



Select Committee Children and Young People and Independent and Healthy Lives

Date: 9 February 2010

Ofsted Inspection of the Adoption Service December 2009

Report of the Executive Director: Children and Young People

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Cllr Jim Foreman

Why has the Report come to Select Committee?

1. To inform the members of the “outstanding” outcome achieved in an area where they have Corporate Parenting responsibilities

How is this linked with the Community Strategy aims and objectives?

2. The activity of the Adoption Service inspected by Ofsted, is linked to the aims and objectives of the Community Strategy. This is evidenced on page 38 of the Strategy. The Service embraces:

Action 61 – “Continue to recruit in fostering and adoption”

Action 63 – “ Increase the number of adoptive parents”

Performing Together Reference: H2

Contact Officer:

Terry Fitzpatrick, Adoption and Permanence Manager –
Adoption, Tel: 423 8500

Action 72 – “ Ensure services continue to meet National Care Standards

What are Members asked to do?

3. Members are asked to note the contents of the report

How will Members views make a difference?

4. It will give endorsement to the work of the adoption agency

Introduction

5. The attached document is the final report produced by Ofsted following their inspection of the Adoption Service in December 2009.
6. This was an announced key inspection where the service is measured against the National Minimum Standards and associated Adoption Legislation, for its delivery of the Every Child Matters outcomes.
7. The overall finding of the inspectors was that the service is **Outstanding**.
8. In all areas measured the judgement was Outstanding too and no recommendations for improvement were made. This follows a similarly successful inspection in 2006

Background Information (Optional)

9. Key points made within the body of the report were: -
 - Children’s needs at the forefront of all activity
 - Clear and focused strategy around the recruitment of adopters
 - An impressive record of placing children with families in a very timely way.
 - An exceptionally well managed adoption panel.
 - Very efficient administrative arrangements for supporting panel.
 - Very timely agency decisions due to flexibility of agency decision maker.
 - A highly qualified manager and staff team who have all been in post for some considerable time bring stability and consistency to the agency.
 - High levels of support to adopters
 - Life story work arrangements were seen as outstanding both in terms of the quality of the work produced and the organisation of the project

- The children's guides produced by the service were seen as impressive and innovative. They were said demonstrate the dynamic and committed approach that the service has to children
- Information provided to people enquiring about adoption was seen as impressive.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding
- The management of the agency at all levels including the executive was seen as dynamic, innovative and seeking to improve continuously
- The energy with which the service is managed is impressive and everyone involved in running the service is held in high esteem across the authority.

Challenges

10. The main challenge to the service is the ability to maintain such high standards during the next three-year period.

Key Issues

11. The key issues are linked to the fact that the service is one of the best performing adoption agencies in the country as judged by both the DCSF and now by Ofsted.
The focus of the service therefore has to be on the maintenance of the high standards already set

Financial and Value for Money Implications

12. The delivery of service was provided within budget. This was bolstered by the ability of the service to generate an income through the sale of families to other adoption agencies. Ofsted judged the management of the service to be outstanding.

Legal Implications

13. The report indicates that not only is the service meeting its statutory obligations but also it is exceeding them in all areas.

Risk and Opportunity Implications

14. There are no risk implications associated with this report

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Equality and Diversity Implications

15. Ofsted judged that the approach taken by the Adoption Service to Equality and Diversity is also outstanding

Environmental and Sustainability Implications

13. None

Recommendations

14. Members are asked to note the contents of the attached report.

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The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location

Performing Together Reference: H2

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