

**TACT Adoption
SIX MONTHLY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY
REPORT (NMS 25)
April 2017 – September 2017**

Details of Specific Notifiable Events - please indicate what happened and outcome e.g. complaints.

Child name	date of incident	Details of incident	
None			

Business Information

1. Adopter Information - initial visits completed, Stage 1, Stage 2 (assessment)etc.

Enquiries	74
Adopters to Stage 1	9
Adopters to Stage 2	8
Annual Reviews	0
Adopters withdrawn	2
Adopter families approved	11
Adopter families de-registered	0
Families receiving adoption support:	36
Families receiving therapy: (indicate the type of therapy)	Therapeutic Lifestory work (7) Play therapy (3) Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (5) Clinical psychological support (2)
Active post box agreements	374

2. Children Information - please indicate number of placements made any trends in age / gender / need / ethnicity etc. Specific details on more complex children. Adoptions, disruptions.

Number of placements as at 30.09 17	19
Number of new placements	17

Adopted (order granted)	
Children	7
Families	6

SBPA decisions

Agreed	13
Not agreed	1

2. Children

Adoption Orders

The number of adoption orders in this period (7) is similar to the same period last year. The youngest child was 6 months old when the order was made, and the oldest was 6 years old. There were 4 males and 3 females. 6 of the children were placed with their adopters under fostering for adoption (FFA) regulations and the 7th child was fostered by her adopters. All of the children were therefore able to join the family that was going to become their legal family at the earliest opportunity. 2 of the children were from eastern European backgrounds and 5 were white British. 2 of the children had the consent of their mothers to adoption.

Family Finding

Each child in Peterborough who has a care plan that includes adoption has a family finder from the permanency service. In this period there were 10 children who were referred to the service. On 30 September, there were 4 children with placement orders who were neither linked nor matched with an adopter. The longest a child had waited was 13 months.

The service uses Adoption match and Linkmaker which are online registers to source suitable adopters for children who do not have a locally suitable family.

The profile of the children needing adoptive homes remains broadly similar although there has been an increase in the number of older children and children who are to be placed with their brothers or sisters.

3. Finance Information – please provide limited summary of current financial performance in the quarter e.g. surplus / deficit.

Adoption allowances were being paid in respect of 56 children on 30 September.

Full financial information will be provided in the Permanency service update.

4. Customer Information - please include results of surveys, changes made to services as a result of listening to adopter views, information from adopter events feedback forms etc.

During this period the service ran :

Monthly adopter support groups:

The support group is a new initiative which started in the last year. The group meets at the NSPCC in Peterborough. The NSPCC allow use of their room and kitchen free of charge. Currently 7 adoptive families make use of the group and feedback is very positive about the safe environment where adopters are able to speak openly to others who understand their situation.

The aim of the group is to provide a supportive and reflective space in which members can focus on the emotional issues that arise in day to day life with their adopted children. The group allows them to share and process their feelings as well as gain support and understanding from each other.

The group has no formal agenda and issues are discussed as and when they arise. An example of themes explored are: morning routines, managing school holidays, families that include birth children and adopted children, behaviour management and social media.

Monthly Play and Stay groups:

These have been running successfully now for over 4 years and provide an opportunity for pre-school adopted children and their families to meet in an informal setting to play and chat.

The group meets in a community setting in the south of the city. Messy play activities are often included which are enjoyed by all. This group has a good core of members of approximately 20 families, which inevitably changes as children leave to start school.

An adopter said to us:

“It is good to be able to go to a group where you know you won’t be asked any difficult questions like ‘what time was she born or how was the birth?’

2 September 2017 – Summer picnic – very good turnout of adopters and children including new and established adopters.

The consortium.

East Midlands Adoption Consortium (EMAC) provided the following training

opportunities which were attended by staff:

The Teenage Brain.

Annual conference – focus on adoption support.

Therapeutic crisis intervention.

Upcoming events:

27 October – Halloween Party

9 December – Christmas Party

5. Panel Information – please indicate summary of panel business and activity and any changes in panel membership.

The Peterborough City Council adoption panel became a Joint TACT and Peterborough adoption panel on 1 April 2017.

Gary Shorter is the main adoption panel chair, however Jack McConnochie, chair and Fernley Copping, vice chair also cover adoption panels if required.

Simon Green is the agency decision maker for Peterborough City Council and considers panel's recommendations on adoption matches.

Alister Brown is the agency decision maker for TACT and considers panel's recommendations on the approval of adopters.

The adoption panel adviser role is now fulfilled by Sue King, Head of Service.

Panel receives legal advice from Peterborough City Council legal team. Its medical adviser is Dr Augustic, community paediatrician.

There were 9 adoption panel meetings in total.

In this period 11 adoptive families were approved, 9 of which were also approved as suitable to be Fostering for adoption (FFA) carers.

Panel considered matches with adopters for 17 children. 14 of these were placed with TACT Peterborough adopters and 3 were with interagency adopters.

There have been no changes to panel membership. Recruitment of additional panel members to increase the diversity and representation will be considered in the next 6 months.

The first business meeting for panel chairs and agency decision makers will take place on 20 December 2017.

Joint training for panel and staff will take place on 18 December with a focus on safeguarding and the Independent review mechanism. The carer training programme

has been made available to all panel members.

6. Grant update

The partnership of TACT Peterborough and PCC was successful in achieving Innovation funding from the DfE of £1.2 million for a three year period. This will be used to support carers and children in a range of activities.

The main initiative areas are listed below and in italics if more suitable for adoptive families or children:

***Strength based assessments** – A short term working group has been established with representatives from the service, PCC, children's participation workers, foster carers and adopters to develop children's profiles.*

***Mediation for contact** - to support positive contact arrangements for special guardians initially.*

Life story work for children with special guardianship orders

***Mindfulness groups for all carer groups** – In collaboration with Adoption Plus. There will be four groups annually, the first of which will take place in January 2018.*

***Nurturing Attachment groups** – therapeutic parenting groups for all carers.*

Fostering changes courses – all staff are being trained in this parenting model to be able to offer a consistent approach to carers.

***Preparation groups** – Joined up groups for all permanency groups offering a modular approach.*

***Attachment aware city** – Members of the service, Dee Glover, Virtual head, 2 adoptive parents and TACT Peterborough's had of service are attending the AUK conference in November on attachment in schools to spearhead this project.*

Parallel Parenting- Two tranches of training have taken place with staff and five identified carers.

Therapeutic support to special guardians – a service that offers families a named worker to support emotional regulation in the family, alongside practical parenting support.

***VIPP therapeutic intervention** – (Video interactive parenting programme) – in collaboration with the Tavistock.*

7. Adoption Support

The key adoption support functions are primarily being carried out by the permanency social workers who already have experience of the work, however training is being offered to all staff to increase their knowledge in this area.

Adoption support to children and families has been the most significant area of work. TACT Peterborough has responsibility to all Peterborough children for 3 years after the adoption order is made regardless of the local authority in which the child is living, however this transfers to the home local authority after 3 years. Many of the children from Peterborough are placed outside of the city often due to safety or security reasons. Equally there are children who are placed with Peterborough families who become the responsibility of TACT Peterborough after the 3 years has elapsed.

A core offer is available to adoptive families which includes access to the carer training programme, the clinical psychology service, support groups, family events and an assessment of support needs.

If therapeutic support is the outcome of an assessment an application can be made to the Adoption Support Fund. (ASF) There is a fair access limit of £5000 per annum for each child, and additionally £2500 for a specialist therapeutic assessment per annum. Any therapy required which costs more than £5000 is required to be provided in a match funded arrangement between the local authority and the ASF.

31 applications have been made to the adoption support fund in this period. The average funding requested is £3165.19 with the total amount received since the ASF became available on 1 May 2015 of £155,094.33. No requests for match funding have been required to date.

The service has invested in staff to deliver therapeutic interventions such as theraplay, DDP (Dyadic developmental psychotherapy) and VIPP. The service is able to claim against the time for these interventions and reinvest the funds received into further staff training.

It is a requirement to provide independent birth parent counselling when a child has a plan of adoption. Adoptionplus is commissioned to provide this service. 20 parents were referred to the service in this period. It is a difficult to encourage engagement however a pending service is offered for a period which has had some success.

Staff business

- 1. Staff meetings / team developments / area news** - *please indicate meetings held, specific issues covered, specific events such as celebration events etc.*

From the 1 April 2017, all statutory adoption functions in respect of the following passed over to TACT Peterborough:

Adopter recruitment, assessment, family finding, placement support.

Family finding for children with plans of adoption in Peterborough

Adoption support for birth family members, adopted children and adoptive families

Adoption contact services

Birth records counselling for adopted adults

Inter-country adoptions

Non-agency adoptions.

Each team within the service holds team meetings on a monthly basis. The service meets monthly for practice workshops. One of these focused on adoption support plans given the increase in referrals.

Team away days have been held to support team and service development alongside social events.

2. Update on staffing within the team and checks completed - please indicate changes in staff, students, sessional staff, training attended etc. Also cover appraisals completed

The structure chart is attached which outlines the configuration of the new service. In brief, the model of delivery has 3 social work teams, each managed by a consultant social worker. The teams are comprised of social workers and team support workers. The teams work on all aspects of permanency and do not focus on either fostering or adoption solely as previously. The premise being that children and carers experience of the services they receive should not be determined by the child's legal order.

There are 19.6 fte social work staff in the permanency service.

2 team support workers deliver the post adoption contact service. This remains a well-respected service and the workers establish good relationships with the birth parents of the adopted children. This helps significantly when they then come to write the annual or bi-annual letter to their children.

There are 4 members of staff who are practice educators. In this period there has been 1 student social worker completing a 100 day placement. 1 member of staff has recently started the practice educator course with Anglia Ruskin University.

All members of staff have completed mandatory 'Prevent' training. They have also been required to attend at least 1 course from the carer training programme. This has proved a successful way to develop links across the different groups.

The TACT appraisal cycle is different from Peterborough, and the service has become aligned to this. Appraisals will take place in October and November.

3. Conclusion - please refer to overall effectiveness of service; give examples of outcomes for children and young people. This needs to be analytical and evaluative not just descriptive.

The TACT Peterborough Permanency Service commenced in April 2017 and has

continued to build on the good work that had been previously achieved.

The highlights have been as follows:

- The high number of placements made for children (17) with very few waiting long to find an adoptive home. Adopters were found for children with complex needs, in sibling groups and who were older.
- There have been no disruptions in this period, maintaining the high stability rates for this group of children.
- The ASF has been utilised increasingly for Peterborough children to be able to offer appropriate therapeutic support. 100% of applications to the ASF for therapeutic support were agreed.
- FFA has become very well-established as a practice within Peterborough. The number of adopters approved for FFA has increased from 65% to 81%. The number of children adopted, placed under FFA has also increased from 60% to 85%.
- The adoption support offer of in-house therapeutic support has benefited more local families, as it have become embedded in staff practice.

The likely challenges will be:

- Continuing to find suitable adopters for the increasingly complex children needing adoption in a climate where adopter numbers are decreasing nationally. For the first time since the adoption reform agenda was brought in, adopter numbers are lower than the numbers of children waiting.
- Ensuring that children achieve legal permanence through adoption at the earliest opportunity, thereby improving the adoption scorecard indicators.
- The support needs of the older children is often greater given the early emotional trauma that they have experienced and we have needed to be creative in our offer to the adoptive parents to prevent disruption of the placement. There are financial and resource implications due to the increasing complexity of children needing adoption.
- Integrating the TACT London adoption service fully into TACT Peterborough.

Signature	
Head of Service	Sue King
Date	16/10/2017

Signature	
Director Children's Services	Andy Pallas
Date	16/10/2017

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