- All IROs have attended the permanency planning training.
- 3 IROs have attended the concurrent planning training.
- IROs have attended development tutorials on permanency planning and expected practice
- Capacity of IROs has increased through the appointment of 1 additional permanent staff post.

34. The Head of ISU and Service Manager ISU have currently undertaken an audit of all children looked after under Section 20 CCA 1989 with a specific focus on permanence planning and outcomes, it is intended that this audit process continues.

Finance - Adoption Service Budget Information

35. 2013/2014 financial year:

2013/14 Financial Year	Budget	Projected Expenditure
Salaries & team running costs	559,500	582,199
Carer recruitment & training	17,000	2,598
Adoption Allowances (all types)	869,900	935,144
Adoption Income	0	-62,759
	1,446,400	1,457,182

Adoption periodical payments and Special Guardianship Financial support

36. There has been a general increase in requests for financial support to Adopters and Special Guardians over the year.
37. As at 31st March 2013 there were the following families being supported with ongoing financial allowances:

	Children	Carers
Special Guardianship Order Allowance	58	38
Residence Order Allowance	67	48
Adoption Allowance	159	101

Report from Adoption Panel Chair, 31st October, 2013

Panel Activity

38. Panel activity is shown in the table below, with the last six months highlighted. “Should Be Placed for Adoption” (SBPFA) recommendations ceased to be a function of Adoption Panels on 1st September, 2012, for children where there are current court proceedings. The SBPFA since are for children where adoption is at the parent’s request or agreement.
39. It can be seen that during 2012/13 there was a significant increase in numbers of applications and some increase in the number of matches over the previous year. This increase has been maintained over the first six months of 2013/14.

	Total 11/12	01 Apr 12 – 30 Sept 12	01 Oct 12 – 31 Mar 13	Total 12/13	01 Apr 12 – 30 Sept 13
SBPFA*	30	13	1	14	3
Applicants Suitability to Adopt	17	17	11	28	16
Match	20	14	11	25	13
Reviews of children+	42	37	42	79	45
Rescission of Plan for Adoption	5	1	0	1	0
Rescission of Suitability to Adopt	3	3	0	3	0

*SBPFA – *Should Be Placed for Adoption*

+ *Monitoring the progress of children with a plan for adoption through consideration of LAC Review reports*

Quality of work presented to Panel

40. The quality of reports to Panel has been mainly good. Where there have been gaps in the written information the verbal presentation has enabled recommendations to be made. There has been one deferral by panel for further work during the last six months.
41. Panel has seen some examples of excellent social work practice, with proactive action, including pre-birth, towards securing permanency for children. Where timescales for children have not been met and there has been delay, this has been primarily associated with complex court proceedings. Panel has noted earlier and proactive homefinding, robust timescales set for contingency planning, adopters matched quickly following approval, and the use of ‘fostering for adoption’ arrangements. There have been examples of excellent work with birth families and good matches for individual children.

42. Panel has been aware of the pressure on the adoption team and managers in relation to the adoption reform agenda, including a greater use of independent assessors. Timescales for assessment of adopters have mainly been met and there is evidence of the process becoming quicker, with the quality of the assessment being maintained, on the whole. The new Prospective Adopters Report has been successfully introduced. Prospective adopters are generally positive in what they say to Panel about their experience of the adoption service.

Development Needs

43. The Adoption Panel notes the significant continuing commitment within the agency for improving the adoption service to children and adopters. Feedback from the Panel to the Agency in the last six months has included the following themes for attention:
- 'Finishing off' the adoption work once a child is placed in a permanent home, including completing life story information, formally rescinding adoption plans when they have changed, and prioritising the preparation of reports for adoption order hearings.
 - Improved quality assurance and clear protocols for adopter assessments carried out by 'independent social workers' on behalf of the agency
 - Continuing development in analysis and evidencing decision-making in written reports
 - Ensuring appropriate attention to medical issues to inform homefinding and support needs
 - Development of practice in relation to 'early permanence' (concurrency and fostering for adoption)
 - Improved understanding of attachment issues and applying this to practice in all aspects of adoption work
44. Regular meetings between the Panel Chair, Service Director and senior and adoption managers provide an opportunity to raise and address quality assurance issues.

Key priorities to be achieved by September 2013

45. The key priorities to be completed by September 2013 and our position to date on achieving these are as follows:
- a. Agree and finalise the key dataset which will be used as evidence to monitor progress and improvement of the PAIP making use of the timescales using "The New Adoption Standards, Regulations and Statutory Guidance (England): What's new? What's changed?"
Position so far: dataset agreed and finalised.
 - b. Collate an evidence file for the Permanence and Adoption Improvement Plan (PAIP). Position so far: We have identified evidence needed and are in the process of gathering this. We have also added a

RAG Impact rating to the PAIP, as per the Safeguarding Improvement Plan.

- c. Agree key 3 month milestones linked to key objectives in the PAIP. Position so far: Key 3 month milestones agreed – the last covering report to SIB included our position in meeting these.
 - d. Monitor our progress against the changes being made the Department for Education through the Adoption Reform Programme – changes being implemented, and in light of adoption Legislative and Regulation proposals. Position so far: All actions to meet the requirements demanded by the Adoption Reform Programme are included in the PAIP – we monitor our progress in the monthly Adoption meeting, using the key dataset as a way of evidencing progress. We have led on a process to commission a consultant to carry out an Options Appraisal for 8 southwest Local Authorities (Adoption West) to explore possible sub-regional partnership options for 2014/15.
 - e. Development and implementation of Concurrent Planning Policy and practice guidance (PAIP 1.1). Position so far: This work has already commenced and a policy is expected to be implemented by December 2013.
 - f. Implementation of dual approval policy (PAIP 2.5). Position so far: work has already commenced on developing a robust policy and support plan. The policy is expected to be implemented in December 2013
46. In May 2013 the government confirmed it is to proceed with a series of legal changes to speed up the adoption system through encouraging more prospective adopters and ensuring adopters are approved more quickly through the implementation of a two-stage approval process. The changes mean that local authorities will need to have robust systems in place to ensure prospective adopters are approved to adopt within six months, and introduces responsibilities on local authorities to have in place a 'fast track' procedure for approved foster carers and previous adopters who wish to adopt. Wiltshire Adoption Team implemented the new assessment process from June 2013. Training for all staff involved in the assessment of prospective adopters and for adoption panel members has been a priority to ensure a smooth transition.

Environmental and climate change considerations

There are no environmental or climate change implications arising from this report

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

There are no equalities impact implications arising from this report

Risk Assessment

47. Risks are regularly reviewed and monitored with appropriate action plans in place where required

Public Health

48. There are no public health implications arising from this report

Safeguarding considerations

Continued improvements in adoption and permanence planning ensure that looked after children are placed with suitable adoptive carers within timescales, that meet their long term needs and in a manner, which minimises the risk of placement breakdown. Conference and Review Officers provide an independent monitoring and scrutiny function to ensure all children with plans for adoption have their care plan reviewed within 1 month of placement with prospective adopters and that the plan is reviewed within statutory timescales until the adoption order is granted.

Financial Implications

47. This report details the activity for the service for the period to 31st October 2013. There are no additional financial implications arising from the report itself. The capacity of the service and the financial implications of any increase in activity are taken in to account within the budget setting process and monitored throughout the year.

Legal Implications

Wiltshire Council as a registered adoption agency approved by the DfE, has a legal duty to present to make regular and timely reports in accordance with the Adoption Statutory Guidance requirements pertaining to the monitoring, performance, management, outcomes and financial state of the adoption agency. This report ensures that the legal requirements are being complied with on an on-going basis and as such there are no legal implications arising.

Conclusions

48. This has been an extremely busy and productive six month period and there are still many challenges ahead. The outcome of the Ofsted Inspection, improvements in the Scorecard and the positive feedback from the Independent chair of the Safeguarding Improvement Board all evidence that improvements are being made across children's services in respect of permanence and adoption planning, and that Wiltshire Adoption Agency is committed to delivering the best possible service to both children for whom adoption is the plan and prospective and approved adopters.

Carolyn Godfrey
Corporate Director, Children's Services

Report Author:

Terence Herbert,
Associate Director, Operational Children's Services

terence.herbert@wiltshire.gov.uk

01225 713897

Date of report: 4 November 2013

Appendices

Appendix 1 Adoption Scorecard and Keyset Data

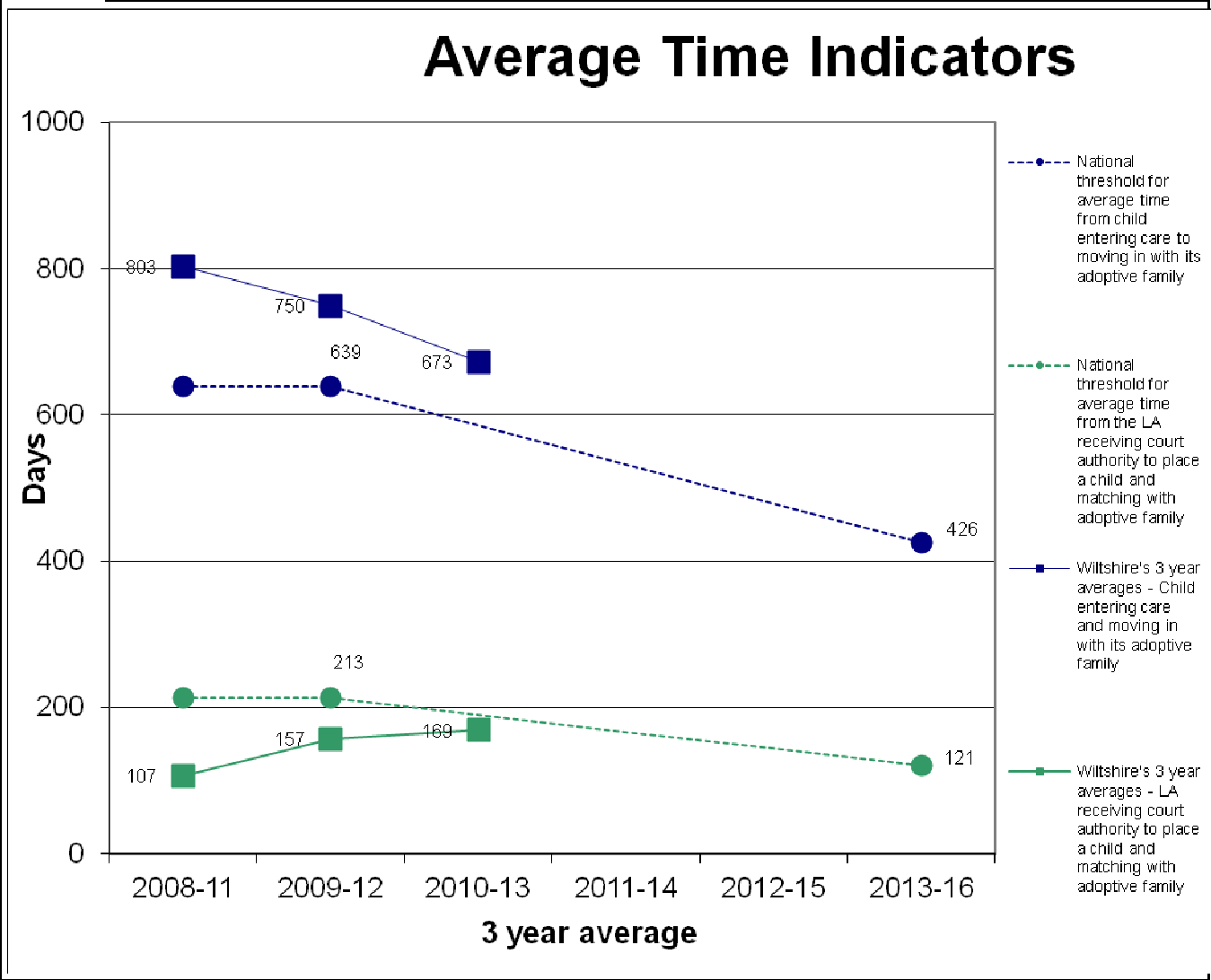
Appendix 2 Permanency and Adoption Improvement Plan

Background papers - none

Appendix 1: Wiltshire's Adoption Scorecard, Wiltshire, September 2013

Children

	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)	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 (days)	Children who wait less than x months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)
LA's 3 year average (2010-13)	673	169	Indicator to be agreed
1 year trend - Improvement from 2012 to 2013	Average time in 2013 was longer than 2012	Average time in 2013 was longer than 2012	n/a
3 year trend - Improvement from 2009-12 to 2010-13	Average time in 2010-13 was shorter than in 2009-12	Average time in 2010-13 was longer than in 2009-12	n/a
England 3 year average (2010-13)	647	210	Indicator to be agreed
Distance from 2010-13 performance threshold	Threshold to be agreed	Threshold to be agreed	n/a



Adopters				Related Information							
	Number of approved adoptive families as at 31 March 2013	Proportion of adoptive families who were matched to a child during 2012-13 who waited more than x months from approval to being matched to a child		Adoptions from care (number adopted and % leaving care who are adopted)	Number and % of children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family. Where times for children who are adopted by their foster family are stopped at the date the child moved in with the foster family (days)	Adoptions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (number adopted and % of BME children leaving care who are adopted)	Adoptions of children aged five or over (number adopted and % of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted)	Average length of care proceedings locally (weeks)	Number of children awaiting adoption (as at 31 March 2013)	Number of applications for approval as an adopter still being assessed (not yet approved or rejected) as at 31 March 2013
LA average	<i>Data not available until November</i>	<i>Data not available until November</i>	LA's 3 year average (2010-13)	50 (10%)	5 (6%)	601	x (x%)	15 (4%)	59	35	<i>Data not available until November</i>
England			England 3 year average (2010-13)	10,540 (13%)	2,020 (9%)	545	1,600 (7%)	2,580 (4%)	51	6,890	

Appendix 2 – Permanency and Adoption Improvement Plan

PART 1: Actions from the Diagnostic Assessment and recommendations made by Ofsted

Objective 1: Good quality permanency and adoption practice which improves outcomes for children and young people

No.	Actions	Links *	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
1.1	Appoint a dedicated “homefinder” within the adoption service who will attend at 2 nd LAC review.	DA	Homefinder in post from 1 st September 2012. To be included in audit plan from January 2014	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	2 Homefinders now in post and attending 2 nd LAC Review. Timeliness improving.	Procedure and practice guidance in place. Audits evidence attendance at 2 nd LAC review.	Action Green Impact Amber
1.2	Develop and implement a Permanency Policy, which includes twin tracking	DA	Completed Update to SLOG February 2013 To be included in audit plan from January 2014		Lin Hitchman	17 children identified with adoption as the plan June 2013. Timeliness improving.	Policy implemented. Scrutiny of Panel evidences twin tracking. Audits evidence improved timeliness and quality of permanency plans.	Action Green Impact Amber
1.3	Develop and implement Concurrent Planning Policy and practice guidance	DA	Revised date: Concurrent Policy to be	Council staff only involved	Gill Burtwell / Owen	Number of children adopted rising. 1 dual approval carer (June	Permanency Plans in place at second LAC	Action Amber

No.	Actions	Links *	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
			implemented from December 2013		Evans	2013).	review. Reduced length of time to adoption More adoptions	Impact Amber
1.4	More targeted and timely recruitment for hard to place groups of children and young people	DA	Implemented from September 2012	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Marketing campaign and Strategy focusing on hard to place groups of children and young people. Limited evidence of impact to date.	Process implemented. Complex cases managed in a timely way. Audit outcomes of matches in complex cases	Action Green Impact Amber
1.5	Consistent, quality and timely life story book and later life letters - sent within 10 working days of the adoption ceremony (March 2013 Ofsted recommendation NMS 2.7 and 2.8)	AIR AIG New Adoption Standards	April 2013 Revised date - training for all social workers to be delivered by December 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Terence Herbert	'Life Story' and 'Later Life Letter' training courses have been delivered to staff with a total of 32 staff attending. The outcome of the audit undertaken by the Adoption Panel suggests that the quality and consistency of completion of both later life letters and life story work remains an issue across the service.	From audits Feedback from children	Action Green Impact Amber

No.	Actions	Links *	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
1.6	Support children to achieve their educational potential through continuing to develop virtual education services to include adopted children (March 2013 Ofsted Inspection recommendation NMS 7.1)	AIR AIG	May 2013	Council staff Schools	Karen Reid	The Virtual School Officer (VSO) for Adoption in post. Case work to date has included 1 situation to prevent a permanent exclusion. Impact - adoptive parents engaged more positively with school than for some considerable time and there is now agreement with all agencies for the longer term goal.	Attendance and delivery of services in schools	Action Green Impact Amber

Objective 2: Ensuring a good supply of well trained and well supported adopters

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
2.1	Develop and implement a customer-focussed Adoption Charter which includes the vision and values of the adoption service.	DA	Revised date : Draft Adoption Charter completed by the end of March 2014	Council staff only involved	Owen Evans	Draft Charter completed.	Charter in place and implemented. Implementation of adopter passport. Feedback from adopters.	Action Amber Impact Amber
2.2	Update the Wiltshire Adoption Marketing Strategy for 2013/14.	DA	Revised date for recruitment and marketing strategy to August 2013.	Council staff LGM international Ltd	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	1 st burst of marketing campaign underway. Initial comments made by marketing specialists on the draft Strategy.	Prospective adopters recruited as per recruitment strategy targets. More children are adopted.	Action Amber Impact Amber
2.3	Implement dual approval of carers as both adoptive carers and foster carers.	DA	Revised date – June 2013.	Council staff only involved	Gill Burtwell / Owen Evans	Process and guidance in place. Dual approval carers (including concurrent carers) – 1 (June 2013)	Audits evidence process in place and in use.	Action Green Impact Amber

Objective 4: Well managed and high performing adoption service

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
4.1	Develop an Adopter's Reference Group and use their ongoing feedback to improve customer service	DA	By Friday 1 st June. Report to SLOG December 2012.	Council staff only involved	Owen Evans	Adopter's Reference Group meeting. The adoption reference group has been identified as a key priority for further development.	Group in place. Changes made to practice and process as appropriate. Feedback from adopters	Action Green Impact Amber
4.2	Amend the current feedback sheets as necessary to ensure quality feedback from the Adopter's Reference Group	DA	Completed.	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Feedback sheets amended. Limited evidence of impact to date.	Feedback from adopters and evidence action taken in response to feedback	Action Green Impact Amber
4.3	Commission a long arm survey with adopters approved by Wiltshire to generate feedback about the quality of their experience	DA	Revised date - commissioned by March 2014.	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Action to be completed by November 2013.	Feedback from adopters and evidence action taken in response to feedback	Action - Impact -
4.4	Develop an evaluation process to get feedback from prospective adopters and adopters at all stages of the process	DA	Revised date - process in draft by end of December 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Action to be completed by November 2013.	Feedback from adopters and evidence action taken in response to feedback	Action - Impact -

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
4.5	Undertake an analysis of workforce and training needs to ensure a mix of staff with skill and expertise in planning for permanence	DA	December 2013	Council staff only involved	Principal Social Workers	Principal Social Workers have been involved in revising the training pathway for all social care staff with quality measures i.e. impacts against permanency planning and timely and outcome focused decision making for children. Principal Social Workers provide coaching to managers with a focus on improving decision making and outcomes for children. Limited evidence of impact to date.	Analysis of evaluation forms Completion of training needs analysis and training pathway Coaching evaluation	Action Green Impact Amber
4.6	Commission specialist training for the adoption team from OUK.	DA AIG	Commenced December 2012	Council staff OUK	Lin Hitchman	Adoption master classes attended by 84 members of staff. Limited evidence of impact to date.	Analysis of evaluation forms Completion of training needs analysis Development of training programme for adoption staff 2013/14	Action Green Impact Amber
4.7	Ensure personnel files are well ordered and can be easily audited to show that files contain	AIR	Completed September 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman	Project well advanced to store all employee records electronically in secure and	HR Single Central Record	Action Green Impact

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
	evidence of identity checks and all the other requirements of Schedule 3 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 (March 2013 Ofsted Inspection recommendation Regulation 11 (3) (d), Schedule 3 and NMS 21.3).					easy to access folders that can be easily audited.		Amber
4.8	Update the Statement of Purpose for 2013/14 to take account of the new 2 stage Adopter Assessment process and new PAR. Ensure that the SoP contains all the information required by Schedule 1 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; in particular, the name and address of the service's manager (March 2013 Ofsted Inspection recommendation NMS 18.1 and Regulation 2, Schedule 1)).	AIR	Revised date - July 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Wiltshire Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and updated. It is now fully compliant with NMS 18.1 and Regulation 2, Schedule 1 and is available on the Wiltshire Council website.	Statement of Purpose 2013/14	Action Green Impact Amber
4.9	Ensure that the children's guide to adoption contains a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 2 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; in particular, a	AIR	Children's guide in place since September 2013 to be further revised by March 2014	Council staff only involved	Owen Evans	Revised in order to be compliant with Regulation 3 and NMS 18.5. Contingency has been made from within the Adoption Reform Grant to produce our own children's	Children's Guide to adoption 2013/14	Action Amber Impact Amber

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
	summary of the complaints procedure and contact details for the office of the Children's Rights Director (March 2013 Ofsted Inspection recommendation Regulation3 and NMS 18.5).					guides. Plans have been made to work together with the Voice and Influence Team to achieve this and it is expected that the guide will be available from December 2013.		
4.10	Ensure a fully staffed adoption team and that plans are in place to be able to access additional staff if demand increases.	AIG ISLAC re SGO	Revised date – advert to be published June 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Team Manager in post. Strengths of the team acknowledge by the Adoption Ofsted Inspection.	TM in post by June 2013	Action Amber Impact Amber
4.11	Ensure retention of records of recruitment and suitability checks; in particular, that records are kept of telephone verification of references (safeguarding and safer recruitment) (March 2013 Ofsted Inspection recommendation NMS 21.1).	AIR	July 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman	Wiltshire Council has designed a comprehensive record of recruitment and suitability checks. An interactive spreadsheet has been developed to hold all the required information. The spreadsheet alerts managers when data is incomplete or if a DBS check is due to expire. The spreadsheet is securely stored in a shared folder with restricted access, for the service managers to complete and for few named managers to review. A training process has begun for managers completing the spreadsheet which will be		Action Green Impact Amber

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
						<p>completed by December 2013. A system to audit the future completion of the spreadsheets is in place.</p>		

Objective 5: Robust quality assurance and monitoring

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
5.1	Set up a Homefinder Management Group to monitor and prevent drift	DA	Completed, in place since May 2013 Audit Group meeting monthly Completed, in place since December 2012 Performance Review Meetings quarterly	Council staff only involved	Terence Herbert	Homefinder Management Group meets regularly.	Monthly meetings taking place Monthly meeting minutes Weekly monitoring information.	Action Green Impact Amber
5.2	IROs will take a pro-active role in the 2 nd review, track cyp in a systematic way and challenge and support operational staff.	DA	Completed , commenced May 2013	Council staff only	Ceri Burton	Underreporting of alerts. IRO service not meeting statutory targets. Limited evidence on case records of IRO oversight. Challenge provided to operational staff - data reveals inconsistent LAC practice across the service.	SMT performance report Supervision notes PPN1 spreadsheet	Action Green Impact Amber

*Links to key documents

DA = Diagnostic assessment findings

AIR = Recommendations in Adoption Ofsted Inspection Report in March 2013

AIG = Actions in response to the Adoption Reform Programme and the Adoption Improvement Grant (AIG)

ISLAC = Wiltshire Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children April 2012

PART 2: Actions in response to the Adoption Reform Programme and the Adoption Improvement Grant

Objective 1: Good quality permanency and adoption practice which improves outcomes for children and young people

No.	Actions	Links *	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
1.1	Work with the family justice system to reduce Court timescales	AIG	Regular attendance at Wiltshire Family Justice Board meetings from September 2012	Council staff Family Justice Board Courts Adult Social Care Health	Terence Herbert	Avg time between local authority receiving court order to place a child and match dropping (213 days ytd May 2013 to 183 days ytd June 2013).	Reducing amount of time taken in Care Proceedings. Improved usage of PLO, FGC etc. to achieve earlier permanency for children.	Action Green Impact Amber
1.2	Agreement in place to commission extra health assessment capacity as needed	AIG	Completed May 2013. Commencing 2013-2014 to ensure no delays to adoption process.	Council staff Health	James Dunne	Agreement in place.	Agreement in place to commission extra capacity above yearly average.	Action Green Impact Amber
1.3	Ensure sufficient staffing capacity to implement the adoption passport.	DA AIG	Revised date – from July 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	Adoption support staff included in AIG - impact of adoption support passport unknown at this time as only	Attendance at team meetings Team meeting	Action Green Impact

No.	Actions	Links *	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
		ISLAC AIR				recently implemented.	minutes	Amber
1.4	Resource extra capacity for prospective adopter assessments	AIG	New framework in place by October 2013	Council staff only	Tim Covington / Lucy Kitchener / Owen Evans	Framework tender process completed – new framework in place from 1 st November 2013 including capacity for prospective adopter assessments.	AIG spend for spot purchase Framework specification	Action Green Impact Amber
1.5	Spot purchase adoptive placements for our children and young people who are currently waiting (highest priority needs)	AIG	From May 2013	Council staff only	Owen Evans	Spot purchase arrangements in place for adoptive placements as appropriate.	AIG spend for spot purchase	Action Green Impact Amber
1.6	Commission counselling and support for adopted adults	AIG	Revised date - agreement with PACT by end of December 2013	Council staff only	Owen Evans / Lucy Kitchener / Tim Covington	Action due to be completed by end of December 2013.	PACT specification	Action - Impact -
1.7	Resource extra capacity for concurrent carer assessments externally	AIG	New social work assessments framework in place from Nov 2013	Council staff only	Gill Burtwell / Lucy Kitchener	Providers being notified for framework which will be in place from 1 st November 2013. Spec includes capacity for concurrent carer assessments.	Framework specification	Action Green Impact Amber

Objective 2: Ensuring a good supply of well trained and well supported adopters

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
2.1	Commission a recruitment and marketing specialist (s) to carry out a recruitment campaign.	DA AIG	By 19 th June 2013	Council staff LGM international Ltd	Lucy Kitchener / Owen Evans / Tim Covington	1 st burst of the marketing campaign underway. No data received.	Prospective adopters recruited as per recruitment strategy targets. More children are adopted.	Action Amber Impact Amber
2.2	Improve the Adoption Service Front Door to ensure it is efficient, timely and professional	DA AIG	Advert out by mid June 2013	Council staff only involved	Lin Hitchman / Owen Evans	% information packs sent in 5 working days dropped from 100% in April to 73% in May.	Information pack sent within 5 working days	Action Amber Impact Red
2.3	Provide therapeutic pre and post adoption support.	AIG	Revised date – post in place by end of February 2013.	Council staff CAMHS	Lin Hitchman / Lucy Kitchener	Post holders now in place. No evidence of impact as yet.	Few disrupted placements. Adopters report a better understanding of their child / young person.	Action Green Impact Amber
2.4	Purchase library resources to support adoptive and fostering placements	AIG	September 2013	Council staff only	Owen Evans	Team Manager has been in discussion with the Library Service about resources. No evidence of impact as yet.	Library service loans and number of registered borrowers	Action Amber Impact Amber

Objective 3: An effective panel and good decision making

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
3.1	Recruit a temporary panel adviser (fostering / adoption)	AIG	September 2013	Council staff only involved	Gill Burtwell	Temporary Panel Adviser post approved. Post not yet advertised. Job description written – awaiting evaluation of grade.	Job description	Action Amber Impact Amber

Objective 4: Well managed and high performing adoption service

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
4.1	Move to electronic file management / use of Carefirst	AIG	Implementation date – October 2013	Wiltshire Council only	Linda Cox / Owen Evans	Carefirst project underway.	Carefirst reports	Action Amber Impact Amber
4.2	Ensure all policies / procedures are up to date and appropriate	AIG	June 2013	Wiltshire Council only	Lucy Kitchener / Owen Evans / PSW	Adoption Manager has reviewed the procedures and these have been sent to Tri-x for upload. Final amendments still needed.	Revised policies uploaded	Action Amber Impact Amber

Objective 6: Well informed plans for future development and continuous improvement

No.	Actions	Links*	Key Dates	Links with other agencies	Lead	Analysis of evidence	Source of evidence	RAG Rating
6.1	Pursue longer-term sub-regional partnership options with "Adoption West" colleagues.	AIG	Procure consultancy scoping work by end of July 2013 Options appraisal for Adoption West Local Authorities by October 2013	Council staff Adoption West Council staff	Lucy Kitchener / Tim Covington	IPC in post to complete options appraisal. Wiltshire Stakeholder Event held 15/10/2013.	Options Appraisal.	Action Amber Impact Amber
6.2	Implement a regular meeting to monitor continuous progress of the Adoption Service.	AIG	From April 2013	Council staff only	Terence Herbert	Indicators for a key dataset have been agreed. Some data is already collected and the Adoption Manager is agreeing methods for collecting for the full dataset. The Adoption Service specification is in place and monthly meetings are held to monitor the performance of the Service.	Notes from meeting. Key dataset.	Action Green Impact Amber

*Links to key documents

DA = Diagnostic assessment findings

AIR = Recommendations in Adoption Ofsted Inspection Report in March 2013

AIG = Actions in response to the Adoption Reform Programme and the Adoption Improvement Grant (AIG)

ISLAC = Wiltshire Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children April 2012