

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 26 September 2017
Subject:	Adoption Annual Report		
Report of:	Head of Children's Social Care	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:			
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report is provided as part of the monitoring of Sefton Adoption Service required under Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and Adoption Minimum Standards 2011.

This end of year report provides details of adoption activity from 1.4.16 to 31.3.17.

Almost all children placed for adoption have been placed from public care. It is a challenging task for Local Authorities and the courts to analytically conclude that parents cannot safely parent their child/children. Adoption is a last resort for children after all other options have been completely exhausted. This report details the activities in respect of 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

Recommendation(s):

- 1) To note the content of Sefton`s Adoption Service Annual Report 2016 – 2017.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Overview and scrutiny committee have a good understanding of adoption activity, including the needs of the children who are placed for adoption and the work to ensure that we assess and support potential adopters

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

N/A

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Children who are looked after and cannot remain with their family have the opportunity to be adopted by parents who are able to meet their needs and can grow to adulthood as a member of a family.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's life chances are improved by growing up in a safe and secure family.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Adoption services are a core function of Children's social Care.
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener N/A

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What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD4865/17) has been consulted and has no comments as the report has no direct financial implications.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD4149/17) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Implementation Date for the Decision

N/A

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Contact Officer:	Vicky Buchanan
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 3128
Email Address:	vicky.buchanan@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

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Background Papers:

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1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Almost all children placed for adoption have been placed from public care. It is a challenging task for Local Authorities and the courts to analytically conclude that parents cannot safely parent their child/children. Adoption is a last resort for children after all other options have been completely exhausted. Minimum delay is crucial in securing permanence for children.

Attachment and neuroscience research have been key in identifying that early permanence provides better outcomes for children. Due to their previous experiences of trauma, abuse, broken attachments and separation children placed for adoption often have greater difficulties in managing their emotions, behaviours and feeling safe in relationships.

Adoptive parents need to be exceptional parents and provide therapeutic parenting that over time will help children heal from trauma. As an Adoption Agency we have a duty to find the right families for children, families who have fully evidenced their motivation, emotional resilience, adoptive parenting capacity and openness/ reflection of their own attachment history.

In recent years the Government has made significant policy and legislative changes to promote children leaving the looked after system to the emotional and legal security that adoption provides. It is now expected that 80% of care proceedings will be completed within 26 weeks. The younger a child is on placement, the better chances of successful adoption. This led to the "Fostering to Adopt" initiative that has allowed children to be placed in their potential place of permanence with approved adopters who are temporarily approved as foster carers. This route to adoption promotes early attachment and minimises the disruption of moves for children.

The Adoption Scorecard was introduced in May 2012 in order to compare, monitor and improve Local Authorities' performance against specific timescale measures. Significant changes have also been made relating to the recruitment and assessment process for prospective adopters which reflects a speedier process. These changes were published as Statutory Guidance.

The Annual report details Sefton's progress in the last year.