

**North Tyneside Council
Adoption Action Plan**

2012 – 2013

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(updated 6 January 2013)**

Area for Improvement	Action	Outcome	Lead	Timescale	Update
<p>The swifter matching of a child to prospective adopters.</p> <p>Refer to appendix 2 for current performance – API 1</p>	<p>Automatic referral of children to the National Adoption Register after a referral period of 3 months, if an 'in house' adoptive family has not been identified.</p>	<p>Swifter identification of potential adopters and the consequent match of child with adoptive parents.</p>	<p>Fostering & Adoption Service Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Fully achieved</p>
<p>The Local Authority to ensure the adoption placement of children is not delayed when no in-house adopter is available; by better commissioning of adoptive placements from voluntary agencies.</p>	<p>Fostering & Adoption Service Manager to manage budget to ensure capacity to purchase adoptive placements from voluntary agencies; when no in-house or other Local Authority adoptive placement is available. This will reduce delay.</p>	<p>Sufficient numbers of adopters.</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Manager, Commissioning and Fostering & Adoption Service Manager</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>Fully achieved</p>
<p>Ensuring better join up and co-ordination of the care planning and legal proceedings for children for whom adoption is a potential outcome</p>	<p>Discussion and subsequent actions with the local courts and social work teams will ensure Care proceedings are completed within a target time of 6 months.</p> <p>The search for adoptive families will commence at an early stage for a child for whom adoption is a likely outcome: local courts approving such pro-active planning.</p>	<p>The key indicators for adoption performance will be maintained at a high level.</p> <p>The time it takes to secure adoption for a child will be improved through quicker decision making. Those children for whom adoption is a potential outcome will have fewer placement moves as the</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Manager, Fieldwork, Adoption Monitoring Group . Fostering & Adoption Service Manager.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Meeting with Senior Managers held and development of practice to be monitored on a monthly basis through the Adoption Monitoring Group.</p> <p>Regional conference on</p>

	Concurrent planning to be available for children aged 2 and under for whom adoption is a potential outcome.	court will allow them to move on a fostering basis to potential adopters: a concurrent placement.			contact to be commissioned by NTC in March 2013.
More people to be approved as adopters and the assessment process to be quicker and more 'user' orientated.	The current Adoption Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services need to be amended by Government to reflect the requirement to complete assessments quicker. The Adoption Service to amend current training and assessment documents to enable the timescales to be met.	The application and assessment journey for those applying to be adopters will be experienced by them as effective and focused.	Fostering & Adoption Service Manager Corporate Parenting Manager	Amendment of National Minimum Standards awaited in 2013	Practice to achieve this fully is integrated under present regulations. Once new regulations in statute practice to be reviewed to ensure compliance.
"Fast tracking" for previous adopters and current foster carers applying to adopt a child in their care.	Changes are required to the current regulations/guidance to fully implement revised practice in this area.	The adoption outcome will be made available more quickly and effectively for children: the assessment process will be pragmatically applied for those who are experienced foster carers and or adopters	Corporate Parenting Manager and Fostering & Adoption Service Manager	Amendment of National Minimum Standards awaited in 2013	Practice to achieve this is fully integrated under present regulations. Once new regulations in statute practice to be reviewed to ensure compliance.
Government to develop a 'National Gateway' for adopters	A central point of contact for prospective adopters in England to provide expert, clear and objective information.	Adopters will have an increased gateway to potential adoptive children nationally. North Tyneside will use all tools available locally and nationally to secure adoption for suitable children.	Fostering & Adoption Service Manager	2013	The contract to provide the National Gateway was awarded to Adoption UK and Coram. The gateway is now called First4Adoption

					and due for launch in Spring 2013.
A reduction of delays in securing an adoption outcome.	The tracking system in place for children requiring permanency outcomes will be revised to ensure all potential obstacles to quick and effective decisions are dealt with. The statutory review process will focus upon monitoring timescales and deadlines for decision making with respect to adoption outcomes.	A significant reduction in any delay in a child's journey towards adoption. Data has been tracked since September 2012.	Corporate Parenting Manager, Adoption Monitoring Group, Fieldwork Manager and IRO Managers	Ongoing	New tracking system in place and monitoring of delays continue to deal with any problems and take action swiftly
The Introduction of the Adoption Scorecard.	Local, Regional and National tracking of adoption performance will allow for comparisons of performance and application of best practice. NTC Adoption service will ensure the adoption scorecard is effectively applied in the borough	NTC's performance will be benchmarked with comparators and where improvements required these will be applied.	Research & Intelligence, Corporate Parenting Manager, Adoption Monitoring Group and Corporate Parenting Committee	Ongoing	Performance continues to be tracked and performance management embedded.
Improved support 'after adoption'.	The introduction of the adoption passport is under development to provide adoptive families with a greater clarity about what post adoption support they can expect in their area.	North Tyneside will make an explicit offer of post adoption support. The North Tyneside offer will make clear what adopters can expect. The introduction of specialist support workers and a post adoption social worker will ensure consistency in practice and enable the development of this area in line with	Fostering & Adoption Service Manager	Government summer Children in Care publication due for publication in June/July 2013.	Review of therapeutic services for all Looked After Children to include those adopted is scheduled.

		assessed need.			
<p>To investigate in greater depth the reasons for permanence planning 'away' from adoption.</p> <p>Refer to appendix 2 for current performance – API 4</p>	<p>Decision making changes in care planning to be more closely monitored to facilitate greater understanding of this issue.</p> <p>Improved data analysis will ensure more effective practice.</p>	<p>There will be an Increase in permanency/adoption within set timescales and better performance overall.</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Manager, Fieldwork Manager, Fostering & Adoption Service Manager, IRO Managers and Research & Intelligence</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Monitoring continues.</p>
<p>Robust monitoring will be introduced to track the time between a child entering care and moving in with his/her adoptive family.</p> <p>Refer to appendix 2 for current performance – API 2</p>	<p>The Adoption Monitoring Group to ensure all cases meet the threshold set for 2013-16 of 458 days between a child entering care and being adopted.</p> <p>A new tracker system has been developed to support monitoring of this requirement.</p>	<p>The performance level required for 2013-16 will be reached and maintained. Improved timescales for adoption will be maintained.</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Manager and Adoption Monitoring Group</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>Tracker in place and monitoring at AGM.</p>
<p>Completion of Care Proceedings within 40 weeks.</p> <p>Refer to appendix 2 for current performance – API 3</p>	<p>Discussions with local courts have been started to eliminate delay both in the court and local authority processes so that the 40 week deadline can be achieved.</p>	<p>To reach the performance level for 2013-16.</p> <p>Improved timescales for adoption.</p>	<p>Fieldwork Operations Manager and Legal Services</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>Tracker in place and monitoring at Adoption Monitoring Group.</p>
<p>Placement of children (those for whom adoption is the plan) with adopters within 21 months of entering the care system.</p>	<p>Monitoring of the timeliness of the adoption journey is in place to eliminate 'time waste' and deal with operational problems and difficulties that add unnecessarily to the time taken</p>	<p>A higher % of children will be placed within 21 months of entering care. This is indicative of better performance.</p>	<p>Operational Fieldwork Manager and Fostering & Adoption Service</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Monitored by Fostering & Adoption Service Manager and Adoption Monitoring Group.</p>

Refer to appendix 2 for current performance – API 2	to achieve adoption.		Manager		
Data analysis of Black and Minority and Ethnic children leaving care through adoption Refer to appendix 2 for current performance – API 5	Greater understanding and collection of data will ensure a fuller awareness of the issues involved. This in turn will be used to improve performance	Issues of equality and diversity will be effectively tackled through an improved understanding of BME children’s journey through to adoption	Research & Intelligence, Fostering & Adoption Service Manager, Fieldwork Manager and Adoption Monitoring Group	Ongoing	This information is maintained.
The adoption decision maker role to be reviewed in line with new guidance The role of Adoption Panel to be adjusted in line with new guidance.	A revised procedure for approval of the plan for adoption by the Agency Decision Maker to be introduced. The adoption panel processes to be adjusted to adapt to the new guidance	To ensure swift outcomes through care/legal system to the decision for adoption.	Agency Decision Maker, Corporate Parenting Manager, Fostering & Adoption Service Manager and Fieldwork Manager	August 2012	Achieved 1/9/12
A forum to be facilitated to consider how best to deliver best practice in finding suitable adoptive families in local areas.	Directors of Children Services to convene a local round table meeting with the local judiciary	Enhanced regional initiatives.	DCS’s – regionally	13 th September 2012	Achieved 13/9/12 and subsequent events to be organised.