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12 November 2013

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) - Councillor Duggins

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director of People

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title:**

Ofsted Adoption Inspection Report 2013

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**Is this a key decision?**

*No*

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**Executive Summary:**

Ofsted introduced a new framework for the inspection of adoption agencies which was implemented from April 2012. All adoption agencies must now have at least one inspection in each three-year inspection cycle. There are four potential judgements that Ofsted can make: Outstanding, Good, Adequate, and Inadequate.

Coventry's Adoption Service was inspected by Ofsted between 12-16 August 2013. Ofsted judged the service to be adequate. The final report was received in September 2013 and made 13 recommendations. The report was published on the Ofsted website on 1 October 2013.

This report outlines the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection and the action taken to address the recommendations.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that:

The Cabinet Member notes the report and endorses the actions taken to address the recommendations of the Inspection Report.

**List of Appendices included:**

Ofsted Adoption Inspection Report

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title: Ofsted Adoption Inspection Report 2013**

**1. Context (or background)**

1.1 Ofsted introduced a new framework for the inspection of adoption agencies implemented from April 2012. All adoption agencies must now have at least one inspection in each three-year inspection cycle. The focus of these inspections is on:

- Children that should be placed for adoption are placed without avoidable delay
- Recruitment, timeliness of assessments and approvals of adopters
- The quality of adoption support to adopters and children
- The effectiveness of adoption panel and quality assurance
- Disruption to placements of children with an adoptive family
- Compliance with guidance, legislation and National Minimum Standards

There are four potential judgements that Ofsted can make:

- Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
- Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements
- Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements
- Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

1.2 Coventry's Adoption Service was last inspected in 2009 when it was judged to be 'Good with Outstanding' features particularly in relation to post-adoption support. At that point the service was located at Stoke House.

1.3 The Adoption Service was inspected by Ofsted between 12-16 August 2013. Ofsted judged the service to be 'Adequate'. The final report was received in September 2013 and made 13 recommendations. The report was published on the Ofsted website on 1 October 2013.

1.4 The report makes 13 recommendations and an action plan is in place. Of the 13 recommendations 5 have already been completed – see table below:

Status	Recommendations	Timescales
Completed	4, 5, 6, 7 13 (40%)	October 2013
In progress	1, 3, 8, 12 (30%)	November 2013
In progress	2, 9, 10 11 (30%)	March 2014

1.5 The Family Placement Service was established in 2012, incorporating the Council's Adoption Services, as part of the Fundamental Service Review in 2011/12. The Adoption Service was integrated with the Fostering Service and Family Finding in July 2012, and was joined by the Permanence Team, previously from the Looked After Children Service in March 2013. All three services are now centrally located in Civic Centre 1. The service is managed by the Head of Service for Looked After Children.

1.6 There were challenges in integrating 3 distinct services, combined with a significant increase in the number of children with a placement order, which increased from 48 in 2011/12 to 71 in 2012/13. Considerable work has been undertaken within the service to address core areas of practice, and given the challenges of managing the changes as well as implementing the Fundamental Service Review, the Ofsted judgement is considered to be an acceptable outcome at this time. However, 'Adequate' is not good enough, and the Council aspires to be 'Good' and 'Outstanding'.

- 1.7 There is a programme of systematic review of practice, systems and processes underpinning the changes, to ensure that these are fit for purpose and comply with the regulations.
- 1.8 The service has recruited to vacancies, with the recruitment of first line managers fully achieved in October 2013. Social work vacancies will be appointed to in November 2013. A review of the Service Manager post is underway as it has not been possible to attract suitably experienced applicants.
- 1.9 A key area for development for the service is to review quality of post adoption support. Adoption support services play a vital role in helping to address the specific issues that adoptive families might encounter with an adopted child. Adoption support includes practical support, therapeutic or intensive family support helping children recover from their previous experiences and bond with their adoptive families. The quality of post adoption support is a critical contributor to achieving a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' judgement in any future inspection. This is also a key priority for Government and in September 2013 the Department of Education announced new funding to improve support to adoptive families, which is planned to be released in 2015/16.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

The Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) is asked to note the report and endorse the actions being taken to address the recommendations of the inspection report.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

Not applicable

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

All recommendations from the inspection report will have been completed by 31 March 2014.

## **5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

The Family Placement net budget for 2013/14 is £2.3m. This service, covering both fostering and adoption is split into 3 teams, Assessment Team, Permanency Team and Support Team.

On top of this, Coventry received £1.1m Adoption Reform Grant for 2013/14. This has been provided to specifically address the backlog of children awaiting adoption as well as supporting wider improvements in the adoption service. £0.3m is being used to increase the budget for purchasing adoption placements, developing training, increasing team capacity to ensure adopters have an allocated support worker, and enabling wider sub regional working. The remainder is being used to support staffing costs, including strengthening the panel advisor role. This will maintain basic regulatory requirements, and ensure the delivery of the Adoption Action Plan plus recommendations arising from the Ofsted inspection.

### **5.2 Legal implications**

No implications identified.

## **6. Other implications**

*Any other specific implications*

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The work of the Adoption Service supports the key priority outcome in the Council Plan "Coventry, proud to be a city that works" to support and celebrate our young people" in particular in the objective "Children are supported to live safe from harm".

The Adoption Service contributes to the wellbeing of children through arranging for permanent placement for a child whose own family is unable to provide care. It supports a key role that the Local Authority plays as a Corporate Parent, of securing appropriate family placements for Looked After Children, as an effective means of giving them the best life chances possible.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Failure to provide an effective Adoption Service would lead to Coventry's Looked After Children staying in care longer. This risk is being managed through the delivery of the Fundamental Service Review aiming to increase the number of children adopted each year effectively.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

The Adoption Service contributes to Children's Social Care's performance against key indicators that are closely scrutinised both internally and externally on an on-going basis by the Department of Education and Ofsted. An Ofsted Inspection provides a robust critical analysis of the performance of the Adoption Service, and in setting requirements and recommendations for improvement assists the service to focus on continuous improvement.

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

An Equality Impact Needs Assessment has been undertaken by the service.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None

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Members: Councillor Duggins			31.10.13	1.11.13

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## Appendices

### Ofsted Adoption Inspection Report 2013