

To the Chair and Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

ADOPTION LEADERSHIP BOARD (ALB) BRIEFING HEADLINE MEASURES

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly lead Member for Children's Services		All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Information on the adoption process, derived from the quarterly adoption leadership board (ALB) Adoption survey is provided at local level where available. It shows performance against the four headline measures used by the ALB to monitor performance. All regional and Local Authority level data relates to Local Authority activity only.
2. Doncaster continues to have twice the number of children waiting per 10,000 than the England, Statistical Neighbour and Yorkshire and Humber averages. This figure shows an increasing trend, whilst the Yorkshire and Humber and England averages show a decreasing trend. Information from our regional consortia indicates that whilst Doncaster has continued to maintain a high number of placement orders: locally and nationally the number of placement orders made has reduced considerably.
3. Adopter availability is twice that of our local region and statistical neighbours and over 8 times the England average. England and Yorkshire and Humber averages show a slight decrease. Doncaster has maintained availability levels.
4. Some delays in timeliness of adoption for children have been noted in 2014/15 to date. This was a national trend as courts responded to the B-S (children) 2013 judgement. The impact of this case law precedent as set out by the President of the Family Courts, Sir James Munby, was to place greater responsibility on social workers as to why adoption was the *best* option for the child rather than the only option left by process of elimination. Despite further clarification as to intent by Sir James Munby court timeliness continues to be affected by the judgement
5. In terms of timeliness of approval of adopters: Doncaster has been performing below the national and regional averages. This has been due to delays in obtaining adopter medical advisor comment. This issue has now been resolved with a new commissioned service providing comment within strict timescales.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. Not applicable

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel accepts the report and note the efforts being made to improve service effectiveness

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. Children in Doncaster who require adoptive families will be appropriately matched with families without undue delay. Prospective adopters in Doncaster will be assessed and matched to children without undue delay

BACKGROUND

Adoption Leadership Board: Headline Measures Statistical Briefing Quarter 2 (July to September) 2015-16

Introduction

9. Information on the adoption process, derived from the quarterly Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) adoption survey is provided at a local level where available. It shows performance against the four headline measures used by the ALB to monitor performance. All regional and Local Authority level data in this pack relate to Local Authority activity only. Adopter information relates to adopter families.

Changes to Quarter 1

10. Quarter 1's figures have been revised in the latest publication and replace the previous figures reported. A common reason for the amendment is the placement order date which may have occurred during the previous quarter but had not filtered through from the courts by the time of the data collection.
11. It is important to note that figures when published are rounded to the nearest 5 and may mean the change is smaller than reported; for example the actual number of children waiting has reduced from 48 to 47, which when rounded to the nearest 5, went from 50 down to 45.
12. In addition, following Local Government reorganisation there has been a change to the statistical (nearest) neighbours which previously included St Helens for Doncaster and now includes Telford & Wrekin.
13. Figures relating to timeliness cover the average across the first two quarters of 2014-15 rather than individual quarters to minimise suppression.

Summary of Key Findings at Quarter 2 2015-16

Children waiting: The number of children with a placement order waiting to be placed with an adoptive family

14. National and regional levels continue to show improvement with a reduction in numbers since the previous quarter. In Doncaster performance is still below the national average and the 17% increase in children waiting since quarter 4 shows it remains a key area of priority. This higher number of children waiting

is indicative of higher numbers of children being granted a placement order (the order which enables children to be placed for adoption) rather than children waiting longer for adoption as can be evidenced by the adopter timeliness information below. Doncaster continues to successfully find adoptive placements for harder to place children and although this is undoubtedly positive it does increase overall numbers waiting.

Adopter gap: The difference between the ‘number of adopters needed for children with a placement order waiting to be placed’ and the ‘number of adopters waiting to be matched

15. Based on the number of approvers not yet matched performance in Yorkshire and Humber has declined slightly but in Doncaster has remained consistent. This indicates performance slightly above regional and National averages.

Child Timeliness: The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adopted family

16. Nationally there has been no improvement in child timeliness levels since quarter 4. The national average for the first half of the year is 547 days. Performance in Doncaster is currently one day below the national average at 546 days and slightly above the regional average of 544 days.

This is a decline in performance from a 522 day average in quarter 4. This decline in performance is due to a number of hard to place children who had waited significant time for adoption being placed in Q2 and does not reflect an overall decline in performance.

Adopter Timeliness: The average time between an adoption agency receiving an application from a potential adopter to a child matched

17. Performance of adopter timeliness has improved nationally since the previous year’s quarter 4 returns when the national average for the first half of the year was 363 days. The current Q2 return average is 248 days nationally and 230 regionally. The Doncaster adopter average is 2674 days, considerably above regional and national averages. This is largely due to delays in adopter medical advisor comments. The adult medical advisor role has been re-commissioned by the CCG with clear contractual performance indicators on timeliness of response.

Performance Data

18. Counts have been rounded to the nearest 5 at LA level or 10 at national and regional level. Average times are rounded to the nearest day.

The following symbols were used:

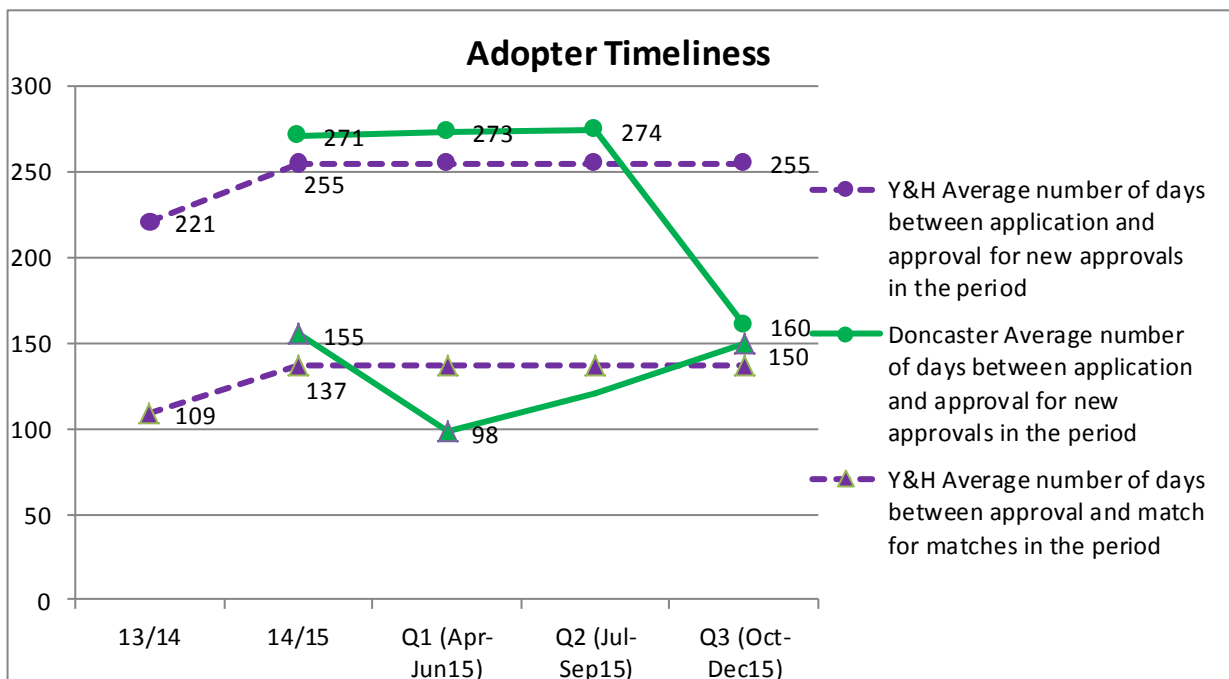
x	Suppressed due to low numbers – where a count is 5 or fewer, or times and percentages are based on a count of 10 or fewer
0	Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.
..	Data not returned – note that some items have been returned but suppressed due to data quality concerns

.	Not applicable
-	Negligible – used to represent a percentage below 0.5%

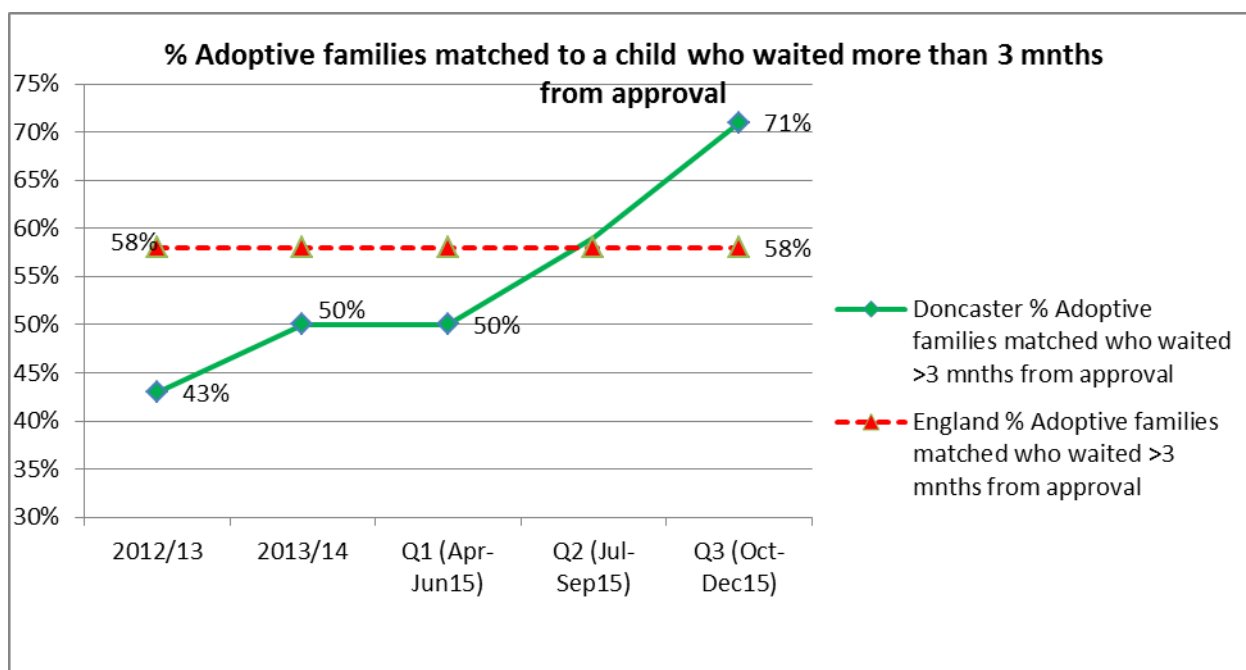
AREA COMPARISON	Population Estimates Under 18 Years (ONS)	HEADLINE MEASURES										
		1. Children (with Placement Order but not placed) waiting							2. Approved Adopters (Approved Adoptive families waiting to be matched)			
		Q4 (2014-15)		Q1 (2015-16)		Q2 (2015-16)		% Change since Q4	Q4 (2014-15)	Q1 (2015-16)	Q2 (2015-16)	% Change since Q4
		Total	Per 10,000	Total	per 10,000	Total	per 10,000					
England	11,591,700	3,060	2.64	2540	2.19	2030	1.75	-34%	3350	2,810	3180	-5%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,141,000	303	2.65	283	2.48	261	2.28	-14%	299	280	291	-3%
Doncaster	65,200	24	3.68	30	4.60	28	4.29	17%	18	15	18	0%

AREA COMPARISON	HEADLINE MEASURES									
	3. Child timeliness (days between entering care & placed with family) Scorecard Indicator A1					4. Adopter timeliness (days between application & approval)				
	Q4 (2014-15)	Q1 (2015-16)	Q2 (2015-16)	% Change since Q4		Q4 (2014-15)	Q1 (2015-16)	Q2 (2015-16)	% Change since Q4	
England	547	523	547	0%		233	254	248	6%	
Yorkshire and The Humber	536	567	544	2%		255	232	230	-10%	
Doncaster	522	461	546	5%		271	273	274	1%	

Adopter Timeliness

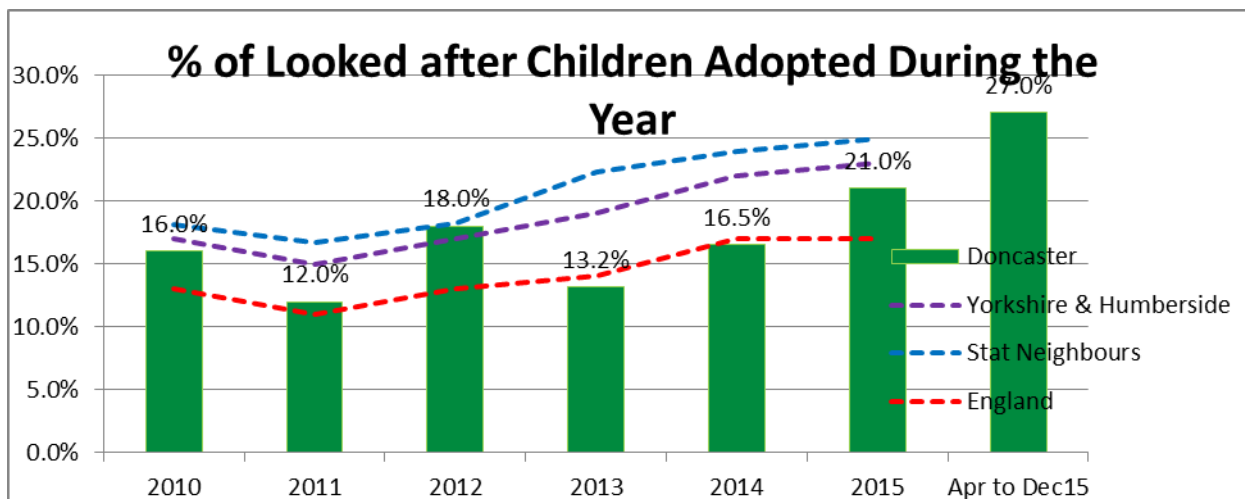


19. There has only been one new approval during Quarter 3. A total of 14 new approvals for Q1, Q2 & Q3. Approvals have taken an average of 160 days from application to approval in Q3. The 1 adoptive family approved during Q3 is a second time adopter family. These approvals go straight to Stage 2, hence timeliness at 160 days during this quarter
20. The overall numbers of adopters approved has reduced as we have sufficient adopters waiting to meet the needs of all children who are under two and have limited additional complexity. We have therefore focussed on approval of adopters who are willing to adopt older children, children with complex needs and sibling groups.



21. There were 7 matches during Quarter 3 (October to December 15). 4 matches were made during Q1 and 0 for Q2. 5 (71%) of the matches made waited longer than three months from approval to matching. This apparent deterioration in timeliness is due to a number of placements made of children who are hard to place and who have been waiting for some time.

								Q1 (Apr-Jun15)	Q2 (Jul-Sep15)	Q3 (Oct-Dec15)	Q4 (all data 15/16)
Children in the Adoption System											
% Children who wait less than 18 mnths between entering care and being placed (those adopted & placed & those in adoption system) (Adoption Scorecard 3)								59.3%	63.8%	58.3%	
Data from Adoption Leadership Board (ALB)											
Yearly Adoption Figures											
	12/13	13/14	14/15	Apr to Dec15	Quarterly Adoption Figures						
No. of Children Adopted	27	37	37	35	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		
% of Children Adopted (Adoption 1 Indicator)	13.2%	16.5%	21%	27.0%	7	19	9		35		
% of Looked After Children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted (Adoption 1)											
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Apr to Dec15				
Doncaster	16.0%	12.0%	18.0%	13.2%	16.5%	21.0%	27.0%				
Yorkshire & Humberside	17.0%	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	22.0%	23.0%					
Stat Neighbours	18.1%	16.7%	18.2%	22.3%	23.9%	25.0%					
England	13.0%	11.0%	13.0%	14.0%	17.0%	17.0%					



Doncaster is out performing all regional and England averages in terms of the percentage of looked after children adopted during the year.

This performance shows continuous improvement from 2010.

20. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable

21. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED OPTION

Not applicable

22. IMPACT ON THE COUNCILS KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>Those Doncaster children who cannot live with their own families live with loving and supportive adoptive families wherever possible</p>
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>Adopted children have the right support to access good healthcare and address any health concerns</p>
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural</p>	<p>Adopted children live in good</p>

	<p>environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>quality homes which meet their needs</p>
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>Adopted children live in thriving families</p>
	<p>Council services are modern and value for money.</p>	
	<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.</p>	<p>The adoption service has been graded as good in both the Voluntary Adoption Agency assessment and the Single Inspection</p>

23. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Adoption team has performed well in recent Voluntary Adoption inspection and the Single inspection, with a grading of 'Good' in both inspections. The service has had success in placement of hard to place children and this brings financial benefits as well as improved outcomes for children. The underlying rate of looked after children per 10,000 is however high and improvements are needed in the early help service in order to assist in the reduction of numbers of looked after children overall.

24. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no corporate legal implications.

25. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Adoption is financial benefit as well as improved outcomes as the service does not have to continue to pay fostering allowances or provide on-going social work support. The service continues to purchase placements of children who cannot live in Doncaster or who have complex needs, just as we sell placements with Doncaster assessed adopters. The government has recently made available a fund to purchase of external placements of hard to place children and we make full use of this. Currently 5 placements have been funded in this way.

26. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

None

27. TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

None

28. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

None

29. CONSULTATION

None

30. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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