

ACE Adoption Panel Annual Report April 2018 to March 2019

1 Context

- 1.1 The regionalisation of adoption services that resulted in the creation of Adoption Central England brought together the Adoption Panels of Worcestershire County Council, Warwickshire County Council, Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council into one single Panel.
- 1.2 This is the first full year report of the ACE Adoption Panel since it became a single Panel on 1 April 2018.

2 Membership

- 2.1 The Adoption Agencies Statutory Guidance (updated 2011) requires that each adoption agency must maintain a list of persons whom it considers suitable to be a member of an Adoption Panel. The Panel's business can only be conducted if at least 5 members are present, including the Chair or Vice-Chair and a social work representative.
- 2.2 A number of Panel members serving in ACE's constituent local authorities elected not to transfer to the ACE Central List including the Chair and Vice Chair of Solihull's Panel, the Vice Chair of Warwickshire's Panel, and the Chair of the Coventry Panel.
- In the period April 2018 to March 2019, one social work member, two independent members and one elected member resigned from the Panel.
- In addition, the educational psychologist who had attended Warwickshire Panels was no longer able to continue his role on a non-charging basis.
- The Agency Panel Advisers for Solihull and Coventry both retired in July 2018, and the current Panel Adviser was appointed from 1 October 2018.
- 2.3 Eight new Panel members were inducted on 18 September 2019 that included five adoptive parents and one social worker. Elected member membership did not progress beyond the induction.

The Panel Adviser followed up more than 15 expressions of interest from professionals and adopters interested in joining the Panel, including those responding to a recruitment appeal issued in the March 2019 adopters' Newsletter. One of the chairs is also particularly proactive in attempts to recruit Panel members. However, for various reasons including ineligibility and a change in family circumstances, most have not progressed beyond the information stage.

There continues to be the lack of representation on Panel from adopted people and there are only 4 male Panel members.

- 2.4 As on 31 March 2019, the Central List from which Panels are constituted is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.5 The Panel members who sit regularly demonstrate a high level of commitment and passion for their role, and the recommendations made for prospective adopters and children reflect members' broad range of expertise and experience. Panel members are nearly always well-prepared and prompt for meetings and seek to contribute helpful feedback to the agencies. It is also appreciated that Panel members have been accommodating and patient as new Panel processes are established.

2.6 **Appraisals**

Annual appraisals of the three Panel Chairs were conducted by the Lead Manager - ACE during the 2018-19 reporting period.

There was no programme of member appraisals in place during the period April to October 2018 before the current Panel Adviser took up the role. A schedule of appraisals commenced in January 2019 and 7 were completed by the end of March 2019.

3 **Summary of Panel Activity**

3.2 The ACE Adoption Panel met as follows during the reporting period:

- 20 Panels in Warwick
- 5 Panels in Coventry
- 8 Panels in Solihull
- 9 Panels in Worcester

In total the ACE Adoption Panels considered **184** items of business during this period.

Approvals

Panel recommended **92** adoptive parent approvals from which:

- 61 were first-time applications for approval as adoptive parents
- 22 were applications for subsequent approval
- 9 were applications from foster carers

Of the 92 approvals, 22 households (24%) were representative of the BME or LGBT communities, and a further 11 (12%) were single applicants.

The families came from the following local authority areas:

Coventry	Solihull	Warwick	Worcester	Other
27	11	27	20	7

3 reviews of adopter approval took place which included two resignations.

Matches

Panel considered **85** placement matches for a total of **96** children. Of these matches:

- 20 were single children placed in a family with no other children,
- 13 were 2 children placed together in family with no other children,
- 2 were 3 children placed together in family with no other children,
- 14 were single children placed who were previously living with their prospective adoptive parents under fostering for adoption arrangements,
- 1 match was for two children previously placed under fostering for adoption,
- 6 were single children matched with their foster carers,
- 6 were single children placed with a sibling previously adopted,
- 13 were single children placed in a family where there is a unrelated adopted child,
- 1 match was for two children in a family with other unrelated adopted children,
- 8 matches were for single children in families with birth children.

The children came from the following local authority areas:

Coventry	Solihull	Warwick	Worcester
31	3	32	29

78 of these children were matched with ACE-approved adopters, and **18** were matched on an interagency basis where the adopters were approved by another adoption agency.

1 match was not recommended by the Adoption Panel. 4 plans for adoption for relinquished babies were also recommended by the Panel.

3.3 Disruptions

No disruption reports were presented at a Panel meeting during the reporting period. However, a report by the ACE Lead Manager published in April 2019 described and discussed the learning from the five disruptions occurring during the reporting period. Three of these disruptions related to matches recommended by an ACE Adoption Panel since April 2018. Two children had been placed with prospective adopters who had transferred into ACE and one disruption related to an interagency placement.

4 Training and Development

4.1 The Annual Panel Members' Training Event was held at the Saffron Centre, Birmingham on 5 September 2018. Nineteen members attended.

The Agenda for the event included:

- Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) Accreditation for ACE
- An update on ACE and a SWOT analysis exercise
- An update on Assessment and Matching Project
- Proposed Practice Guidance on 'Transitions and Play Dates.'
- Post adoption support offered by ACE

4.2 The Panel Adviser has introduced collated feedback to the Panel from the Agency Decision Makers that is uploaded to the secure portal used by Panel members every 3 months.

4.3 During the year Panel welcomed a number of social workers, health professionals (LAC nurses and paediatricians in training) and new Panel members as observers.

4.4 The Chairs and Panel Adviser continue to provide opportunities for informal discussion and feedback during breaks and at the end of meetings.

5 Practice issues

5.1 **Panel Team:** The previous Panel administrator together with the Operations Manager and previous Panel Advisers ensured that, despite the changes brought about through regionalisation, a schedule of Panel meetings was fixed at an early stage, thereby ensuring that the Panel stage

of the agency's work has run smoothly and predictably.

- 5.2 **IT:** Panel members remain highly committed to attending Panel and continue to prepare well, accessing papers via a secure portal operated by Warwickshire (WeLearn). Those Panel members who previously used Modern.Gov software have reported that the functionality of WeLearn is not as effective - while reports can still be commented upon, there is a loss of formatting clarity. Some Panel members have also experienced some difficulties in submitting their expense claims. These 'glitches' are steadily being addressed by members, Panel staff and the Warwickshire IT helpdesk.
- 5.3 **Size of Panel meetings:** Panel meetings can have up to 6 agenda items and this involves a significant amount of pre reading within a week and concentration at the Panel meetings. The minuting of long meetings by one minute taker is very demanding and alternative arrangements have been agreed.
- 5.4 **Logistics:** The continuation of Panel meetings would not have been possible without the flexibility of a number of members to sit on Panels in several locations. Particular recognition is due to Daniela Visram, Charlotte Shadbolt, Lorraine Cooksey, Heather Tobin, Margaret Powell and Eamon Moran whose willingness to travel has made otherwise non-quorate meetings quorate.
- There continue to be logistical challenges to be overcome due to meeting in four (soon to be five) locations. These include the availability of meeting and waiting rooms, access to the buildings, and lack of staff to provide reception for adopters and social workers, in some areas.
- 5.5 **Social work members:** While no Panels have had to be cancelled on the grounds of non-quoracy, there have been challenges in guaranteeing the presence of a social work member at Panel meetings. The majority of Panel meetings in the reporting period were attended by a social work member who, while they had no direct involvement in a case, was employed in ACE. The Lead Manager has raised this with the local authority Heads of Service and efforts to recruit more social work members continue.
- 5.6 **Fostering specialists:** It is ACE policy that there should be a social worker with fostering experience at any Panel considering the match of a child with foster carers or under fostering to adopt arrangements. Arrangements are being made with the local authority fostering services for nominated representatives.
- 5.7 **ACE policies:** There has been a review of the different agency policies for example on e-cigarettes, preparation training for foster carers who adopt, ex-partner references, sharing of medical reports, the inclusion of trainer feedback, and children attending Panel. This is an ongoing process with a

view to finalising the Adoption Panel procedures in the near future.

- 5.8 **Minutes:** The format of the Panel minutes has been standardised during the reporting period. Draft minutes are now sent for an accuracy check to social workers attending Panel as well as to Panel members.
- 5.9 **ADM decisions:** The Adoption Panel makes recommendations to the agencies (local authorities and ACE) and there is a statutory requirement for them to make their decision within 7 working days of receiving the finalised minutes. Currently there is some variation across the local authorities, which is being addressed.
- 5.10 **Chairs' meetings** with the Agency Adviser and ACE Lead Manager and Operations Manager are held on a quarterly basis. In addition, a meeting of the Agency Medical Advisers took place on 10 January 2019.

6 Panel feedback on the quality of adoption reports

- 6.1 The present Panel Adviser has developed the feedback process on reports presented to Panel and this has been in place since 26 November 2018. The templates used consider :
- (i) The quality of the Prospective Adopter Report (PAR), and
 - (ii) The quality of the matching reports, i.e. the Child Permanence Report (CPR) and the Adoption Placement Report (APR that includes the Adoption Support Plan).

Prospective Adopter Reports (PAR) – See Appendix B

Panel members provide a collective rating from very good to outstanding, adequate to good, requires improvement, inadequate. The criteria applied is summarised in Appendix B and relates to 35 reports considered between 26 November 2018 and 31 March 2019.

Overall, Panel felt that general standard of **74%** of PAR's was good, while **16%** required improvement.

Where Panel members positively rated the reports it was noted that there was:

- Clarity and thoroughness, with clear ecomaps and genograms supplied.
- Direct quotations from the applicants themselves to illustrate their learning, reflective capacity, understanding of key themes, response to challenge.
- Evidence that Fostering for Adoption had not only been discussed by the social worker, but that the applicants understood the implications.

- Evidence that the social worker had got to know the applicants well.
- Clearly marked updates of previous reports, appropriately credited.
- Thorough exploration of vulnerabilities together with strong analysis of their significance against strengths and other vulnerabilities.
- Detailed information that obviated the need for questions at Panel, e.g. dates and duration of childcare experience, evidence that any children have been interviewed, feedback from Preparation Course facilitators, finances, arrangements for adoption leave and childcare thereafter, evaluated references.

Panel members felt reports required improvement in the following ways:

- Improving the evidential basis within the reports – this would require more corroborating information and analysis about the prospective adopters parenting capacity and fewer assumptions based upon their reflections of personal experiences.
- Summarising and exploring in more depth the prospective adopters' motivation to adopt and identifying any potential vulnerabilities highlighted during the assessment.
- To reduce the length of some report by editing and improving the detail and analysis in some sections ensuring that the adopter's 'voice' is clear within the report.
- Providing clear evidence of children's views or that they have been consulted by the assessing social worker

This quality assurance process also identified that on occasions key information had not been 'pulled through' into the reports from the client record system (MOSAIC). This is being addressed.

Panel deferred making a recommendation in 3 cases of prospective adopters presented for approval as suitable to adopt. Reasons for deferral included:

- Insufficient evidence of the applicants' understanding of adoption,
- Lack of inclusion of the views of the children about their adoption by family and friends carers,
- Failure to contact the previous partner of an applicant who had also co-parented children in the adoptive family.

ACE is committed to raising standards of assessment and report writing across the board and in 2019-20 is to run a series of workshops for assessing social workers. It is a contributor to a DfE Practice Improvement Fund Assessment and Matching Project and will be piloting and evaluating a new format of the Prospective Adopters' Report later in 2019.

Matching Reports – See Appendix C

a) Child Permanence Report (CPR)

For the 24 matches presented in the period 26 November 2018 to 31 March 2019, Panel members offered a collective rating - very good to outstanding, adequate to good, requires improvement but adequate for a recommendation, and inadequate. A summary of the Panel's appraisal of matching reports is provided in Appendix C against the agreed criteria.

Overall, Panel members continued to note a wide variation in the quality of the Child Permanence Reports and found that **42%** of those presented required improvement with **58%** being rated as good or adequate to good.

Positive comments of Panel members concerning the quality of CPR's noted:

- Evidence of social worker efforts to gain information from or about birth family members, foster carers or guardians, even if that information has not been provided.
- Evidence of social workers taking time to talk to the people who know the child best.
- Evidence of effective co-working between the local authority social worker and ACE social worker.
- Thorough social histories of the child's birth family.
- Careful consideration of future contact proposals.

CPRs could be further improved by:

- Improving accuracy – e.g. updating legal and medical information, photographs, and chronologies to include details of efforts made to explore a placement within the child's family,
- Improving accountability – e.g. proof reading to reduce grammatical and formatting errors ensuring that the language used is appropriate for the child who can access the report in later life, quality assurance being evident and for all reports to be signed by managers,
- Improving analysis - e.g. to evidence better that contact after adoption has been properly considered, particularly where there are half-siblings.

ACE has worked in partnership with colleagues in the Local Authorities and has devised a two-day training programme '**Promoting Permanence through Adoption.**' This training has been delivered twice to date and includes a module on writing CPR's. Additional support is also available.

b) Adoption Placement Report (APR) and the Adoption Support Plan

The APR is prepared by the child's social worker and adoption social worker together. Its purpose is to make the case for the proposed placement match, considering the adopters' strengths and the child's needs, and to describe the support to be made available.

Overall, Panel felt that the general standard of the APR was adequate to good or outstanding in **58%** of reports, with the remaining **42%** requiring improvement.

Positive feedback from Panel members about the quality of the APR noted:

- The contributions by adopters,
- Clarity,
- Detailed descriptions of the child,
- Discussion of likely challenges and strategies.

The APR could be further improved by:

- Ensuring accuracy in the reports around the child's ethnicity, financial support and the reasons for any delays in the placement process,
- Having support plans that are more bespoke, focusing more on the child's needs and likely placement challenges, with a long-term perspective of what these might be,
- Providing more information on the process for deciding this particular match for this child,
- Evidencing how the child's attachment needs will affect the placements,
- Improving clarity around contact plans.

The current template used for the APR across the ACE local authorities is difficult to both use and read and there is considerable overlap and confusion between the matching matrix table and adoption support plan table, with some columns running to several pages.

The current format does not invite further analysis of matching considerations or parenting capacity with regard to children placed under fostering to adopt arrangements.

Through ACE's involvement with the PIF Project (see above) there maybe future opportunities to review and improve the matching processes and adoption support plans documentation. Workshops are also in the process of being planned.

- 6.2 Feedback collected at Panel in connection with matching reports is shared with Heads of Service of the local authorities and with the ACE Management Group.

7 Feedback from Adopters to Panel

- 7.1 Adopter feedback on their experience of attending Panel during the reporting period has been collected via a paper form sent with a reply paid

envelope and the Agency Decision Maker's (ADM) letter of notification of their approval as adoptive parents.

The response rate has been modest and 21 paper forms were returned, the majority of which were very positive and from which following themes emerge:

- The majority received an invitation and were given sufficient notice
- 90% answered yes to the question "did you feel you received the support you needed to prepare for Panel
- 18% felt that staff were not helpful in directing them to the Adoption Panel meeting room
- All felt it helpful to meet the Chair before being invited into the meeting and 97% said they were made to feel welcome.
- 93% felt they were given sufficient opportunity to share their views, that they were listened to and that the questions asked were appropriate
- One response stated that the Panel's decision not to recommend a match had come as a shock, noting that the nature of the questions had not reflected concerns and the belief that members had misunderstood details of the reports.
- A number of responses noted poor reception arrangements, waiting times, unhelpful or uninformed staff, and a lack of waiting room and water, suggesting that this contributed to their nervousness. Some suggested that information about what to expect at Panel would have been helpful.

The Chairs and Lead Manager are kept informed of adopter feedback and continued efforts will be made to address issues as they arise. Reception and waiting rooms are challenges related to constraints on staffing and meeting rooms. It is hoped that adopters' waiting times will be reduced by staggering their arrival times to 15 minutes after the Panel discussion begins. It is anticipated that the level of adopter feedback will be increased by the implementation of an online survey to be sent to adopters at the point of ADM decision.

8 Feedback from social workers who attended Adoption Panel

- 8.1 A template seeking feedback was developed by the Panel Adviser and sent to social workers following Panel, from January 2019 onwards.

Social workers were asked to comment upon:

- Panel's timekeeping and response to delay,
- Panel's welcome,
- The relevance of Panel questions posed to them,

- The relevance of Panel questions posed to the adopters,
- Their understanding of the reasons for Panel's recommendations,
- Ways in which the experience of attending Panel could be improved.

Of 25 responses received between 7 January and 31 March 2018:

- 12 stated that their case did not start within 30 minutes of the time given
- All but 1 rated the welcome provided by Panel as 4 or 5 (5 = very welcome)
- All but one rated the relevance of Panel's questions to them as 4 or 5 (5 = very relevant)
- All rated the relevance of Panel's questions to the adopters as 4 or 5 (5 = very relevant)
- All stated they understood the reasons for Panel's recommendation
- 7 noted that they had not been reminded of their obligation to inform the adopters of the ADM decision within two working days

Comments about their and the adopters' Panel experience were largely positive, praising the welcome offered, the nature of the questions and the Chair's management of the meeting.

The time allocated to cases, potential and reasons for cases overrunning and feedback about Panel is kept under review through regular summaries of feedback shared with the Panel chairs and ACE Lead Manager.

It will be a priority in 2019- 2020 to reduce waiting and to fine tune further the scheduling of the Panel agendas.

9 Chairs' Comments

9.1 Eamon Moran chaired 23 Panels between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019:

It has been a particularly busy and interesting year for the Adoption Panel as ACE has begun to achieve its aim of increasing the scale and timeliness of adopter approvals and matches. We have maintained a clear focus on the core business of making recommendations on the adoption plan for relinquished children, approval of prospective adopters and matching of children with adopters already approved. We have continued to welcome observers to our meetings and these have included student Social Workers, community paediatricians, child psychologists and education professionals - feedback from these visits is generally very positive with the day being seen as valuable experience by all involved.

ACE Panel members have consistently brought a conscientious and caring approach to Panel days and have made full use of the impressively wide mix of

skills and experience they bring to their role. As ACE practices become more embedded in our work it is rewarding to see that range and experience becoming ever more diverse as panel members move fluidly around meetings in each of the five local authorities.

There does remain a gender imbalance in panel membership generally and recruitment of more male panel members should continue to be pursued during the forthcoming year.

The recruitment of a single full time Panel Adviser has been a major step forward in enabling us to pursue our goal of consistency and transparency across the five local authority panel locations. The appointment of a new Panel Administrator who brings a wealth of relevant experience to the role is also good news for us all.

9.2 Margaret Powell chaired 9 Panels between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019:

Panel continues to work well; its quality assurance and processes were recently praised during my interview with the Ofsted inspector during Worcestershire's inspection in June 2019. It is extremely positive to report that no Worcestershire children experienced adoption disruptions in the last 12 months. Disruption report from other ACE areas was available and discussed for common learning points. Generally, the quality of Child Permanence Reports has improved across ACE local authorities, which evidences good working relationship between ACE and the LAs. As before, attempts are being made to recruit panel members from more diverse backgrounds.

It would be helpful to panel, in its quality assurance role, to receive more specific adoption support plans, that stipulate precisely what the children's needs are (to include emotional and attachment presentation) and how these needs are going to be supported and by whom. This is vital for a regional adoption agency placing its local authority members' children with adopters - in the interest of clarity, transparency and provision of individual 'tool kit' for families being matched with specific children.

9.3 Heather Tobin chaired 9 Panels between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019:

I am Heather Tobin MBE, one of the four Chair Persons across ACE since its inception in February 2018. Primarily, I Chair the panels in Coventry and Solihull. My husband and I adopted our then 3 year-old daughter in 2012 and so have personal experience of the adoption process.

I achieved 30 years' service with West Midlands Police, attaining the rank of Detective Inspector within the Public Protection arena. Child Protection is within my heart. Since retiring, I have remained within the Public Protection arena, working for a national charity rescuing victims of modern slavery and also a more local charity, providing support and mentoring for the most vulnerable members of our community.

I am passionate and totally committed to protecting children, improving their situation and being a small part in achieving a safe, nurturing and happier future for them. I feel very fortunate to be a Chair within ACE. Each panel comprises independent members who have a professional and/or personal reason for being there. Without exception, each member has a genuine desire to contribute to a positive outcome for our extremely vulnerable children.

Having chaired a panel where a prospective adopter(s) has been approved and then chairing the subsequent panel for their match to a child(ren) is a source of great pride and immense pleasure to me. I feel very privileged to be a part of the adopter's and child's journey through adoption.

I am very proud of the successful approvals and matches with our children over the past year. I know, from personal experience, the utter joy, unconditional love and total commitment that adoption brings and I look forward to the coming year.

9.4 Lorraine Cooksey (Vice Chair):

The first year of ACE has been an interesting time. Panel members from across the region have worked together to operate in a cohesive way. It is important to note that all panel Chairs have personal experience of fostering and adoption at home and this gives an invaluable insight into the reality of adoption. It is my feeling that this is an important factor that prospective adopters will recognise when attending panel.

There is much work to do in the development of support plans and taking the longer term view. This is critical to give families the best possible experience as an adopted person and family. I continue to look forward to working with the agency in future development.

10 Development Plan for 2019-2020

10.1 This report is based on the first year of the operation of the ACE Adoption Panel. It has been a period of change in terms of administrative processes and key staff, including the Adoption Panel Adviser mid-way through the year.

The quarterly meetings with the Adoption Panel chairs have been constructive and the introduction of quality assurance processes has been invaluable. This with other practices will support improvements in adoption practice and the longer term stability of these placements.

10.2 Year 2 priorities for the Adoption Panel are:

- The integration of Panel members from Herefordshire Council and three new members.
- The re-arrangement of Panel meetings to convene up to 3 in Herefordshire between July 2019 and March 2020.
- To continue Panel recruitment to have a more representative Panel particularly including men and adopted people.
- Recruit more independent social workers and social work members with fostering experience.
- To firmly establish the quarterly feedback arrangements to ACE and the local authorities.
- To finalise the Adoption Panel Procedure incorporating ACE policies.
- To review of the feedback templates, to ensure that constructive and targeted feedback is available.
- To complete Adoption Panel member appraisals within the period April 2019 to March 2020.
- The assimilation of Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) principles into the Panel function, as facilitated by the agency's bid for certification and further training for Panel members.
- Strengthen communication and feedback between the Panel and the agency decision makers through a planned joint training event.
- To provide regular reports from ACE to the Panel to provide context on adoption outcomes, numbers of children waiting, number of adopters waiting, matches in last quarter, disruptions.
- To improve the quality of information to prospective adopters ahead of Panel and their experience of attending the meeting.
- To produce an electronic feedback format for adopters attending Panel.
- To improve the procedures for managing deferrals or negative recommendations.

Note: Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) provides a framework for supporting looked after and adopted children to recover from trauma through the parenting and support they receive, supplemented by therapy when appropriate. Based on theories of Attachment and Intersubjectivity, DDP aims to help family members to feel safe and connected through the development of healthy patterns of relating and communicating. Of central importance is supporting parents to manage challenging behaviour whilst also staying emotionally connected with the children. This is achieved by helping parents with day-to-day parenting based on principles of PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy), as well as through therapeutic sessions.

Kate Cowell
Adoption Panel Adviser

Brenda Vincent
ACE – Lead Manager

27 August 2019

Appendix A

Central Panel List

Margaret Powell, Independent Chair, adoptive parent, member of the IRM and Vice-Chair of an IFA Panel

Eamon Moran, Independent Chair, adoptive parent and foster carer

Heather Tobin, Independent Chair, adoptive parent and retired police officer

Lorraine Cooksey, Vice-Chair, adoptive parent and education specialist

Dr Alison Rigler, Agency Medical Adviser, Associate Specialist Community Paediatrician, Clinical Director, Children, Young People and Families, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust.

Dr Emma Thompson, Agency Medical Adviser, Paediatrician, Children, Young People and Families, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust

Dr Lucy Coker, Agency Medical Adviser, Senior Trust Specialist in Community Paediatrics, South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Viji Krishnamoorthy, Agency Medical Adviser, Paediatrician, C&W Partnership Trust

Dr Tanya Thangavelu, Agency Medical Adviser, Specialist Doctor, Community Paediatrics, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Kindy Sandhu, Elected member, Coventry City Council (first Panel April 2019; subsequently resigned)

Emma Wooldridge, Social work member and Family Finding Social Worker, ACE

Lisa Ruhback, Social work member and Post Adoption Social Worker, South Spoke, ACE

Parveen Nagra, Social work member and Post Adoption Social Worker, ACE

Margaret Meredith, Social work member and Assessing Social Worker, ACE

Ruth Hunter, Social work member and Assessing Social Worker, ACE

Claire Coutts, Independent social work member, Children and Families Social Worker



Liz Newman, Social work member and Team Manager, Stratford Children's Team, Warwickshire Children's Services

Deborah Roden, Social work member and Social Worker in Connected Persons Team, Warwickshire Fostering

Calvin Smith, Social work member and Service Manager, Warwickshire Children's Services

Hazel Howard, Social work member and Team Manager, ACE Hub

Dr Dan Lake, Educational Psychologist, Warwickshire Education and Learning (until February 2019)

Independent Members

Andrea Candlish, retired health visitor

Audrey Davies, adoptive parent and retired fostering panel administrator

Charlotte Shadbolt, adoptive parent of four children

Daniela Visram, foster carer with Warwickshire County Council

David Burgess, foster carer with Solihull MBC

Janis McBride, retired head teacher with personal experience of fostering and adoption

Karin Burrage-Pitchford, adoptive parent and teacher

Leanne Warren, adoptive parent

Maggie King, retired adoption social worker

Natasha Sutton, adoptive parent

Nigel Pendleton, adoptive parent and foster carer

Rob Rogers, adoptive parent, educationalist and counsellor

Sharon Bent, adoptive parent

Non-voting attendees

Kate Cowell, Panel Adviser (full time from 1 October 2018)

Melissa Rose, Acting Operations Manager, ACE Hub and panel adviser

Louise Hathaway, Operations Manager, ACE Spokes and panel adviser



Jemma Fordham, Operations Manager ACE Hub and panel adviser (on maternity leave from September 2018)

Ruba Aktar, Panel Administrator (part –time)

Sue Griffiths, Panel Administrator (part-time)

Michelle Rothwell, Panel Administrator (full-time until February 2019, resigned May 2019)

Adoption Panel assessment of PARs

- **Timescales for Stage Two assessment:**
8 met the timescale (i.e. 4 months between notification to proceed and ADM decision)
- **Overall readability:** sense, grammar, accuracy, proof-reading.
26 were adequate to good or very good to outstanding,
9 required improvement.
- **Completeness of the report to aid decision-making:**
23 were adequate to good or very good to outstanding,
8 required improvement
4 were inadequate.
- **The quality of the evidence supporting facts and statements:**
27 were adequate to good or very good to outstanding
5 required improvement
3 were inadequate
- **The quality of the social worker's analysis, conclusions and recommendations:**
26 were adequate to good or very good to outstanding
8 required improvement
1 was inadequate

Appendix C

Child Permanence Report (CPR) and Adoption Placement Reports

Child Permanence Report (CPR)

- **Overall readability of the report** (sense, grammar, accuracy, formatting, presentation):
14 adequate to good or very good to outstanding
10 required improvement.
- **Completeness of report to aid decision making:**
14 adequate to good or very good to outstanding
10 required improvement
- **Quality of analysis of the child's needs and implications for placement:**
1 outstanding,
17 adequate to good
6 lacking depth but adequate for purpose
- **Evidence of management oversight:**
11 as insufficient e.g. reports not signed, cut-and-paste errors unchallenged
- **Value of the report to the child as an adopted adult:**
8 were considered to be an adequate presentation of the child's journey to permanence,
15 were felt to need updating, correction, proof-reading or editing,
1 was not fit for purpose.

Adoption Placement Reports

- **Overall readability of the report:**
14 were adequate to good or very good to outstanding,
10 require amendments.
- **Evidence of family finding:**
6 reports provided detailed evidence,
15 were considered adequate but could be improved.
No family finding was evidenced in 1 case

1 case not applicable.

- **Explanation of why this match is proposed:**

4 reports were considered to lack a clear rationale for matching that child with that particular family.
- **Scope, content and quality of the Adoption Support Plan:**

1 plan was considered good, detailed and thorough,
23 were considered adequate for panel purposes but needing improvement for the sake of the adopters and child.
- **The rationale and proposals for contact after adoption:**

5 of the reports were considered to provide good detailed proposals.
17 required further consideration
2 were rated inadequate.
- **The child's voice and evidence of preparation for adoption:**

1 case, Panel felt that the evidence was strong,
11 cases the evidence was adequate.
This criterion did not apply in 8 cases where a child was already placed. In 4 cases panel could see no evidence that a verbal child had been helped to understand adoption or share their views.
- **Evidence that the adopters understanding the match and its implications:**

The Panels considered that all the reports evidenced adopters' having an understanding of the match, but felt that in 14 cases there could have been stronger evidence.
- **Evidence of management oversight:**

Yes in 17 cases,
Some oversight in 6,
None was evident in 1 case.
- **Panel administration** (i.e. all reports provided):

1 case had key papers missing,
3 cases had papers added late.