



## Corporate Parenting Board

**Date:** Thursday, 28 April 2022  
**Time:** 5.00 pm  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

**Members (Quorum 3)**

Kate Wheller (Chairman), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chairman), Ryan Holloway, Carole Jones, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby and Cathy Lugg

**Chief Executive:** Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact Tel: 01305 224709 - [megan.r.rochester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:megan.r.rochester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

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### Agenda

Item	Pages
<b>1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b>	
The Chair to open the meeting and welcome those present.	
<b>2. APOLOGIES</b>	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their decision councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	
If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.	

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

5 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

#### **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit up to two questions or two statements for each meeting. Alternatively, you could submit one question and one statement for each meeting.

All submissions must be emailed in full to [megan.r.rochester@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:megan.r.rochester@dorsetcc.gov.uk) by 8.30am on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

When submitting your question(s) and/or statement(s) please note that:

- no more than three minutes will be allowed for any one question or statement to be asked/read
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context, and this will be included within the three minute period
- please note that sub divided questions count towards your total of two
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g. the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

#### **6. INTRODUCTION AND SCENE SETTING**

Theresa Leavy, Executive Director Children, to set the scene of the meeting.

#### **7. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

11 - 20

Matthew Chislett, Service Manager Corporate Parenting and Permanence, to report.

8. **CORPORATE PARENTING DATASET** 21 - 38
- To receive a report from the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting and Permanence.
9. **THE PROMISE TO CHILDREN ANNUAL REVIEW** 39 - 46
- Simon Fraiz-Brown, Service Manager Young and Thriving, to report.
10. **CHILDREN IN CARE AT RISK OF OFFENDING AND CUSTODY** 47 - 52
- David Webb, Service Manager Dorset Combines Youth Justice Service, to report.
11. **FOSTERING PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FEEDBACK FROM PANEL. FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT.** 53 - 70
- To receive a report from Gerry Connell, Service Manager Fostering, and Louise Drury, Head Of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers.
12. **ASPIRE ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022 AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2022** 71 - 154
- Michelle Whiting, Service Manager Aspire Adoption, to report.
13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- To confirm details and deadlines for papers for the next meeting of the (formal) Corporate Parenting Board which will be held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

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## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10 MARCH 2022**

**Present:** Cllrs Kate Wheller (Chairman), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chairman), Carole Jones, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby and Cathy Lugg

**Apologies:** Cllrs Ryan Holloway and Cllr V Potheary

**Also present:** Cllr Andrew Parry

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Matthew Chislett (Service Manager - Corporate Parenting Board and Permanence), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sarah Jane Smedmor (Corporate Director - Care & Protection), Louise Drury (Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers), Marc Eyre (Service Manager for Assurance) and Kaye Wright (Personal Advisor (C&S 13-25)), Lisa Reid (Consultant Quality Assurance), Elizabeth Williams (Assistant Assurance Manager – Complaints) and Tony Colledge (Team Manager Dorset Council Permanence)

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first “in-person” meeting of the Board since the start of the pandemic.

2. **Apologies**

The following apologies were reported: Cllr R Holloway, Cllr V Potheary Theresa Leavy – Executive Director People (Children’s) Elaine Okopski, Dorset Parent Carers, Jan and Martin Hill – Foster Carers, Simon Fraiz Brown – Service Manager for Young & Thriving , Louise Smith Dorset CCG, Lisa Linscott, Principle teacher and David Webb, Service Manager Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were declarations of interest to report.

4. **Introduction and Scene Setting**

Sarah-Jane Smedmor, Corporate Director for Care and Protection reflected on the work that had been carried out since the Board last met. The service had held its annual conversation with Ofsted last week. Ofsted took the opportunity to look at the work that was taking place with the authority’s care leavers.

She drew attention to the progress of the Care Leavers Delivery Group and the impact and the pace that the care leavers service had worked since Ofsted had

visited the service in September 2021. She confirmed that all the areas that Ofsted had highlighted and recommended on had been completed.

She further confirmed that Dorset now had 18 unaccompanied children in its family and Dorset Council was working with its partners to ensure that these children received access to the services that they needed.

5. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 29 April 2021, 5 August 2021, 16 September 2021 and 6 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation for this meeting.

7. **Care Leaver Offer 2022**

The Service Manager Corporate Parenting Permanence and Care Leavers set out the report. The Care Leavers offer had been created in conjunction with Dorset care leavers in relation to its presentation. He also referred to the young care leavers video shown prior the start of the meeting. The full offer was to update the Board members, and this would be done annually.

He referred to the offer available to young care leavers and the development of a local provision which when up and running will offer 7 self-contained flats as well as a training flat to help young people settle into their own accommodation. Further details would be shared with the Board later in the year.

In response to a question regarding the number of care leavers on the housing register, the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting Permanence and Care Leavers advised that he could find out that information and report back to members.

Members welcomed the document, which was well presented. They also asked how this information being disseminated to care leavers. In response, the Service Manager indicated that work was being developed to display this on the website by working with QR codes, advertised through PAS and hard copies will also be provided.

It was also noted that local charities can provide support to care leavers and greater connections should be made with these organisations.

It was proposed by Cllr A Kerby seconded by Cllr S Jones

Decision

That the Corporate Parenting Board supports the Care Leaver Offer for 2022.

8. **CLICC Update and Challenge Cards**

Kaye Wright, Youth Voice Team Manager set out a report seeking support to move away from challenge cards in order to bring corporate parents closer to young people and by doing so role modelling good adult relationships with them.

The proposed report card approach would allow conversations to take place between members and young people, allowing for solutions to be co-produced. A short PowerPoint presentation set out some examples of co-production and report cards.

Members welcomed the approach to use report cards and expressed the importance to be engaged with the wider care leavers community. However, it was essential that progress be carefully monitored.

It was proposed by Cllrs S Jones and seconded by Cllr C Jones

Decision

That challenge cards be discontinued in favour of co-production between corporate parenting board members, children, and young people.

## 9. **Corporate Parenting Dataset**

The Service Manager for Corporate Parenting and Permanence set out the purpose of the Dataset report to provide the Board with an overview of performance. The indicators were grouped together under the relevant areas.

The following issues were discussed and highlighted:

- Need to look at ways to track unaccompanied refugee children data
- Improvement in pathway plans
- Highlighted improvement in number of care leavers in bed & breakfast with action plans in place
- Initial health assessments consents to be completed in 5 working days with the assessment to be in place within 20 working days
- Looking to work closer with neighbouring councils regarding health assessments.
- Working with health colleagues
- Making sure that council is in the national conversation re health outcomes.
- Working group in place to explore education and employment figures, further report to come forward to the Board at a future date.
- Council should encourage procurement companies to be offering apprenticeships to care leavers
- The increase in mental health issues and care including provision and support to foster carers.
- The importance of meeting and connecting with young people to have fun and get to know them.
- Family dates would be circulated to the board.

- Adoption – members received an explanation of the Somerset Ruling.

The Corporate Parenting Dataset was received and noted.

## 10. **Complaints and Representations - Children in Care and Care Leavers**

The Service Manager for Assurance presented the annual complaints report that provided an update on the numbers, types and outcomes of complaints made against Dorset Council. There was also an appendix that met statutory reporting requirements for Children's Services.

Members noted the key messages that were set out within the 2020-21 annual report. Over all directorates there was a 76% increase in complaints but to balance this there was also a significant increase in complements across services.

He confirmed that complaints from children in care and advocacy was still very low and where possible the complaints team work with officers to resolve the complaint informally and outside of the statutory complaints process. Of the complaints that were referred to the ombudsman, none of them had been upheld. He further advised that regular reporting was carried out with Children Services Directorate.

Members discussed the types of complaints received and how the function continued to make a difference in promoting a culture of learning from complaints despite well documented challenges across the directorates due to the Covid19 emergency during this period. Members requested to see care leavers complaints at Board meetings in the future. The Chairman also suggested that the subject matter could be discussed at a future workshop session.

Decision

That the annual complaints report for 2020/21 be noted

The Chairman welcome Cllr A Parry to the meeting.

## 11. **Advocacy and Independent Visitors**

Kate Saunders (NYAS Advocacy and IV Commissioned Service set out the report designed to update the board on progress for the provision of advocacy since the change in provider from August 2021.

She advised members that following some initial teething issues, the service was in a position that any young person referred to the service was receiving advocacy in a timely manner. Recruitment was on-going and corporate & compliance training was also taking place.

In response to a question relating to independent visitors, members were reassured that this role would continue to exist and there was no mixture between independent visitors and an advocate. She did confirm that there was cross over between personal advisors and advocates, but the service tries to manage these boundaries.



Members noted the update on the service.

## 12. **Corporate Parenting Board - Future format, themed agenda, identification of champions**

Members were advised that formal Corporate Parenting meetings were currently held approximately 7 times a year. Many reports were for noting and challenge but did not require a decision to be made. The Head of Service and Children in Care Leavers sought members support to hold a single formal Corporate Parenting meeting a year to receive annual statutory reports and all other meetings would be in an informal setting. This would allow for the informal meetings of the Board to use different locations and methods of engagement with stakeholders and children and young people. It would ensure that members were accessible and able to encourage the very best input from everyone taking part in the meetings.

It was also suggested that Board members be nominated to “champion” themes that were of particular interest to them. Champions would be able to work with lead officers and young people to contribute to the content of workshops and act as an ambassador for young people promoting high aspirations and securing best outcomes through service development within an area of interest.

Overall members were supportive of the proposal and made the following comments:

- Keen not to lose site of the Dataset and hoped that this could also be received in the informal setting.
- If the Dataset showed areas of concern an additional formal meeting could be arranged
- Would be open to meeting formally twice a year if required.
- Would enable an increased rigor of challenge and scrutiny
- Opportunity to engage with young people.

In response the Corporate Director for Care and Protection advised that from her experience an informal setting often encouraged more challenge as the board member could get to the root of the issue by meeting with a young person in a more comfortable setting. But she agreed that it was important that it is well managed and that the challenge was open, transparent and visible.

Members indicated an interest in the following champion areas

Cllr C Jones – to meet with young people who were struggling educationally, not in education or in training programmes. To talk to them about their dreams, their aspirations for the future and help them find a pathway forward.

Cllr R Biggs - Residential Care including private provision.

Cllr S Jones - Safeguarding and Education

Cllr C Lugg - Residential Care

Other councillors could discuss champion options with the Head of Service and Children in Care Leavers direct.

It was proposed by Cllr C Jones and seconded by Cllr A Kerby

Decision

- (a) That formal Corporate Parenting Board meets once a year to receive annual statutory reports and all other meetings would be in an informal setting.
- (b) That individual members of the board nominate themselves to participate in champion work and act as an ambassador for young people promoting high aspirations and securing best outcomes through service development within the area of interest.

*Any nominations of interest, not received at the meeting, would be warmly received by Matthew Chislett and can be sent to [matthew.chislett@Dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.chislett@Dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)*

13. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next formal meeting will be held on 28 April 2022 at 5pm in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester.

**Duration of meeting:** 5.00 - 6.53 pm

**Chairman**

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## Corporate Parenting Board 28 April 2022 Corporate Parenting Annual Report

### For Recommendation to Council

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):** Cllr

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Matthew Chislett

Title: Service Manager Corporate Parenting Permanence and Care Leavers

Tel: 01202 868257

Email: matthew.chislett@dorsetcouncil.co.uk

**Report Status:** Public

#### **Recommendation:**

The report highlights the Corporate Parenting Board's key achievements and the challenges identified from April 2021 to March 2022. It also highlights future actions that will be required to address these challenges.

#### **Reason for Recommendation:**

I recommend that the board members support the area's identified for focus in this report. As Corporate Parents, all councillors should seek to stay informed about children in the council's care and our care leavers.

#### **1. Executive Summary**

This Annual Report provides an overview of what we are doing well, our key achievements in the last year, what our key challenges are and our plans to address those challenges in 2022/2023 and beyond.

#### **2. Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications to consider.

#### **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

There are no wellbeing and health implications to consider.

#### **4. Climate implications**

Transport to and from the board meeting venues will increase the use of transport. However, the Council continue to explore how this can be reduced by way of Hybrid meetings moving forward.

#### **5. Other Implications**

All Corporate Parenting Boards have and will continue to follow Government guidance in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

#### **6. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

#### **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

#### **8. Appendices**

Not applicable

#### **9. Background Papers**

Not applicable

#### **10. Introduction**

10.1 This Annual Report provides an overview of what we are doing well, our key achievements in the last year, what are our key challenges and our plans to address those challenges in 2022/2023 and beyond.

10.2 The Corporate Parenting Board is chaired by Cllr Wheller and Vice Chair Cllr Biggs. The rest of the Board is made up of a number of multi-agency stakeholders including young people who are care experienced. The Board has maintained a consistent membership which has enriched developing relationships. Young people's voices are prioritised by the chair and as are ways in which the Board and its members can be accountable.

10.3 The primary objective of the Board is to ensure they are the best possible parents to children in care or the care-experienced of Dorset Council. The Board strives to ensure Dorset to be the best place to be a child; where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be'. This is in keeping with the 6 priorities of the Children, Young People and Families plan 2020/2023 and the aims of Dorset council overall.

- 10.4 We have a duty to make sure the Statutory Corporate Parenting Principles are upheld and to ensure vulnerable children and young people have an equal opportunity to enjoy and achieve the ambition of the council.
- 10.5 Our collective responsibilities and duty to children in care and care leavers are outlined in the seven key Corporate Parenting Principles in the Children and Social Work Act (2017):
1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
  2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
  3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
  4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
  5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
  6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
  7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living
- 10.6 Dorset Council are committed and ambitious for our children in care and care experienced young people as any parent would be for their children. As such, the Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2020/2023, which was co-created with our young people, highlights the 6 priorities/ambitions for the Board.
1. Increase opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account.
  2. Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improved access to health information and services.
  3. Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their education, training and employment.
  4. Ensure safe and stable accommodation within the family home or close relatives and friends. If not possible, children are moved to a permanent placement without delay.
  5. For our children to have a good and enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.
  6. Effective governance and planning arrangements are in place to mean the Corporate Parent can be the best they can be.

## **11. Context: Corporate Parenting Overview 2021/2022**

- 11.1 The Board is required to meet a minimum of 7 times per year. During this period, the Board met 9 times between 5-7pm, as requested by our young people to support their attendance.
- 11.2 Of the 9 meetings held, 6 were public and live streamed via YouTube. One of these meetings was held in person due to updated Covid-19 guidance. The remaining 3 were informal meetings which allowed for deep dives into key topics of interest. Informal meetings are intended to allow for open and honest conversations which

are rich with challenge, without fear of disclosing the personal data of our children in care or care experienced young people.

- 11.3 During 2021/2022, the Board received all annual statutory reports with regard to children in care and care experienced young people. Statutory reports include annual reports from the Independent Reviewing Officer, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Fostering, Adoption, Private Fostering, Fostering Panel Chair, Quality Assurance and Annual Corporate Parenting Report, Complaints and Representations, Virtual School and Health and Wellbeing.
- 11.4 During in-public meetings, a comprehensive data set has also been provided with commentary from lead officers to ensure that all members are well sighted on key data relating to our children in care and our care experienced young people. Updates on progression of the Corporate Parenting Strategy have also been provided in 3 of the 6 in public meetings, to ensure the members are sighted on progress and areas that require further focus.
- 11.5 At request of members, the following briefing reports have been completed and shared in board meetings:
- The progress of the Modernising Fostering Programme
  - Meaningful Care into Adulthood
  - Harbour progress report
  - Ofsted Report - The Cherries and Hayeswood
  - The Permanence and Care Leaver Strategy 2021-2023
  - The Care Leaver offer 2022-2023
  - Children in Care at Risk of Offending and Custody
  - Emotional Health and Well-Being in schools and briefing on the Emotional Health and Well-Being Steering Group
- 11.6 During informal meetings, key topics were explored in a multitude of mediums including workshops, case studies, videos and presentations. Topics covered included:
- Deep Dive on Care Leavers' Employment, education, and skills – Not in Education Employment and Training
  - Review annual children in care survey findings
  - National Care Leavers Week activity and promotion workshop
  - Dorset Council's in-house fostering workshop
- 11.7 Dorset Council continue to welcome Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children into our care both through the national transfer scheme and those presenting in person in Dorset. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, we have welcomed 22 children since April 2021. Our staff continue to get alongside our children and ensure access to safe accommodation and health and education provision.
- 11.8 Due to the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, there was a clear impact for 11 of our children in care and or care leavers who originated from outside of the United Kingdom (UK) rights to remain in the UK. The deadline for the settled

scheme application (30th June 2021) was carefully monitored and tracked within Dorset Council and all children and care leavers have now settled and or pre-settled status allowing them to remain in the United Kingdom. For those on pre settled status we will look to submit applications to request change in their status to settled in keeping with the current government guidance.

## 12. Covid-19 Pandemic and Corporate Parenting

12.1 During the national pandemic, Dorset Council's Corporate Parenting Board continued to operate and function, making best use of technology to ensure the Board continued to meet virtually via Microsoft Teams and that members were well sighted on progress relating to our strategy, priorities and ambitions. Other technology has been used to promote our board members engagement and interaction as they would have done prior to the pandemic. Examples of technology used include:

- Miro - an online collaborative digital white board platform that enabled members to work effectively together in group discussion to produce ideas and capture ideas through digital sticky notes and in real time.
- Slido - an easy-to-use Question and Answer polling platform. This has supported our young people's views being captured prior to, and shared, in our meetings. This app has also supported live feedback of all involved in meetings to get the most out of meetings and bridging the gap between speakers and those attending the board meeting.

12.2 As the rules of the Pandemic eased, as of the 10<sup>th</sup> March the Board has started to meet face to face and Dorset Council is actively exploring how hybrid board meetings may occur in the future.

## 13. Representation of our children in care and care experienced young people.

13.1 Our young people have reported in a number of forums that they have struggled with the number of online meetings during the pandemic. As such, attendance by our young people at board meetings has at times been sporadic. This remains a key area of focus for Dorset Council who value the participation and engagement of our young people.

13.2 Advocacy and Independent Visiting Services for our children has changed with National Youth Advocacy services (NYAS) taking over from Action for Children on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021. A key change in service delivery is that NYAS look to empower our young people to advocate for themselves. Feedback has been positive from our young people to date:

Having an advocate is nice, I had a voice- like an adult and people listened to me.

Advocacy was quite useful. I won't need it next time as I am now OK talking for myself. I have found my voice.

It is good having an advocate because they are there to help me when I am making difficult decisions or not sure what to do.

- 13.3 As Chair of the Board, Cllr Wheller has also made an open offer to meet with young people prior to any Corporate Parenting Board meeting to promote attendance, engagement and to build relationships with our young people.
- 13.4 In August 2021, we saw the development and successful implementation of Dorset Council's Youth Voice Service, taking over from Participation People. The Youth Voice Team performs an essential role in ensuring that we are listening to our children and young people, including children in care and care leavers, understanding their needs and working with them to find solutions together. The Youth Voice Team support a number of projects including the Dorset Youth Council, the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum and are in the process of developing a Young Commissioners programme. They also support initiatives, such as Takeover Challenge, to ensure leaders and managers are engaging with the children and young people that their service is responsible for.
- 13.5 The Youth Voice Team also provide specific support to children in care and care leavers to be involved in decision making both formally and informally. Formally, care experienced children and young people are invited to contribute through governance structures, such as the Corporate Parenting Board and the Care Leavers Delivery Group. Informally, the team hold events and workshops where leaders and managers are invited to meet with them, as well as surveys and other online approaches. Additionally, the team are supporting the redesign and promotion of the survey in calibration with our children in care and care experienced young people. The service has also presented to the board how the challenge cards have been redesigned into a challenge report moving to a report card approach so that conversations take place between members and young people, which means that solutions will be co-produced.
- 13.6 The Young People in Care Annual Satisfaction Survey was open to children and young people aged 11 – 25. The subsequent report was co-produced and then presented at the Corporate Parenting Board highlighting the key messages from our young people. These messages included how our children and young people have been offered help and support during the pandemic, particularly in areas of Health, Education, Social Care, and digital support. There was also a clear steer regarding future surveys; our young people felt that there needs to be a concerted effort to promote the next survey to many more children in care. We have listened to this and, as stated above, we are co-producing a new survey for our children in care and will through consultation explore how best to promote this for the 2022 survey. A clear recommendation from the survey was the need for a range of opportunities provided for children in care and care leavers to enable children and young people a choice as to how, and to what extent, they get involved. This has been heard and the Youth Voice service has co-produced and created a timeline considering future Corporate Parenting Boards and children in care and care leaver forums to ensure our children and young people have an opportunity to engage with our members in places and spaces that they are more accustomed too. This



will also mirror our Corporate Parenting themed agendas for 2022/2023 and maximise the voice of our children on our meetings.

## **14. Ofsted Inspection**

14.1 An inspection of Dorset Local Authority Children's Services took place from 27 September 2021 to 8 October 2021. This was the first full inspection of all Dorset children's services since the inception of the new Dorset Council Unitary Authority in April 2019. The last full inspection of all services was undertaken in 2016 and through Dorset's predecessor council, Dorset County Council.

14.2 The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services is a graded inspection. Inspectors make their graded judgements on a 4-point scale:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement to be good
- Inadequate

14.3 Ofsted have judged Dorset Children's Services as follows:

- Overall effectiveness: good
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: good
- The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: good
- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: outstanding

14.4 Ofsted have determined services for children and families in Dorset are of good quality and are continuing to improve, finding that senior leadership has a proven determination to give every child in Dorset a brighter future.

14.5 The inspectors have acknowledged the strong political and corporate commitment to improvement, the pride that staff take in their work and that good work is expected, delivered and celebrated. Inspectors have noted the scaffolding for further improvement is firmly in place.

## **15. Key Achievements**

15.1 The Harbour was launched in October 2021 and is developing an integrated service for our more complex and troubled young people to ensure that their needs, no matter how diverse, are addressed within a single team of trusted and skilled workers. This may be to prevent care, support placement stability or reunification if in care, and a smooth transition to independence when leaving care. The board have been regularly updated on the Harbour's development and the impact this service is having.

15.2 Dorset Council's creation of the Youth Voice Service is a positive step to developing our relationships with our children in care and our care experienced young people. The service continues to look at how and where we engage with our young people

and are looking to ensure a wide range of views are gathered and then supported to influence service development.

- 15.3 The board have been sighted on key Investing in Local Housing provision for our care leavers in the purchase of 10 Kirtilton Avenue, which forms part of Dorset Council's residential sufficiency program to increase the availability of suitable accommodation for care leavers within Dorset. The proposal remains to develop the property to provide suitable care leaver accommodation, and to create a care leaver Hub. Providing a space for professionals and our care leavers to meet.
- 15.4 The Corporate Parenting Board on the 1st March 2021 approved and signed up to the Care Leaver Covenant. At the heart of the Care Leaver Covenant is close collaboration with local authorities who are statutorily responsible for the wellbeing of our care leavers.
- 15.5 Firstly, Dorset Council worked to expand the internal offer across all Council departments to offer services and/or experiences to care leavers. This includes identifying a care leaver champion in each directorate. This work is being overseen by the Care Leaver Service Delivery Group chaired by Cllr Kerby. Secondly, the Covenant are working with us to engage and encourage local businesses, charities and organisations to consider what they may be able to contribute to the development and opportunities for care leavers.
- 15.6 The New Belongings Programme (NBP) run through Corum Voice was successfully launched and has run from 2020. Dorset Council were one of 8 Local Authorities to participate in this programme. The NBP developed a model for improving support for care leavers based on engagement and involvement of young people as experts in their own experience. A life beyond care survey was completed in 2020 and then in 2022 with a significant 60% return rate from our care leavers in the 2022 survey. The surveys have supported highlighting 'Bright Spots' for our care leavers which the board have been sighted on. The 2022 Bright Spots report is to be shared with the Board in the coming months as the programme comes to an end.
- 15.7 On 21st June 2021, we launched a care leaver delivery group which sits below the Corporate Parenting Board and is responsible for driving the Care Leaver Action plan – this plan is a combination of the New Belongings and Care Leaver Covenant Action plan. The delivery group has a key role in reporting on progress as well as identifying and addressing barriers to effective change, making recommendations on how issues can be resolved to improve the lived experiences of our children looked after and care leavers.
- 15.8 There are a variety of task and finish groups that focus on the work identified within the annual business plan and their work reports into the delivery group.
- 15.9 The areas of focus for the Corporate Parenting board for 2022/2023:
  - Our care leavers in emergency or temporary accommodation. There is a clear action plan which has been created to address OFSTED's 2021 recommendation, which will ensure not only that these types of accommodation are accessed as a last resort but there is improved management oversight of wrap around support and exit planning for the accommodation.

- Improve the diversity and number of children in care and care experienced young people contributing to the Corporate Parenting Board meetings.  
The Youth voice Team continues to make inroads to developing this in conjunction with the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting. As a Council we are committed to not only develop engagement but also seek active co-production in shaping and developing our service delivery with our young people.
- Dorset Councils plan for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.  
Dorset Council is proud to be part of the national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Dorset Council area are committed to developing services and local communities to promote a warm welcome and integration of these children in Dorset.

The board will continue to be updated as to progress in the above focus areas in future board meetings.

## **16. Governance of the Corporate Parenting Board**

- 16.1 On 10th March 2022, the Board agreed to a change in the governance to two formal meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board held in public that will receive statutory reports; the remaining meetings will be informal and not in public, using different locations and methods of engaging our young people and stakeholders to ensure that the board is accessible and able to encourage the very best input from everyone taking part in the meetings. Themes of future boards were agreed and will include engagement, sufficiency, safeguarding, education, employment and training, health and wellbeing and care leavers.
- 16.2 Corporate Parenting Board members were also invited to nominate themselves as a champion of a theme that is of particular interest to them. Champions will be able to work with the lead officer and young people to contribute to the content of the workshop and act as an ambassador for young people promoting high aspirations and securing best outcomes through service development within the area of interest.
- 16.3 In summary, the Corporate Parenting Board continues to benefit from strong membership with positive relationships between Councillors and Officers that have regularly met through the year. This has ensured that all members are well sighted not only on key performance data but also provided reports on activities and developments within the council. This has supported our overarching Corporate Parenting Boards ambition to be the best corporate parents, with high ambitions for our children and care leavers.

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### **Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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# Corporate Parenting Performance Report

## People - Childrens



### March 2022 Performance

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

# Corporate Parenting Board - Performance



## Introduction

This purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of performance. These indicators are grouped together under the relevant areas. Work will continue with managers to develop targets.

## Overview of Performance

The report assesses the performance of available data during or as at the end of the last month, snapshots of this data are taken. Performance is compared with the previous month and whether there has been an improvement or decline in performance. Where appropriate, a target has been set to ensure high performance and drive improvement and there is RAG rating for these indicators. Targets have been set in line with national and statistical neighbour rates/averages and this information is included in the report where it is available and in discussion with Service Managers. Sparkline graphs have been included to illustrate trends.

## RAG Rating and Performance Direction




Where a target has been set, indicators are RAG rated using the criteria below:

**Green** Performance is good and in line with or exceeding target: consistent with the National/Statistical Neighbour average.

**Amber** Performance is below target; inconsistent with National/Statistical Neighbour average; action is in place with likelihood of improvement.

**Red** Performance is poor; well below expected levels nationally; improvement is required.

Latest performance is compared with the previous month with arrows indicating direction of performance as follows:

-  improved performance compared with previous month
-  same performance compared with previous month
-  decline in performance compared with previous month

## Benchmarking Note:

Good and Outstanding Statistical neighbours for are Shropshire, Wiltshire, East Sussex, Cornwall and Suffolk. The latest available benchmarking data has been included.

# Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Latest Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset March 2020	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											
<b>Profile</b>													
<b>Measure</b>													
<b>Rate of children in care as at end of month</b>													
	67	57.6	60	70	65.1	65.1	64.6	64.1	64.8	66.2	⊗	🟡	
<b>Number of children who became CIC</b>													
			10	21	13	14	13	10	16	18	⊗	🔴	
<b>Number of children who ceased to be CIC</b>													
			13	22	9	13	14	12	11	11	⚠️	🟡	
<b>Number of CIC who are UASC at end of month</b>													
					9	11	11	11	15	23			
<b>% of CIC who are UASC</b>													
					2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.4	5.1			
<b>Health</b>													
<b>% of New Children in Care receiving their IHA within 20 days (one month in arrears)</b>													
			95	28	84.6	16.7	8.3	18.2	0.0		⊗	🔴	
<b>% CIC for 12 months or more with Annual Health Assessment completed on time</b>													
	91	92	90	79	84.2	82.0	81.3	78.6	84.3	88.8	✅	🟡	
<b>% CIC in care 12 months or more who have had a dental check within 12 months</b>													
	40	30.4	85	78	47.7	50.1	57.1	60.1	61.1	62.4	✅	🔴	
<b>% of ALL CIC at end of month with up to date immunisations</b>													
	86	92	88	83	86.2	85.7	83.8	81.3	83.2	83.9	✅	🟡	
<b>Emotional Wellbeing</b>													
<b>% of children for CIC for at least 12 months age 4-16yrs with completed SDQ assessment</b>													
	81	83.8		61	82.0	85.4	86.3	86.4	73.8	80.1	✅		
<b>Average SDQ score for children in care who have been in care for more than 12 months (age 4 to 16)</b>													
	13.7	14.1	15	18.6	15.3	15.3	15.4	15.4	15.5	15.7	⊗	🔴	
<b>Safety</b>													
<b>% of children in care (at any point in last 6 months) with at least one missing episode in the last 12 months</b>													
	11	11.6	10	16	12	12	12	13	12	13	⊗		
<b>% Children in Care who have had more than 1 episode of Missing</b>													
	7.4	7.4		8.2	8.4	8.9	8.9	9.3	8.9	9.2	⊗		
<b>Number of allegations made against foster carers</b>													
	10	12.0		27	1	1	0	3	2	0	✅		

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# Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Latest Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset March 2020	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											
<b>Placement</b>													
<b>% Children in Care living in foster placement</b>													
	71.8	73.3			70	70	69	70	69	69	!		
<b>% of CIC at end of month with 3+ placements in previous 12 months</b>													
	9	9.4	10	11	9.1	9.5	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.9	✗		
<b>% of children in care for 2.5 years or more, aged under 16 who have been in their placement for 2 or more years</b>													
	70	72.2	70	69	64.9	67.4	67.1	66.9	63.4	65.1	✓		
<b>% Children in Care living in a commissioned placement</b>													
	51	41		49	54	56	55	55	55	56	✗		
<b>% CIC placed 20 miles away from home</b>													
	21	34	35	47	43.8	43.1	43.5	43.3	43.5	43.8	✗		
<b>% CIC placed outside Dorset</b>													
	42.1	25.6	30	40	40.8	40.1	43.0	43.3	42.8	42.9	✗		
<b>Number of unregulated placements (H5, P2, R1)</b>													
			10	47	21	19	18	18	19	24	✗		
<b>Education</b>													
<b>% Children in Care with an Education Health and Care Plan</b>													
	45.2	39.58			39	38	39	41	38	37			
<b>% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 1</b>													
							Data not available due to COVID		Data published August 2022				
<b>% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Maths</b>													
	51	48.6					Data not available due to COVID		Data published August 2022				
<b>% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Writing</b>													
	50	46.3					Data not available due to COVID		Data published August 2022				
<b>% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Reading</b>													
	49	46.9		51.0			Data not available due to COVID		Data published August 2022				
<b>Average Attainment 8 score for Children in Care</b>													
	17.7	19.08					Data not available due to COVID		Data published August 2022				
<b>Average progress 8 score for Children in Care</b>													
	1.23	1.42					Data not available due to COVID		Data published August 2022				
<b>% of children with a PEP within 20 days of coming into care</b>													
			100		NA	NA	100	NA	NA	NA			
<b>% all Children in Care Unauthorised absence</b>													
	1.7	1.56	1		2.29	2.34	3.02	2.16	2.13	2.36	✗		



# Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Latest Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset March 2020	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											
<b>Education</b>													
<b>Average Attendance % for Children in Care of school age</b>													
			95		92.6	91.1	89.9	89.0	89.0	87.9	⊗	Red	
<b>% Children in Care who have been in care for 12 months who have had at least one suspension (in the month)</b>													
	11.4	13.7			2.5	3.8	2.8	3.8	2.0	6.1	⊗		
<b>% all Children in Care on reduced timetable</b>													
			2		1.4	2.8	3.8	5.8	6.6	6.5	⊙	Red	
<b>Permanence</b>													
<b>% of CIC for 4 months or more with a completed permanence plan</b>													
			90	73	98.1	97.8	98.5	98.7	98.8	98.3	⊗	Green	
<b>% Children who have achieved Permanence</b>													
					35.5	36.6	41.2	40.1	41.9	42.7	⊙		
<b>% Children Achieved Permanence SGO</b>													
	12.2	12.5		8.6	15.0	15.0	21.0	17.0	18.0	20.0	⊙		
<b>% Children Achieved Permanence Adoption</b>													
	11	12.4		9.0	13.0	15.0	13.0	10.0	9.0	7.0	⊗		
<b>Sufficiency</b>													
<b>Number of Foster carers at end of month</b>													
			215	206	194	194	193	190	190	192	⊙	Red	
<b>Number of new households recruited – Mainstream</b>													
				26	0	1	0	1	1	2	⊙		
<b>Number of new households recruited – Connected Person</b>													
				45	2	2	1	5	2	3	⊙		
<b>Number of new households recruited – Temporary</b>													
					0	0	5	0	0	4	⊙		
<b>Number of households de-registered – exclude connected carers</b>													
			2	12	1	1	0	1	3	2	⊙	Green	
<b>Number of households resigned</b>													
				15	1	1	3	6	3	2	⊙		
<b>Number of applicants undergoing assessment (Foster Carers)</b>													
					13	13	13	11	11	11	⚠		
<b>Number of allegations made against foster carers that were substantiated</b>													
				14	1	1	0	3	2	0	⚠		

# Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



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	Latest Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset March 2020	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											

## Adoption

<b>Number of adoptions finalised in month</b>													
			16	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	!		
<b>Number of children living in adoptive placements pending adoption orders</b>													
				21	23	21	21	20	20		!		
<b>Number of children with a match identified</b>													
				1	0	0	0	0	0		!		
<b>Number of children where family finding is ongoing</b>													
				13	10	12	12	14	13		✓		
<b>Numbers of Adoption placement order revocations over last 12 months</b>													
			2	6	7	7	5	3	4		✗		
<b>Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family for adopted children (adjusted for foster carer adoptions)</b>													
			412	522	508	541	532	518	544		✗		
<b>The average number of days from the date of the placement order to the date the child was matched to prospective adopters</b>													
			203	268	239	260	251	242	257		✗		
<b>Number of adoptive families recruited</b>													
			60	1	1	4	3	4	2		✗		
<b>Number of adoptive Families in assessment</b>													
				NA	44	44	37	33	35		✓		

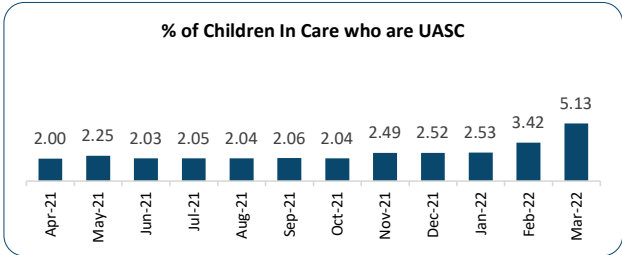
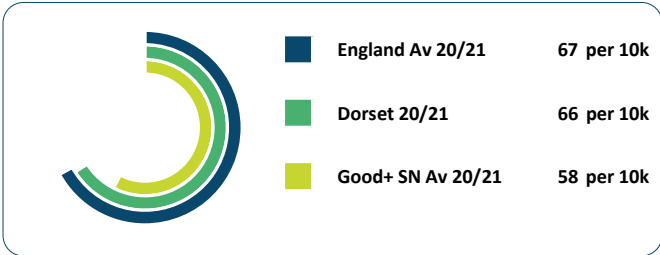
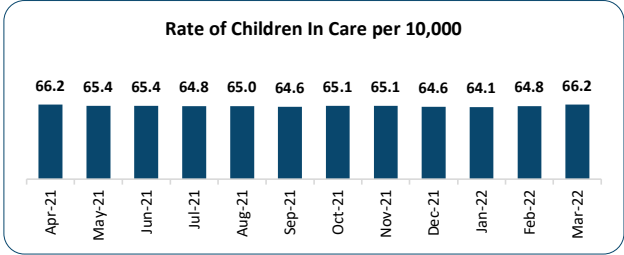
## Care Leavers

<b>% Care Leavers with an up to date pathway plan at end of month</b>													
			95	66.5	71	65	62	81	80	84	✓		
<b>% Care Leavers who are living in suitable accommodation (19-21 yrs)</b>													
	88	89.8	96	88	94	95	95	93	90	95	✓		
<b>% Care Leavers who are in Employment Education or Training (19-21yrs)</b>													
	52	55	60	48	53	54	51	48	48	50	✓		
<b>% Care Leavers who are in touch with Dorset Local Authority (19-21yrs)</b>													
	91	92.2	93	92	99	99	99	99	99	98	✗		
<b>Number of Health passports due within the month (2 months in arrears)</b>													
				7	7	7	6						
<b>Number of health passports completed (2 months in arrears)</b>													
				7	7	7	6						

# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

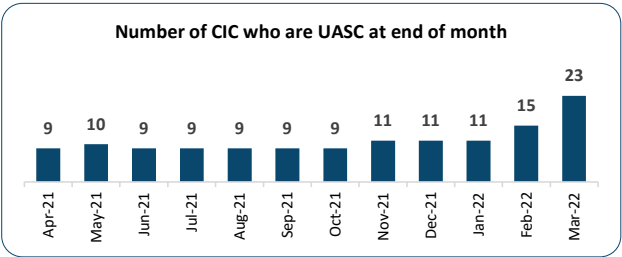
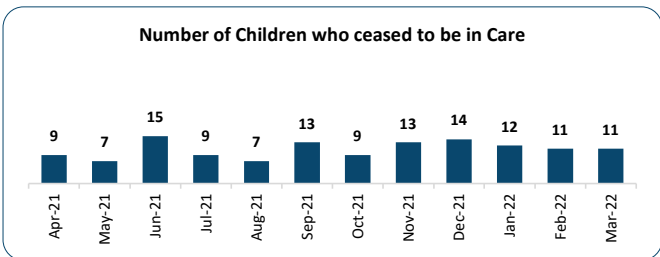
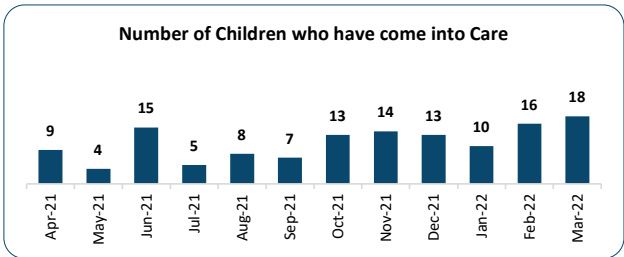
Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)



**Comments:**

Our rate of children in care per 10,000 has steadily increased month on month since January 2022. Dorset Council is part of the National Transfer scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children. We have seen an increase in children coming into our care in this way in 2022 which has increased our overall child in care number. Our rate of children in care remains lower than the national average. We do remain with a higher rate of children in care than our good + statistical neighbours. We are committed to continuing to work towards achieving a similar rate per 10,000 as Good+ Statistical neighbours. Considerable efforts continue to be made to only have children come into our care when appropriate to do so and they achieve permanence without drift or delay..

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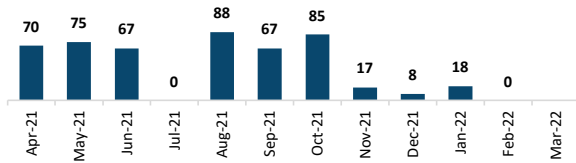
# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

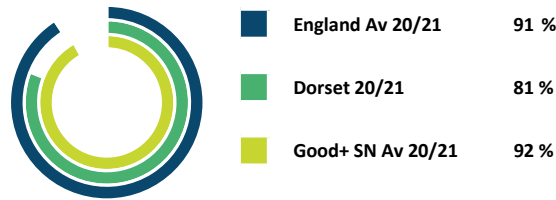
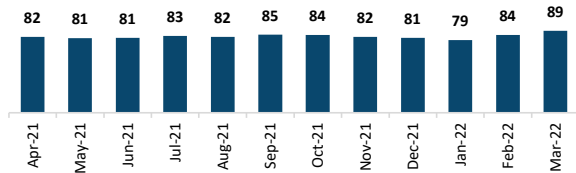


**% of New CIC receiving their IHA within 20 days**



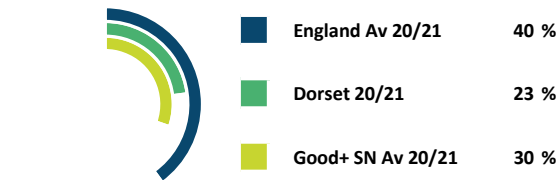
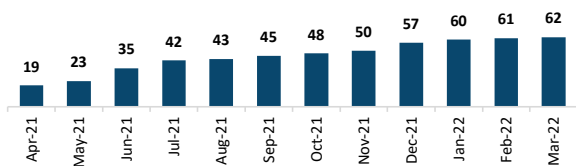
**Comments:** % of New Children in Care receiving their Initial Health Assessment (IHA) monthly data is reported 1 month after the month is due, this is to allow for the data to fall into the month due, i.e. a child accommodated on the 31 December would not be calculated until 26 January. Data is from our Mosaic system. Benchmarking data is currently not available. We have seen a decline in performance in completed IHAs since April 2021. We continue to monitor our children in achieving consents within 5 working days of the young person coming into care and their Initial health assessment. In January 1 consent was out of time scales and in February we had a sibling group of 2 and 1 in March where consent was gained out of the 5 working day timescale. We continue to work closely with our health colleagues to address any issues in real-time with all professionals involved fully committed to improving performance.

**% CIC Annual Health Assessment completed on time**



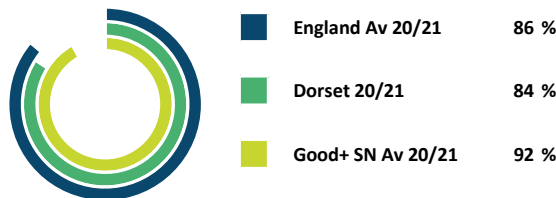
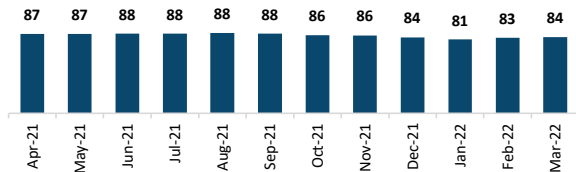
**Comments:** Figures shown on the graph are for children in care for 12 months or more, the percentage having their Annual Review Health Assessment (RHA) completed on time. It should be noted that our measures are different from the CCQ who measure % of children in each month who have had their review health assessment as opposed to our measure. Review Health Assessments out of area response is determined by out of area health team capacity.

**% CIC who have had a dental check within 12 months**



**Comments:** Figures shown on the graph are for children in care (CIC) for 12 months + and whether they have had a dental check within the last 12 months. We continue to see an improvement in our children accessing a dentist for their 12 monthly dental check. Our children accessing their annual dental check is also a month on month improving picture as our children are now seen as a priority vulnerable group in the South West. Performance was impacted due to the global pandemic.

**% CIC at month end with up to date immunisations**

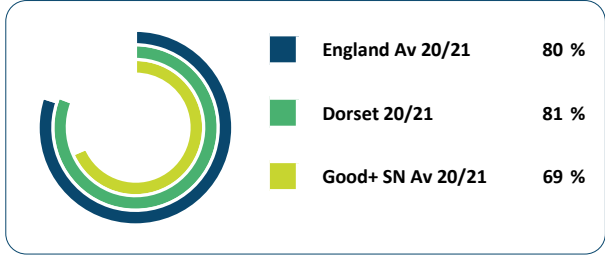
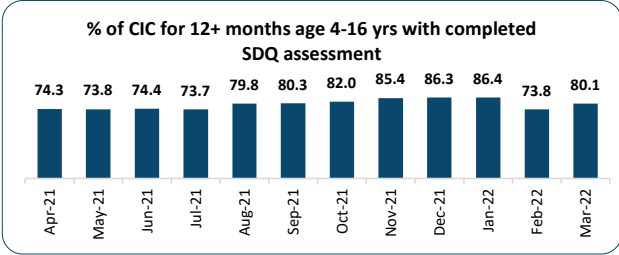


**Comments:** Figures shown on the graph are for the percentage of children in care at end of month with up to date immunisations. CCG data shows Immunisations for Children in care are up to date with the UK Immunisation schedule for the month of those due an RHA in the month.

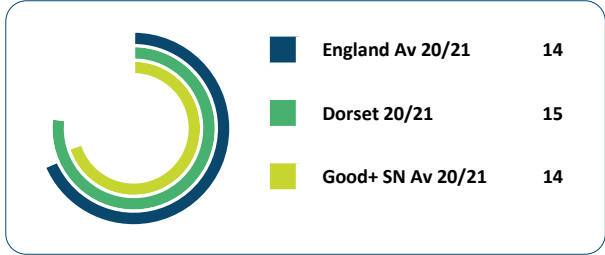
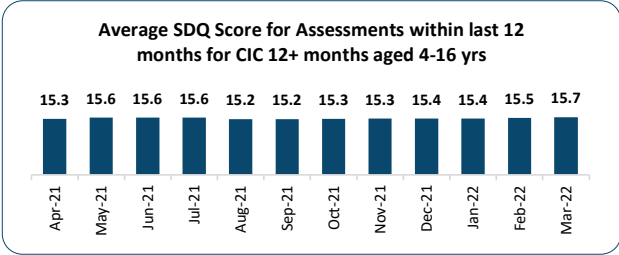
# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)



**Comments:**  
 We continue to remain focused on this as a priority for Children Services. We have seen an improvement in completion of the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire from March 2021 and the subsequent months. We are monitoring and tracking on a child level data these scores and what that means for our children. We have sustained this performance and the % return is greater than last year and better than our good + statistical neighbours and the English average.



**Comments:**  
 A score below 14 is best. Dorset's average score has dropped as the percentage of SDQs completed has increased. The average score for those completed falls in the slightly raised banding. This suggests that overall the wellbeing of our children in care has improved and may indicate that we are better at meeting and responding to their emotional and behavioural needs.

# Corporate Parenting Data Set

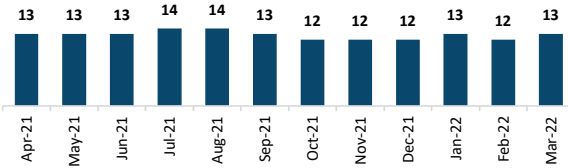
People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)



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% CIC who have had a Missing Episode

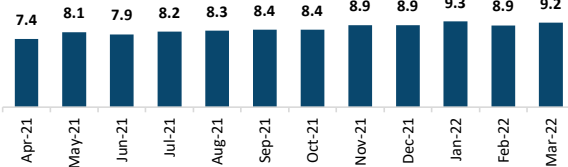


England Av 20/21	10 %
Dorset 20/21	10 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	9 %

**Comments:**

13% of our children in care had a missing episode in March 2022, a slight increase from the previous month's figures. There is continued work in respect of our young people and how we can reduce missing episodes, through the Daily Missing Meeting and continued oversight of the Return Home Interview process. We are currently seeing a reduction in the number of young people engaging in their Return Home Interview and plan to seek feedback and consider ways to improve engagement.

% CIC with >1 Missing Episode

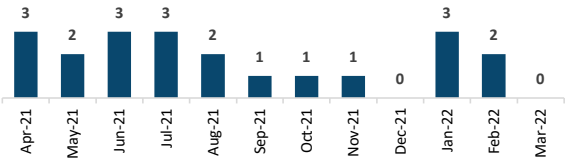


England Av 20/21	6.5 %
Dorset 20/21	5.5 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	5.8 %

**Comments:**

We have seen a gradual increase in our young people with more than one missing episode and there are a number of them who have had regular missing episodes. We are exploring this further, through looking at how we engage young people in the Return Home Interview and how we work together to reduce further missing episodes. A workshop was held with our Harbour and Targeted Youth workers, attended by Police Missing Team Strategic Lead and Children's Services Leads, with a focus on missing and Return Home Interviews. We will also be developing the Daily Missing Meeting, risk management and how recommendations/actions inform the young person's support plan to reduce further missing episodes and risks associated with this.

Number of allegations made against foster carers per month

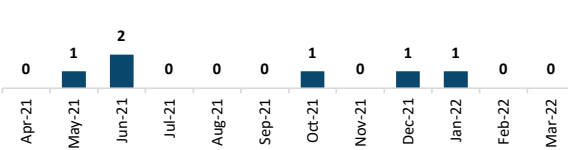


England Av 20/21	10
Dorset 20/21	15
Good+ SN Av 20/21	11

**Comments:**

In March 2022 there were 0 allegations made against foster carers.

Number of allegations made against foster carers that were substantiated per month



12 month Dorset Total 20/21 5

**Comments:**

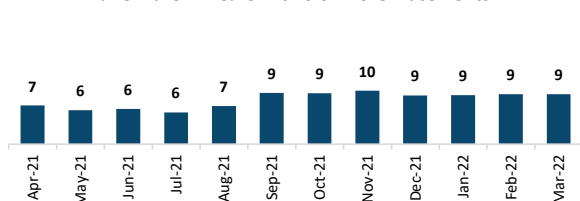
There has been no allegation substantiated against a foster carer in February or March 2022.

# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

**% Children in Care with 3 or more Placements**

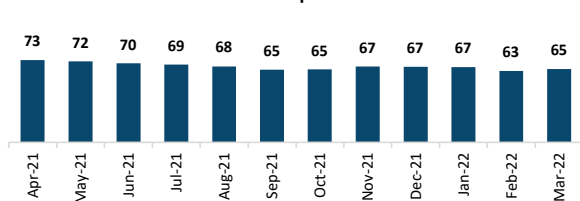


England Av 20/21	9 %
Dorset 20/21	9 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	9 %

**Comments:**

Dorset Council performance is in line with our good statistical neighbours and the national average. We continue to use stability meetings as a way of offering support early to reduce crisis escalating and placement break down. The Harbour Outreach team are also now working with our children where placement break down has been identified.

**% CIC 2.5 Years in same placement for 2+ Years**

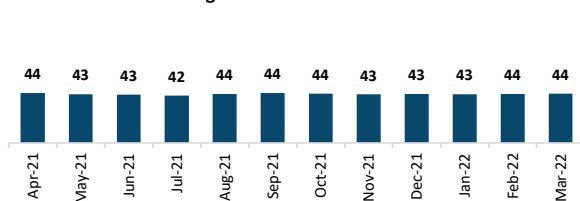


England Av 20/21	70 %
Dorset 20/21	76 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	72 %

**Comments:**

This continues to be a consistent picture and we continue to develop practice to ensure that where possible children achieve permanence and stability earlier. We know our children and have a forward planner for all our children who have not achieved permanence in these placements and have clear plans to progress their permanence in a timely way.

**% CIC Living 20+ Miles from Home Address**

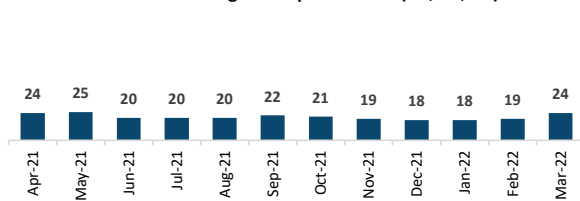


England Av 20/21	21 %
Dorset 20/21	48 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	34 %

**Comments:**

We continue to have too many children who are placed away from their local community. Recruiting local carers for local children is central to our sufficiency strategy and work with local providers and expansion of our own in-house provision through The Harbour will see 9 children's homes opening in Dorset this year for Dorset children.

**Number of unregulated placements (H5, P2, R1)**



**Comments:**

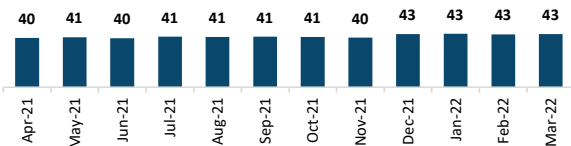
All of our children in unregulated placement are 16+ and are closely monitored on a monthly basis. We have seen an increase in March 2022 due to the increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people coming into our care via the National transfer scheme.

# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

**% CIC Living Outside Dorset Council Area**

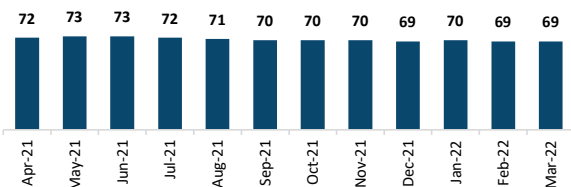


England Av 20/21	42 %
Dorset 20/21	42 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	26 %

**Comments:**

We continue to have too many children placed out of their local area. We continue to review permanence plans for these children. Just over two thirds have been in their placement for more than a year. A proportion of these children are placed in connected persons placement which are placement falling outside of the Dorset Council locality.

**Children in Care Living in Foster Placement**

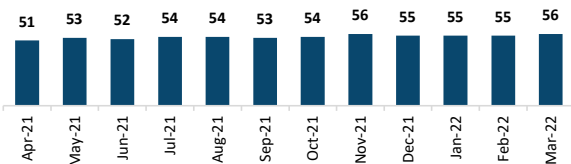


England Av 20/21	71 %
Dorset 20/21	72 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	74 %

**Comments:**

The majority of our children continue to live in a family home. Figures are taken from ChAT.

**CIC Living in a Commissioned Placement**



England Av 20/21	48 %
Dorset 20/21	54 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	58 %

**Comments:**

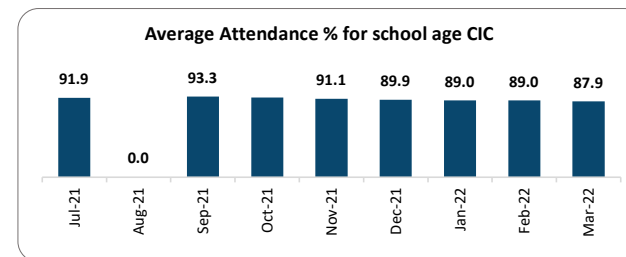
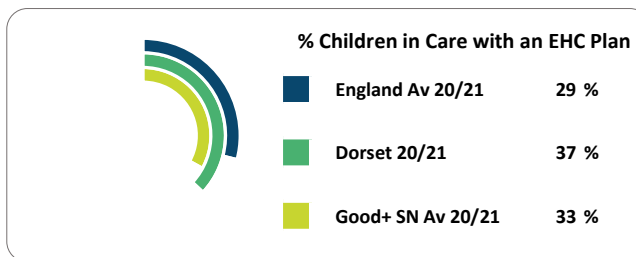
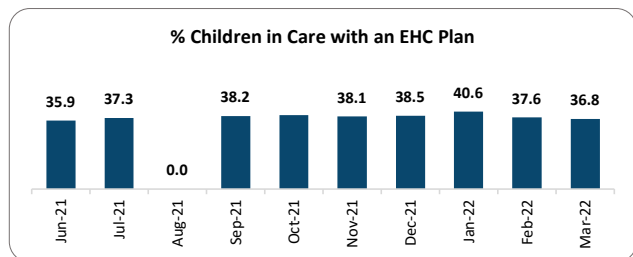
Figures are taken from ChAT and include children in care as at the end of each month. Includes all placements that are not in Dorset provision.



# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)



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England Av 19/20	Dorset 19/20	Good + SN Av 19/20		Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
			<b>Children with a PEP within 20 days of coming into care (%)</b>	NA	NA	100	NA	NA	NA
1.5	1.3	1.1	<b>Children in Care Unauthorised absence (%)</b>	2.3	2.3	3.0	2.2	2.1	2.4
9	10	12	<b>Children in Care 12+ months who have had at least one Fixed Term Exclusion (%)*</b>	2.5	3.8	2.8	3.8	2.0	6.1
			<b>Children in Care on reduced timetable (%)</b>	1.4	2.8	3.8	5.8	6.6	6.5

\* Exclusions are reported a year in arrears so refer to 19/20 (published 20/21)

Comments:	Indicator	England Av 18/19	Dorset 18/19	Good+ SN Av 18/19	Good+ SN 18/19 Range
County and National data is not available for 2021 year due to Covid-19 pandemic. The use of these indicators, for accountability, is suspended. Dorset Council continues to support our schools to provide the best education for all.	Children in Care achieving expected standards in KS2 Maths (%)	0.5	0.6	0.5	35% - 46%
	Children in Care achieving expected standards in KS2 Writing (%)	0.5	0.4	0.5	32% - 42%
	Children in Care achieving expected standards in KS2 Reading (%)	0.5	0.4	0.5	25% - 37%
	Average Attainment 8 score for Children in Care	19.2	14.4	15.4	14.9 - 17.8
	Average progress 8 score for Children in Care	-1.2	-1.0	-1.4	- 0.93 - -1.33

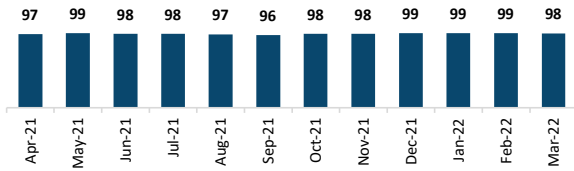
**Comments:**  
 There has been a slight decrease in the % of children with an EHC Plan but this is due in part to an increase in the full roll of the Virtual School. The average attendance has decreased to 87.9% in March from 89% in February. The Virtual School are introducing a celebration of outstanding attendance at the end of each term to encourage attendance whilst undertaking some analysis of patterns in attendance within the team during the summer term to address this trend. There has been an increase in the number of suspensions (FTE) in March. Analysis has been undertaken by school and year group and meetings have been arranged with targeted schools to discuss alternatives to exclusion.

# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

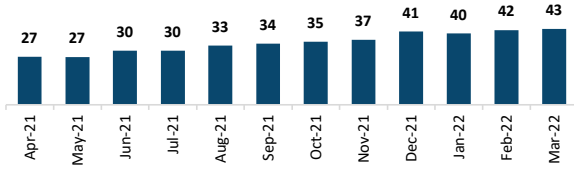
**% Children with a Permanence Plan**



**Comments:**

This continues to be a consistent picture for Dorset Children with month-on-month seeing consistent performance. We have processes in place and a data dashboard to track permanence and we continue to monitor and track our children’s permanence option and timeliness of achieving permanence. A monthly permanence report is also shared with senior managers and operational staff. There continues to be growing scrutiny from our Quality Assurance and Reviewing Officers to ensure further oversight of timeliness and quality of permanence plans. Figures are taken from Mosaic for children in care for 4 months or more at the end of each month

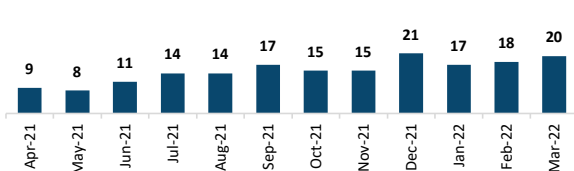
**% Children who have achieved Permanence**



**Comments:**

We remain committed to ensuring our children are achieving permanence in a timely way. This performance has steadily improved slightly since April 2021. This remains a key focus and performance in this regard should steadily improve in coming months as seen to date. This is due to better monitoring and tracking of our children’s journey to permanence in our care, supported by improved data (dashboard) accessible by our staff. Numbers of children in care have increased, however we are still seeing an increase in the % achieving permanence.

**% Children Achieved Permanence: SGO**

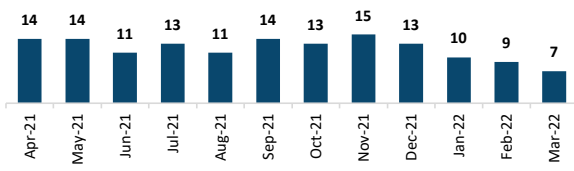


- England Av 20/21 14 %
- Dorset 20/21 12 %
- Good+ SN Av 20/21 14 %

**Comments:**

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children who left care in the last 6 months. We continue to look at all options for securing permanence for our children whilst in our care.

**% Children Achieved Permanence: Adoption**



- England Av 20/21 10 %
- Dorset 20/21 14 %
- Good+ SN Av 20/21 12 %

**Comments:**

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children who left care in the last 6 months. Dorset Council continues to progress and track our children through the adoption process in a timely way, in close partnership with ASPIRE.

## Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

# SUFFICIENCY



Indicator	Dorset 19/20 (whole year)	Dorset 20/21 (whole year)	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
No of approved foster carers (All)	206	244	202	205	202	197	196	198	194	194	193	190	190	192
No of new households recruited														
Mainstream	26	25	3	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	2
CP	45	38	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	1	5	2	3
Temporary CP			5	2	8	1	2	1	0	0	5	0	0	4
No of households de-registered (excludes connected carers)	12	12	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	2
No of households resigned	15	16	3	2	4	4	3	4	1	1	3	6	3	2

### Comments:

In the month of March, we had 20 enquiries, which is an increase from the previous month and better than this time last year.

This financial year there have been 206 enquiries in comparison to 248 in previous year. However, we anticipate our recruitment strategy which includes an increase of face-to-face recruitment alongside digital recruitment with strengthen the footprint of the Dorset Council Fostering Service in the county. Over the last two months we have had transfers from independent fostering agencies and other local authority. The 20 enquiries in March resulted in progressed to 8 initial visits and 2 approvals.

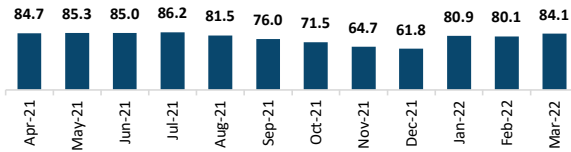
The annual fostering report is being presented to Corporate Parenting Board on the 28th April.

# Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

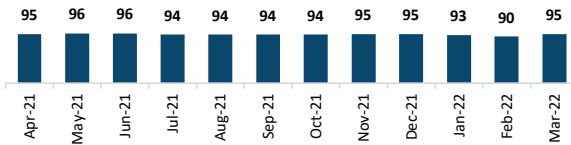
## With an up to date Pathway Plan



### Comments:

Benchmarking data currently not available. Figures taken from Mosaic for all Care Leavers at the end of each month. Quality and timeliness of pathway plans remains a focus for the Care Leaver services who continue to closely monitoring performance.

## Living in Suitable Accommodation (19-21)

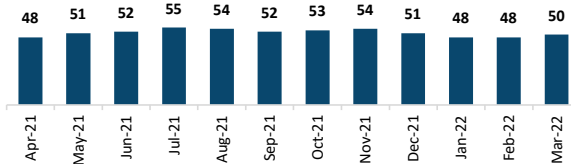


England Av 20/21	88 %
Dorset 20/21	88 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	90 %

### Comments:

Although a high number of our Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation, there are 5 young people in B&B and 6 in custody, and 4 in residences unknown. Those in unsuitable accommodation are monitored through a monthly highlight report to CSLT. Please note: For 'Living in Suitable Accommodation' and In Employment, Education, or Training' measures we use current data available but benchmarking data is using data from last birthday.

## In Employment Education or Training (19-21)

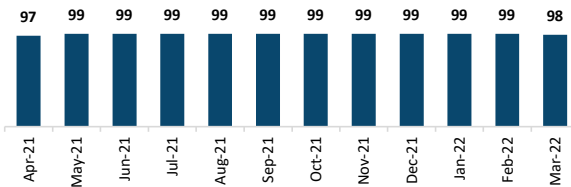


England Av 20/21	52 %
Dorset 20/21	43 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	55 %

### Comments:

Improvements in our NEET statistics have dropped slightly, and we are working with our NEET reengagement team to improve performance. We have 3 Personal Advisors who focus on preparing any care leaver prior to university and supporting the current 32 young people at university.

## Who are in touch with Dorset LA (19-21)



England Av 20/21	91 %
Dorset 20/21	94 %
Good+ SN Av 20/21	92 %

### Comments:

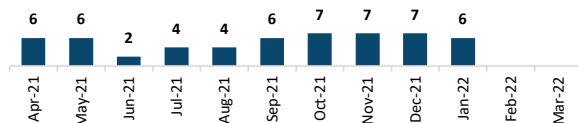
Our 'In Touch' rates are higher than our statistical neighbours, we do have a small number of Care Leavers we are not in touch with. Where we are not in touch, Care Leaver will still have an allocated PA who will continue to try to make contact by whatever means they can.

## Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

**Number of Health passports due within the month (2 months in arrears)**



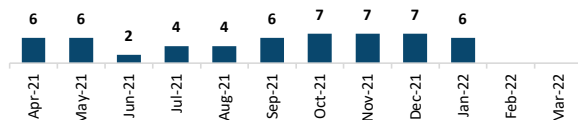
### Comments:

Health passports provide an overview of health for a young person leaving our care.

It details immunisations, allergies, medication, health history such as any significant illnesses known or operations. It also supports our young people to know their health information and where to go for support if needed. For example, sexual health services, mental health services

Health Passports are shared by Dorset's Child in Care Nurse with our Children in Care 6 months prior to their 18 birthday. This is an in-person discussion and is also shared electronically and in paper form with our children their current social worker and their Personal Advisor to support smoother transitions.

**Number of health passports completed (2 months in arrears)**



# Corporate Parenting Data Set

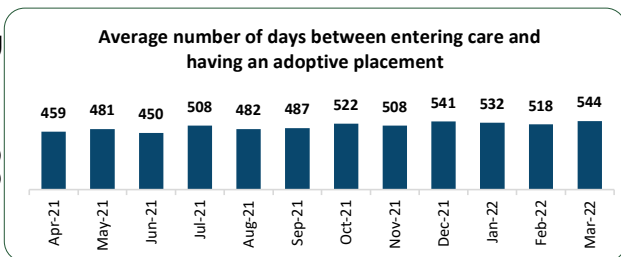
People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

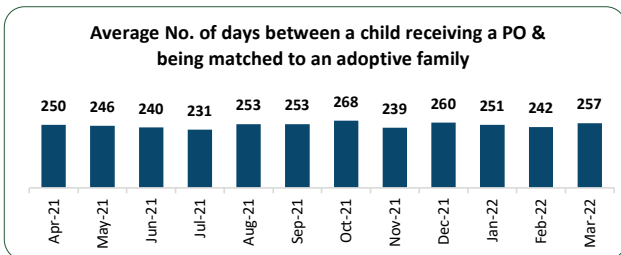


Indicator	Dorset 19/20	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
Number of adoptions finalised in year	16	1	2	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	0
Number of children living in adoptive placements pending adoption orders	-	20	20	21	20	21	23	21	21	20	20
Number of children with a match identified	-	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Number of children where family finding is ongoing	-	17	19	18	15	13	10	12	12	14	13
Number of revocations of Placements Orders	2	8	6	7	7	6	7	7	5	3	4
Number of adoptive families recruited	60	3	2	5	0	1	1	4	3	4	2
Number of adoptive Families in assessment	-	45	45	41	41	NA	44	44	37	33	35

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National 2019	<b>376</b>
Dorset 2019	<b>285</b>
Good+ Statistical Neighbours 2019	<b>342</b>



National 2019	<b>178</b>
Dorset 2019	<b>129</b>
Good+ Statistical Neighbours 2019	<b>149</b>

**Comments:**

Dorset have continued to perform well among statistical neighbours for the time a child starts in care and moves to their adoptive family.

All data is taken from Aspire Adoption Agency.

There were no adoption orders made between December and March because 4 children's adoption hearings have been delayed by the Somerset ruling. Those children remain with their adopters. Early permanence avoided delay in children being placed with adopters. All 13 children subject to family finding are linked with potential adopters. The 5 revocations are for historic children whose plan has changed to foster care.

The timescale for matching and placing children has lengthened compared to the 2019 figures. This is a national trend and is skewed by a few children with high level needs who took longer to be successfully placed and a few children waiting for their placement order to be revoked. Young children continue to be matched and placed quickly. Timescales for each child are reviewed monthly by senior management.

Aspire maintains around 30 available adopters a third of which will consider early permanence. Comprehensive tracking means that if a suitable inhouse adopter is not identified by the time a child receives a placement order, external searches are immediately initiated.

## Corporate Parenting Board 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 The Promise

Choose an item.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):**

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Kaye Wright  
Title: Youth Voice Manager  
Tel: 01305 228213  
Email: [kaye.wright@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kaye.wright@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**Report Status:** Public

### **Recommendation:**

The board are being asked to approve the new Promise, which has been reviewed and written by a care experienced young person, who has collaborated with other young people and corporate parents.

We currently talk about 'The Pledge' but propose that we should refer to this as 'The Promise' going forward, so that consistent language is used, making it easier for children, young people and their families to understand.

It will also make it easier for corporate parents to understand the detail in The Promise, having this as a framework to work with.

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

#### **1. Executive Summary**

The Pledge was last reviewed with young people when we were Dorset County Council and since then, the language we use and the guidance which directs our work, has changed. It is therefore necessary to review this document.

Dorset Council refers to The Promise in the Corporate Parenting Strategy which uses different language to the current pledge, and we want to make sure that these are better aligned.

**2. Financial Implications**

None

**3. Well-being and Health Implications**

None

**4. Climate implications**

None

**5. Other Implications**

NA

**6. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

**7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

NA

**8. Appendices**

Appendix 1 [Web link to 'Our Pledge'](#)

Appendix 2 The new Promise

**9. Background Papers**

Dorset's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023

**10. Context**

10.1 The Pledge is a commitment to the children and young people in the care of Dorset Council, setting out the help and support that is available and what



they can expect from their corporate parents. Having a pledge and a promise is confusing, especially as they use different language. For example, in The Pledge there is a section called 'moving on', yet our corporate parenting strategy (pg6) could be referring to having 'a safe and stable home' or 'work together and guide them into adulthood'. We are proposing that this area of The Promise is called 'Supporting you to be steady and settled as an adult'.

10.2 A care experienced young person has been working on the new proposed promise. They have reviewed The Pledge, advised on improvements, and engaged with other young people about whether it feels right. They have also collaborated with Louise Drury, Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers and Kaye Wright, Youth Voice Manager.

10.3 These are the new proposed areas of The Promise, which now includes health as it was in The Pledge but missing from The Promise.

10.4 We promise to;

- Help to keep you safe
- Support you with your health and wellbeing
- Support you to live your life by providing you with opportunities and activities, and celebrating your achievements
- Help you to have aspirations for your future
- Supporting you to be steady and settled as an adult
- Listen to you and involve you
- Work with you
- Keep our word, be honest, kind and reliable

## **11. Monitoring of the Promise**

11.1 The annual Satisfaction Survey will be aligned to The Promise so that Corporate Parenting Board are able to ensure they are keeping their commitment. The analysis of the findings will identify areas for improvement and continued collaboration and co-production with children and young people.

11.2 The principles of The Promise could become the framework for discussions with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leaver Forum, including the work of the Care Leaver Delivery Group.

- 11.3 At informal corporate parenting board, children and young people could ask officers and members to tell them how well we are doing at delivering The Promise so that we can work on improvements with them.

## **12. Recommendations**

- 12.1 We no longer refer to The Pledge. Our Promise, is our pledge.
- 12.2 The new refreshed Promise is approved and adopted by Corporate Parenting Board
- 12.3 The Promise becomes a framework for the Council to measure itself against and the annual Satisfaction Survey, becomes one of the tools which will allow us to do this.
- 12.4 Members are asked to oversee one or more of the areas of The Promise.

### **Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

*This document will go to print and design ahead of it being published.*

## **The Promise**

This is Dorset Council's promise to their care experienced children and young people.

We promise to;

- Help to keep you safe
- Support you with your health and wellbeing
- Support you to live your life by providing you with opportunities and activities, and celebrating your achievements
- Help you to have aspirations for your future
- Support you to be steady and settled as an adult
- Listen to you and involve you
- Work with you
- Keep our word, be honest, kind and reliable

### **Helping you to be safe**

We promise to make sure that:

- You have a safe and stable home
- You feel safe in your school, college and community
- If it is safe to and you want to, we will help you live with your family (even if it's not with your parents)
- If it is safe and you want to, you are able to keep in regular contact with family and friends
- You are given help to protect you from harm.

### **Supporting you with your health and wellbeing**

We promise to make sure that:

- You are registered with health services and that you have help to attend and make appointments if you need it.
- You can access advice from a dedicated nurse when you need it.
- You are given access to mental health support when you need it.
- You have access to information about sexual health when you need it.
- The people who take care of you, are able support you with your health needs.

### **Supporting you to live your life by providing you with opportunities and activities, and celebrating your achievements**

We promise to make sure that:

- You can go to the activities and clubs that you want to and are given help to attend if needed.
- You are told about opportunities you might like whether you live in Dorset or elsewhere.
- You are treated like your friends without feeling like everyone knows you are care experienced.
- Your achievements are celebrated in a way that is right for you.

### **Helping you to have aspirations for your future**

We promise to make sure that:

- You are listened to and supported with what you want to achieve in the future and whoever you want to be.
- You are told about the support and opportunities there are available to you and how to access them.
- You have a good education and you are helped to achieve.
- You know who your designated teacher is at school
- You are given support getting training or a job and helped to get there if you need it.

### **Supporting you to be steady and settled as an adult**

We promise to make sure that:

- You meet your Leaving Care Personal Adviser at 16.
- You are able to stay with your carers when you are 18, if you want to.
- You are given the information you need at the right time, to help you prepare for becoming an adult.
- You are supported to develop and increase your independence at every stage of your life.
- We stay close and keep in touch.

### **Listening to you and involving you**

We promise to make sure that:

- You are involved in decisions that are about you.
- You are respected and listened to.

- You can speak to someone that does not work for Children's Services, like an advocate, if you want to.
- You are given the option to have an Independent Visitor if you would like one.
- You will be supported to tell someone if you are unhappy about something.
- We will listen to what you and other care experienced children and young people tell us, then work with you to improve the things that matter.

### **Working with you**

We promise to make sure that:

- We work together and communicate properly to give you the care and support that you need
- We will do our jobs well and ask you how you think we are doing.
- We will get to know you properly.
- We will help you to keep your personal belongings safe.
- We will make sure your belongings are moved with you in the right way, if you need to change where you are living.

### **Keeping our word, being honest, kind and reliable**

We promise to make sure that:

- We do not make promises we can't keep.
- We will do what we said we would and explain to you why we can't if this happens.
- We will check that everyone is doing their job properly and involving you.
- We will always be kind.

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## Corporate Parenting Board

28 April 2022

## Children in Care at risk of offending and custody

Choose an item.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):**

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: David Webb

Title: Manager, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service

Tel: 01202 794321

Email: david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

**Report Status:** Public

### Brief Summary:

Children in care are over-represented in the justice system. There is a local multi-agency protocol to reduce the criminalisation of children in care. The scope and implementation of this protocol is summarised in section 1.

For those children who do enter the justice system the Youth Justice Service provides a multi-disciplinary response, in partnership with other services, to reduce the risk of further offending and to avoid the use of custody. The Youth Justice Service has 'case responsibility' for all Dorset children in care who are in the youth justice system, including those placed in other local authority areas. Section 2 of the report outlines the work that is undertaken, the approach to children placed out of area and the success in avoiding custodial sentences for Dorset children, including children in care. Some young adult care leavers do receive custodial sentences. The support for these young people is also considered in section 2.

### Recommendation:

That the Corporate Parenting Board note and support the work being done to reduce the criminalisation and offending of children in care

## **Reason for Recommendation:**

To ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board are informed of the issues relating to children in care at risk of offending and of the work being done to address these issues.

### **1. Diverting children in care from the justice system**

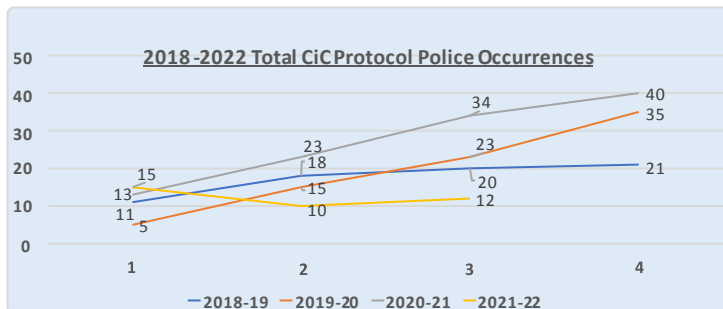
- 1.1 It is recognised that children in care are over-represented in the youth justice system. Previous national reviews of this issue include a Department of Education review in 2016 led by Martin Narey and Lord Laming's Prison Reform Trust report in 2017, "In Care, Out of Trouble".
- 1.2 One of the reasons for children in care being over-represented in the justice system is that they can be criminalised for their behaviour at home when similar behaviour in a family setting would not lead to the police being called. Board members may recall that we have a local multi-agency protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Children in Care. The protocol sets out how children's homes and supported housing projects should decide when to call the police. The aim is to avoid unnecessary police involvement.
- 1.3 A multi-agency group developed our protocol and monitors its use. The group meets three times a year and reviews all incidents when the police have been called to a children's home or supported housing provider in response to the behaviour of a child in care (safeguarding issues and missing persons reports do not fall under this protocol).
- 1.4 The process of reviewing each incident enables us to check that local children's homes and supported housing providers are continuing to follow the protocol. Dorset Police have allocated a Single Point of Contact for each designated provider which enables us to follow up any concerns.
- 1.5 The group monitors performance data about numbers of police call-outs. It is difficult to compare data from one year to the next because we continue to add new addresses to be monitored as we become aware of new providers.
- 1.6 This table shows the total number of recorded police call-outs over the past three years across the whole Dorset Police force area:
- 1.7 Table



**Children in Care Protocol Comparisons 2018 - 2021**

Quarter	Number of occurrences	Gender	Number of Children involved	CJS Outcomes	Local Authority Breakdown
QTR 1 2018 -19	11	Female	4	2 x Charge	BCP = 3
		Male	1		Dorset = 8
QTR 2 2018 -19	7	Female	4	2x YRDs	BCP = 2
		Male	2		Dorset = 5
QTR 3 2018 -19	2	Female	1	None	BCP = 1
		Male	2	None	Dorset = 1
QTR 4 2018 -19	1	Female	0	None	BCP = 0
		Male	1	Youth Caution	Dorset = 1
2018 - 2019 TOTALS	21	Female	9	1 x Youth Caution, 2 x Charge & 2 x YRD	BCP = 6
		Male	6		Dorset = 15
Quarter	Number of occurrences	Gender	Number of Children involved	CJS Outcomes	Local Authority Breakdown
QTR 1 2019 -20	5	Female	1	None	BCP = 3
		Male	4	1x Youth Caution	Dorset = 2
QTR 2 2019 -20	10	Female	1	None	BCP = 4
		Male	6	1 x YRD	Dorset = 6
QTR 3 2019 -20	8	Female	2	2 x Under YOoOD Process	BCP = 1
		Male	7	1 x YRD	Dorset = 7
QTR 4 2019 -20	12	Female	5	1 x Charged	BCP = 6
		Male	4	None	Dorset = 6
2019 - 2020 TOTALS	35	Female	9	2x YRDs 1x Youth Caution	BCP = 14
		Male	21	1 x Charged 2x Under YOoOD Process	Dorset = 21

Quarter	Number of occurrences	Gender	Number of Children involved	CJS Outcomes	Local Authority Breakdown
QTR 1 2020 -21	13	Female	3	None	BCP = 11
		Male	5	None	Dorset = 2
QTR 2 2020 -21	10	Female	1	None	BCP = 8
		Male	8	1 x YC 1 x YCC 2 x Charged	Dorset = 2
QTR 3 2020 -21	11	Female	1	None	BCP = 4
		Male	9	1 x Charged	Dorset = 7
QTR 4 2020 -21	6	Female	3	None	BCP = 3
		Male	3	None	Dorset = 3
2020 - 2021 TOTALS	40	Female	8	1 x YC 1 x YCC 3 x Charged	BCP = 26
		Male	25		Dorset = 14
Quarter	Number of occurrences	Gender	Number of Children involved	CJS Outcomes	Local Authority Breakdown
QTR 1 2021 -22	16	Female	2	None	BCP = 7
		Male	7	None	Dorset = 8
QTR 2 2021 -22	10	Female	0	None	BCP = 7
		Male	7	2 x Charged	Dorset = 3
QTR 3 2021 -22	13	Female	3	None	BCP = 12
		Male	6	1 x PR	Dorset = 1
2021 - 2022 TOTALS	26	Female	5	2 x Charged	BCP = 14
		Male	20	1 x PR	Dorset = 11



Quarter 3 has seen a 17% increase in calls to the police from the previous quarter.

1.8 It is harder to apply our local protocol to placements outside our area. Although there is a national concordat, which requires local areas to have a protocol in place, the coverage and application of these protocols is inconsistent. Colleagues from our commissioning services participate in our local group and aim to include its principles in the commissioning and oversight of contracts for placements in other local authority areas.

**2. Support for children in care after they enter the justice system**

- 2.1 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) works with all local children who have received a Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court order for a criminal offence. If a Dorset child in care receives one of these youth justice outcomes while living in another local authority area, DCYJS has 'case responsibility'. This means that the allocated Youth Justice Officer oversees the work, usually with the local youth justice service providing the direct work. DCYJS also provides the same reciprocal service, ie working directly with children in care from other local authorities who live in Dorset.
- 2.2 To give an indication of the numbers of young people, there are currently 48 young people on the DCYJS Dorset caseload (ie residing in Dorset or Dorset children in care who live out of our area). Of the 48 young people, nine are children in care (six from Dorset, three from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole). Four of the Dorset children in care on the DCYJS caseload are placed out of the area. This means that DCYJS is working with more BCP Council children in care residing in Dorset than Dorset children in care.
- 2.3 A recent Child Safeguarding Practice Review, 'Iris', included some consideration of support for children in care living out of our area. DCYJS identified some learning from this review, about facilitating other youth justice services' requests for information from Dorset children's services. The increase in remote working during the pandemic has led to DCYJS workers having increased contact, virtually, with children in care placed elsewhere. These virtual contacts can help maintain the relationship, alongside face to face contacts and work with the local youth justice service.
- 2.4 DCYJS is a multi-disciplinary team. As well as youth justice officers, the team includes CAMHS nurses, a psychologist, speech and language therapists, education and careers specialists, restorative justice specialists, a probation officer and two police officers. In recent years the service has focused on working in a trauma-informed way, building on previous work to focus on children's speech and language needs. This means that each child can receive a speech and language assessment, which enables the child, their carers and other professionals to understand their communication needs. Trauma-informed practice means that the team seeks to understand the impact of past traumatic experiences on the child and how it affects their current behaviour to work out the best way for workers to respond to these needs.

- 2.5 There are very low rates of custodial sentences for Dorset young people. No Dorset child has been sentenced to custody in the past two years. When a child is at risk of custody, due to the seriousness of their offences, and sometimes the persistence of their offending, the Youth Justice Service works closely with children's social care and other services to agree a credible community sentencing option that can be proposed to the court.
- 2.6 An area of current development is the support for care experienced young adults who are in contact with the criminal justice system, including the small number who receive custodial sentences.
- 2.7 DCYJS works across both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. During 2021/22 we have undertaken view-seeking work with young people from the BCP Council area who have been sentenced or remanded to custody in recent years. Some of these young people are now young adults in the adult prison system. They gave helpful and powerful views about their isolation, loneliness and anxiety about their current and future situations.
- 2.8 When young people turn 18 they enter the adult justice system and work with the Probation Service, rather than the Youth Justice Service. The seconded Probation Officer in DCYJS supports the transition process, including appropriate information-sharing. The next step is to identify if DCYJS can help with the joint work between the Probation Service, the Prison Service and Dorset's Care Leavers service.

### 3. **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications from this report.

### 4. **Climate Implications**

No climate implications have been identified in this report.

### 5. **Well-being and Health Implications**

The health workers in DCYJS liaise with the Child in Care health team to help meet the health needs of children in care who have contact with the justice system. It is recognised that young people in the youth justice system often have unmet, and sometimes unidentified, health and communication needs.

6. **Other Implications**

No other implications have been identified.

7. **Risk Assessment**

7.1 Having considered the risks associated with this report the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Medium

8. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

This report does not relate to new working arrangements and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

It is recognised however that children in care are over-represented in the youth justice system, adding to other disadvantages experienced by this group. This report sets out some of the actions taken to prevent children in care entering or progressing through the justice system.

9. **Appendices**

None

10. **Background Papers**

None

# Corporate Parenting Board

## 28.4.22

### Fostering Service Annual Report

#### For Recommendation to Council

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):**

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

**Report Author:** Louise Drury, Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers

**Tel:** 01305 228382

**Email:** [louise.drury@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:louise.drury@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

**Report Status:** Public

**Recommendation:** Members of Corporate Parenting Board are requested to note the content and actively consider and comment upon the strengths and future recommendations.

#### **Reason for Recommendation:**

To be assured that the report had identified the strengths and areas for development that will strengthen the work we do as Corporate Parents and ensure that children and young people in Dorset will be happy and safe and have opportunities to reach their goals.

#### **1. Executive Summary**

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provides written reports on the management, outcomes, and financial state of the fostering service. This Annual Fostering Service Report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the Fostering Services in the Dorset Council area as required by statutory guidance. The Annual Fostering Service Report must be presented to Corporate Parenting Board.

#### **2. Financial Implications**

None identified

#### **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

None identified

#### **4. Climate implications**

None identified

#### **5. Other Implications**

None identified

#### **6. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: N/A

Residual Risk: N/A

#### **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

N/A

#### **8. Appendices**

None

#### **9. Background Papers**

### **1. Introduction**

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provide written reports on the management, outcomes, and financial state of the fostering service. This report provides an overview of activity from the last financial year, April 2021 to March 2022 and the plans from the service for the forthcoming year (April 2022 to March 2023).

This has continued to be a busy and challenging year within the fostering service. While Covid-19 has sustained logistical challenges for service delivery it has also shone a light on fostering, and our carers, their capacity for kindness, innovation, commitment, and contribution to service development.

During the Inspection of Dorset local authority children's services in September 2021, Ofsted noted, *'Foster Carers are recruited, supported and trained by experienced and aspirational social workers who support them to understand the trauma that children may have faced earlier in their lives. Through the challenges of several lockdowns, foster carers have been supported well to build and maintain relationships with children.'*

The transformation programme for fostering includes the development of Mockingbird which alongside an ambitious recruitment and marketing strategy will support growth in

the number of fostering households, ensuring our children remain close to the people and places they have attachments with.

This year we have welcomed a permanent Service Manager and Fostering Panel Chair, Advanced Practitioner, Panel coordinator, 2 Fostering social workers and Advanced Practitioner (Mockingbird). Current vacancies include two Team Managers – Mockingbird and Post Approval. Where there are vacancies in the team, these are being recruited to at pace.

The service knows itself well, its strengths and areas for improvement and has a clear plan to grow and develop over the next year.

The plan focuses on:

- Improving outcomes for children through placing more children locally enabling them to maintain relationships with friends, family, and community
- Delivering value for money, reducing spend on external placements
- Ability to compete in the market, increasing the number and range of local foster carers with the skills and competencies required to meet our needs.
- Supporting foster carer resilience through the delivery of high-quality supervision and training and access to specialist support when needed
- Ensuring there is a sufficient number of foster carers with the right skills in the right location to enable appropriate matching

## **2. Recruitment, Assessment, Approval and De-registration.**

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 there were 191 Dorset Council fostering households, of which 129 are mainstream households, 57 are connected persons (approved and temporary approved) and 5 households are foster to adopt/early permanence.

On 31 March 2022 there were 178 (218) children and young people living within 126 (207) in house fostering placements which includes mainstream, approved and temporary approved connected persons.

### **2.1 Recruitment**

In this reporting period 2021/22, the Fostering Assessment Team has recruited 17 new mainstream fostering households, 2 of which transferred from another area (IFA and local authority). Throughout the period 2021/22 41 (27) households were temporarily approved as Connected Persons under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning Review and Placement Regulations 2010. A total of 16 (16) Connected Persons households became fully approved foster carers.

The total number of new foster carers for Dorset in 2021/22 was 33 in comparison to 36 in the previous year.

## 2.2 Enquiries, Assessments and Approvals

In the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 206 (248) enquiries from the public seeking information about becoming a foster carer. The team completed 104 (131) Initial Visits and 15 (20) new fostering households were approved.

The Fostering Network estimates that on average one out of ten enquiries progress to approval as foster carers. To ensure the conversion rate is as high as possible it is vital that our approach ensures:

- Enquirers are welcomed positively, provided with a personal service and responded to within 24 hours.
- Prospective carers are given clear, engaging verbal and written information that highlights what Dorset Council Fostering can offer at every touch point with a consistent message.
- The application process is smooth and efficient with fostering carers approved with 26 weeks where possible

<b>Enquiries</b>											
<b>206 (248)</b>											
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
16 (20)	20 (42)	15 (19)	16 (13)	26 (13)	16 (16)	8 (27)	15 (20)	19 (19)	20 (23)	15 (20)	20 (19)
<b>Initial Visits</b>											
<b>104 (131)</b>											
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
9 (12)	9 (20)	11 (14)	6 (6)	17 (9)	6 (12)	3 (12)	5 (11)	10 (5)	12 (12)	8 (11)	8 (7)
<b>Invited to Apply</b>											
<b>41 (87)</b>											
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
3 (11)	7 (19)	5 (11)	3 (5)	5 (3)	4 (5)	1 (7)	2 (7)	2 (3)	5 (7)	3 (6)	1 (3)
<b>Approvals</b>											
<b>15 (20)</b>											
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
4 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (1)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (2)	1 (4)	0 (2)	1 (2)	1 (3)	2 (3)



As of 31 March 2022, there are a further 28 (19) new fostering assessments in progress which includes 11 mainstream households and 17 Connected Persons. This is a significant increase from 19 at the same time in the previous year. Of the 11 mainstream households, 3 are from IFA's and in the last week we have received a further 2 enquiries from households looking to transfer to Dorset.

### **2.3 De-registration**

Nationally 13% of the foster carer workforce are retiring or leaving every year.

In this reporting period, 26 mainstream fostering households compared to 19 in the previous year, and 18 Connected Persons were deregistered from fostering. Reasons for deregistration are as follows:

#### Mainstream

22 resigned from fostering

1 retired

2 ill health

1 resigned following allegation

#### Connected

6 SGO awarded

8 children moved placement of which 3 children returned home

4 children turned 18

This has resulted in an overall loss of 11 fostering households (9 Mainstream and 2 connected persons).

### **3. Recruitment and Marketing**

The recruitment of foster carers nationally is currently a significant issue with an estimation by the Fostering Network (2021) that 7,300 fostering families are required nationally with 720 of those needed in the Southwest.

The aims of the Recruitment Strategy are:

- To improve local placement choice and stability for children and young people in Dorset, particularly for teenagers.
- To increase the number of black and minority ethnic foster carers.
- To increase the number of in-house placements and reduce the usage of independent fostering agencies and residential care.
- To provide an effective, high quality and best value fostering service to meet the needs and numbers of the looked after population

- To ensure that all people who are interested in becoming foster carers are welcomed without prejudice, responded to promptly and given clear information about recruitment, assessment, approval and support services.

In May 2021 the recruitment of foster carers reverted to in-house having previously been delivered by WREC (Whitehead Ross Education and Consulting). Traditionally recruitment methodology has focussed on face-to-face situations such as libraries and local events. However, the impact of the pandemic significantly reduced face to face engagement opportunities and during this time attention has been given to on online and digital recruitment. Nevertheless, it is clearly evidenced that both methodologies are required, and the lack of face-to-face recruitment has led to Dorset Council having less of a 'footprint' within the county.

### **3.1 Marketing**

Colleagues in the Communications Team are working closely with us to deliver an ambitious marketing strategy for foster carer recruitment. We have commissioned an external marketing agency, which has experience of running a number of successful fostering campaigns for local authorities, and have redesigned Dorset Council's fostering image, produced a new insights-led campaign and working with colleagues in IT, a new micro-site. This work will be completed by end of April 2022 and will ensure that Dorset Council fostering is competitive and highlights to both individuals considering fostering and foster carers currently with other agencies the benefits of fostering with Dorset Council. As interim lead generation activity, we have been running targeted Google advertising since after Christmas and through to end of March 2022.

We are putting new systems in place to monitor the results of marketing activity and the number and quality of enquiries generated. This insight will be used to continually refine the marketing activity. Fostering is something that people think about for a number of months or years before they contact an organisation. Our marketing activity will aim to support people along their consideration journey, providing useful information, inspiration and advice to help them decide whether to pursue foster care.

### **3.2 Face to Face Recruitment Events**

In recent months we have once again been able to get out into the local communities to raise our profile and awareness of the need for more carers to support our children in Dorset. We have hosted fostering information stands at local events, such as Christmas Markets, local family friendly venues- such as Moors Valley Country Park, Nothe Fort, Kingston Lacy House, Sea Life Centre, local football grounds and country fayres. We have a variety of venues booked for the coming year and welcome members of Corporate Parenting Board to join us.

Our 'Fostering Roadshow' has commenced in partnership with the local libraries, and we are hosting in person drop-in sessions in libraries across Dorset to ensure we are reaching all areas throughout April and May 2022. This provides a great opportunity for people to gain further information and to ask questions in a venue close to their homes.

Further engagement includes:

- Monthly online drop-in events hosted on TEAMS. These have been open to the general public and advertised via our social media formats, alongside invites being sent to potential carers that have made an early enquiry with us. The drop-ins are hosted by the Enquiries Officer and are supported by current Dorset foster carers and social workers from the Fostering Assessment Team. These are held in the evenings to ensure they are accessible for potential applicants who may be working during the day.
- Initial Enquiry Calls and Home visits- These are an opportunity for potential carers to have a 1:1 discussion and to gain further information about fostering to see how it will fit for their family.
- Social media campaigns via our online formats- Facebook, Instagram and magazine advertising in local magazines delivered to households.

All of our events are shared via the communications team to ensure members of the public know where we are and where they can attend to gain further information. We are also working in partnership with Dorset Foster Carers Association to hear the voice of current carers and their views on areas we could develop to support our recruitment programme.

We will launch our new branding in late April which will see a wider range of advertising and a new look microsite. We are also engaging with the textile department at a local college to develop and design items of clothing with Dorset branding to support our campaign and

#### **4. Fostering Panel**

Under the Fostering Service (England) 2011 Regulations Fostering Services are required to appoint a foster panel. Under Regulation 25 the fostering panel is required to:

- To make a recommendation as to whether the applicant is suitable to be a foster carer and the terms of the approval.
- To consider the first annual review for newly approved foster carers, as well as reviews following the managing allegations process, and where foster carers are seeking a change in the terms of their registration status.
- To recommend whether a person still is suitable to be a foster carer, and whether the terms of their approval (if any) remain appropriate.
- To give advice or make recommendations on other matters or cases referred to by the fostering service provider, including terminations of approval.
- The fostering panel must also advise, where appropriate, on the procedures under which reviews in accordance with Reg. 28 are carried out by the fostering service provider, and periodically monitor their effectiveness.

In addition, the National Minimum Standards 2011 requires that:

- Panels provide quality assurance feedback to the fostering service provider on the quality of reports being presented and the timeliness of assessments and decisions.

In July 2021 we were delighted to welcome our newly recruited Panel Chair and through her leadership we have seen the development of processes to strengthen quality of conversations in panel, completion of member appraisals and improved quality assurance.

We have also been able to permanently recruit to the posts of Advanced Practitioner whose role also includes providing advice to fostering panel, and Panel Coordinator. It is recognised that not having these posts permanently recruited has presented challenges which we anticipate will now be overcome through strengthened quality assurance streamlined panel administration processes with dedicated support.

Fostering panel continues to be held on consecutive days once a fortnight on Tuesday and Wednesday every other week although there are opportunities to review this.

A panel is quorate when at least 5 members are in attendance. This must include the Chairperson, a social worker and at least three other members. The current number of members (14) on the central list has created vulnerability in panel being consistently quorate. With the hugely successful recruitment of a further 14 members to the central list, 7 of which are social workers, means that panel remains resilient.

As a result of the pandemic, Fostering Panel has continued to meet virtually. Following a recent development day with Mark Finnis on 30 March 2022, plans are now being put in place so that panel can meet face to face with the opportunity of attendees being able to join virtually where this is necessary.

In the reporting period the panel met 43 times and heard 158 cases.

<b><u>2021 -2022</u></b>	
Number of panels	43
New Approvals – mainstream and connected persons	44 presented, 34 approved
Connected Persons - approvals	16
Regulation 25 Extension (Connected Persons)	20 presented, 17 approved
Resignation	21
Reviews	35
Total number of actual cases presented	158

## **5. Dorset Approved Fostering Households and Beds**

As of the 31st of March 2022, there were 448 children who were being looked after by Dorset Council. Of these 310 or 69% of all children in care were being looked after by foster carers either through an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or with Dorset's own in-house fostering service.

Of the 310 children in foster care, 184 or 59% were placed within Dorset Council Foster Carers and 126 or 41% were placed with IFA carers.

The table below shows the number of approved households by type, the optimum number of registered placements and the number of placements used by type.

Type of Fostering Household	Total Number of Fostering Households	Total Number of Beds	Total Number of Children Placed
Mainstream Including Parent and Child	129	249	126
Connected Persons	57	73	55
Foster for Adoption	5	5	3
Total number of Households	191	327	184

The combined number of all types of approved fostering households including Short Breaks, Connected Persons and Foster to Adopt is 191. The optimum number of placements provided through the Fostering Service is 327, and the number of fostering beds used was 184.

The current utilisation rate of foster children to fostering households is 1.04. This continues to be low and has been impacted in the year by the number of fostering households with fostering beds on hold and the number of unavailable placements.

Fostering households may be approved for one, two or three children. Often the approval can be for one or two, if siblings. This is usually due to bedroom space available and in Dorset we allow siblings (if appropriate) to share bedrooms. For the purpose of reporting the number of beds approved, the maximum number is reported. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 there were 143 fostering beds not in use which is a decrease from 151 as reported on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

There may be a number of reasons why fostering beds are not in use which may range from matching to being on hold due to ill health, personal or family circumstances. Foster carers may also be placed on hold by the service due to complaints or safeguarding concerns. It is also common for fostering households not to be used to the maximum number of beds they have available because of the needs of children already placed with them.

It is important to differentiate between fostering households that have vacancies and have no foster children placed (primary vacancies) and those that have vacant beds but do have other foster children in place (secondary vacancies). Likewise, fostering households that are on hold without any foster children placed have primary beds on hold and those that have children in placements but have additional unused beds have secondary beds on hold.

## **6. Fostering Reviews**

The foster carers annual review of approval addresses all relevant aspects of the National Minimum Fostering Standards and Regulations 2011. The reviews are initiated by the Fostering Social Worker with a written summary of achievements and significant events within the foster carers home over the preceding year.

A Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer convenes and chairs an independent annual review meeting. A report is then either presented to Panel and endorsed by the Fostering Panel Agency Decision Maker or submitted to the Senior Manager for Fostering who is the Agency Decision Maker for non-Panel reviews. All the completed reviews are quality assured by the relevant Team Managers who monitor compliance with the regulations before final agreement.

Over the last 6 months, the Fostering review process has been revised in order to streamline the procedure and ensure continued compliance with the Regulations. Weekly meetings between the team managers in fostering and the manager of the fostering reviewing officers (FROs) now take place to monitor and track the reviews as well as highlighting those due for review at the 9 month mark which allows for sufficient time to plan and prepare before the formal review processes commences. The FRO manager provides quarter reports to QPAG (Quality Assurance Performance Group) to share progress and to further strengthen practice and performance in this area.

We have been able to evidence the following areas of strength:

- The gap between review meetings is now starting to decrease.
- There is an independent overview of the individual circumstances agreed actions and plans.
- The workflow and timescale between review completion, Quality Assurance from line manager and ADM has significantly improved.
- Escalation procedure is now in place which alerts managers within Fostering, Quality Assurance and Fieldwork teams of outstanding input into foster carer reviews.

- Increased management oversight and monitoring of reviews has started to become embedded in practice.
- Reviews are progressed at pace as soon as the work is allocated to the FRO and on average completed within 4 weeks.
- Increased management oversight is evidenced on the foster carer records.

Alongside the development of the service over the last 12 months the following areas for development have been identified as a priority for the 2022/23 service plan:

- To complete fostering reviews within 11 months to improve timeliness and meet statutory requirement.
- Improve the progress of reviews progressed to fostering panel. FSW must book a panel slot prior to the review being sent to The FRO's to prevent the reviews from sitting in the Virtual Panel tray.
- Understanding and commitment from supervising social workers, QAROs and childcare social workers to contribute and inform the statutory review. This includes providing all the relevant information within the required timescales.
- To maintain high expectations in the standards of fostering reviews to ensure our foster carers have the skills, training, and support to meet the individual needs of our children & young people.
- To embed the audit framework within the FRO process to regularly highlight areas of strength and development. This will enable learning and improvement in practice from any emerging themes.
- To establish regular feedback from foster carers as part of the review process.
- To use the escalation process to drive standards and highlight key areas for managers and senior management oversight.

There is an expectation that on average 20 fostering reviews should be completed per calendar month. The team is currently operating at 61% completion and improvements continue to be made, through collaborative working and increased communication between the FRO's and the FSW's. Increased management oversight and regular meetings have improved the tracking of review timescales and reviews are now booked in advance at the review meeting, which should improve the timeliness of the reviews going forward.

## **7. Foster Carer's Support**

Foster carers have valued more than ever the contact and support they have received throughout the last year. The service has adapted to

### **7.1 Support Groups**

Throughout March 2021 – April 2022 monthly support groups have taken place virtually on the first Monday of each month between 1.30pm – 3pm. These groups provided a regular opportunity for carers to come together supported by fostering social workers to discuss a range of topics. As a number of these groups took place during Covid-19, themes centred around home schooling, vaccinations and balancing home and work.

While attendance at virtual meetings was consistent, the number of carers attending was quite small.

More recently the fostering service has re-established a number of local face to face support groups for foster carers in the North and East of the county with plans for these to be county wide beginning in May 2022.

Carers have clearly identified a preference for face to face meetings and attendance is higher and feedback is positive. The groups provide the opportunity for carers to meet with each other, to form supportive relationships, to deliver localised training and share experiences and knowledge. Going forward, the Support Groups plan to reinstate the attendance of guest speakers and are extending the number of locations at which groups are being held to ensure localized information and support is available to carers.

## **7.2 Therapeutic Support**

The Fostering Team work in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group to promote the emotional wellbeing of fostered children and young people. A total of 18.5 hours of Clinical Psychology support continues to be provided through 2 part time clinical psychologists.

Due to the rise in the numbers of requests for support, advice, and guidance from foster carers to the children in care Psychologists for adoption and permanence we are developing a model of practice that improves the skills of the supervising social workers to provide the direct support to the foster carers. This is consistent with Dorset Council Children's Social Care's restorative practice model. Through consultation and group supervision, support and joint training foster carers will have an improved understanding of the emotional needs of the children in their care and how to respond to these. This will further be underpinned by the development of a therapeutic DDP (Dyadic Developmental Practice/PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) led service.

## **7.3 Child's Voice**

Listening to children's voices is key to improving fostering care practice. In January 2022 the Children's Commissioner for England published a report detailing the responses for children in care and children in need to her Big Ask survey conducted last year. The most consistent message was that children in care want the same things as all other children: to be loved, to have friends, to make plans for their future and to be able to pursue their own interests.

The Fostering Service actively supports children and young people to share their views about how they are being cared for and supported by the Fostering Service.

This includes support for keeping in touch with their family and friends, support with education, hobbies and interests and planning for the future. Views are shared ahead of child in care reviews and as part of the foster carer's annual review.



Children in foster care also have access to a children's advocate. This service is provided independently through NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) who are also exploring the potential of using digital workflow to improve their capacity and raise the profile of advocacy with children, young people, colleagues and our partners. NYAS are also helping us to understand the "distance travelled" by children and young people by monitoring how they use advocacy over time to share their views – this feedback will also be used to inform how we can change the way we work to make it easier for children and young people to share their views as directly as possible.

The Youth Voice Team are also working closely with our Fostering Service to take a 'whole family approach' to engagement, where foster carers, their birth families and the children they foster are able to attend events together, creating an opportunity to engage with foster families at the same time.

#### **7.4 Delegated authority**

Dorset Council Children's Services continue to work to ensure that foster carers have delegated authority to make certain decisions for the children they care for. A delegated authority agreement is completed at the point of the initial placement planning meeting which provides clarity and enables foster carers to make common sense, everyday decisions about the children and young people they care for, for example allowing them to go to friends' houses for sleepovers, signing consent forms for school trips and even arranging haircuts. Completion of delegated Authorities is tracked weekly at Leadership Oversight to ensure timely completion by social workers.

#### **7.5. Dorset Foster Carer's Association (DFCA)**

The Dorset Foster Carer's Association was formed in March 2021 by a number of the foster carers from Dorset with the aims of:

- Providing strong channels of communication between the Fostering Service and the Association
- Working in partnership with Corporate Parenting and Fostering Services
- Seeking to improve all aspects of fostering
- Promoting good practice
- Representing foster carers as a group
- Organising and supporting social events for foster carers

This year has seen the DFCA establish support groups which offer peer mentoring. These take place monthly with one group in the East, one in the North and two groups in Weymouth. DFCA has also supported foster carer recruitment events at local sports clubs which has yielded additional benefits of receiving complimentary tickets for foster carers. A recent raffle raised £400 which will be used to provide events in the summer. The DFCA continues to raise the profile of Dorset Council foster carers, advance foster carers views

and recommendations regarding the Fostering Service and support carers to provide to provide high quality care for the children they look after.

Currently the DFCA are in the process of setting up a website for all Foster Carers to access information regarding various issues and topics and for them to leave their views in relation to any fostering matters. This will ensure that there are robust channels of communication and feedback from foster carers to senior managers.

## **7.6 Long Service Awards**

Plans are well advanced for our annual Foster Care Award Ceremony which is taking place face to face on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with keynote speaker Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director – Social Care. At this event we will see carers being celebrated for the outstanding love, care and kindness they provide for Dorset children and their longevity of service. Thirty-five carers will be recognized for 5-10 years' service, 23 carers for 11-15 years' service, 7 for 16-20 years' service, 3 for 21-24 years' service and 14 for 25 years plus. Further family events are being planned in the summer which will include the celebration of our children who foster.

## **8. Complaints and Allegations**

The Fostering Service always takes any complaints and allegations against foster carers very seriously and all complaints and allegations are thoroughly investigated. Wherever possible we will attempt to resolve complaints informally, but these can be escalated should the complainant remain dissatisfied.

All Allegations against foster carers are referred to the LADO and are thoroughly investigated

### **8.1 Complaints**

Between 1 April 2021 and 3 March 2022 there were 13 complaints about the fostering service, 4 of which were upheld.

Two of these were from children both of which were upheld and resolved informally.

Four complaints were made by foster carers, 2 of which were upheld.

One complaint was made by a 'other professional', which was not upheld.

Four complaints were children and young people's parents, none of which were upheld, and a further 2 complaints were made by 'others' both of which were not upheld.

The themes from these complaints identify the need to pause and consider the wider impacts of making decisions to move children from foster placements and strengthen communication. The focus of the Fostering Service in response to complaints made is to build rapport and heal relationships whilst delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people in care. As a learning authority, our approach is to promote the

best relationship with our foster carers, young people and their families by learning from complaints.

## **8.2 Allegations**

During this reporting period there were 22 referrals to the Designated Officer (aka LADO) concerning foster carers during this reporting period. Four of these did not meet the allegation threshold and were therefore closed.

After deliberation with the LADO 11 were considered to be unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious

Seven were substantiated and appropriate actions taken. After formal reviews, 2 carers resigned from their position as foster carers and were subsequently de-registered as foster carers for Dorset.

## **9. Foster Carer Training**

Foster carers have access to a comprehensive learning and development offer through the Foster Carers Training Handbook. During the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 29 training courses were delivered with a total of 556 attendances. While the majority of these training events were online (20), more recently training events have been face to face with high attendance rates (between 11 -30).

To enhance the training offer available to foster carers, children's services now subscribe to The Training Hub which has a wide range of specialist e-learning modules targeted specifically at foster carers. The Foster Carer Training Hub offers the UK's largest cohort of online subjects. All their online training is built upon scientific evidence. This means it is engaging, interactive, and is supported by unique modules which include assessments, course-related handbooks, and an in-depth learning outcome review to ensure the learning outcomes have been met by our carers. In this period 61 foster carers have also completed e training available on the Learning Hub.

All foster carers providers can access Research in Practice although to date only 6 have created accounts. This is an area identified for improvement. Work is currently being done to establish foster carers with Dorset Council email addresses which will mean the 'creating account' process will become much easier for them. More benefits such as direct emails and promotion of resources from Research in Practice will encourage foster carers to access the site more.

New training handbooks were created for foster carers and can be viewed using the links below.

[Foster Carer Handbook 1 - 1 \(pagetiger.com\)](https://www.pagetiger.com/foster-carer-handbook-1-1)

## **12. Budget**

The 2021/22 budget for Inhouse Fostering Fees & Allowances totalled £5.2M funding an average of 231 placements during the year.

Placements were consistently below this level and an estimated underspend of £1.3M is forecast.

It is anticipated that usage of in-house provision will increase going forward through the recruitment of foster carers and implementation of Mockingbird.

## **13. Developments for 2022/23**

The Fostering service has closed off a number of actions from last year's Strengthening Fostering Action Plan and developed a revised Action Plan which over the coming year will prioritise work in the following areas:

### **13.1 Strengthening Business Intelligence and Performance Monitoring Arrangements.**

Embed the Fostering Dashboard within the service with access being extended to fostering social workers.

Develop the Fostering Dashboard further to ensure that all KPIs are captured and reportable.

For example:

- Foster Carer Supervision
- Unannounced visits
- Medical
- DBS
- Health and Safety
- Foster Carer agreements

### **13.2 Ensure Fostering Service Has Sufficient Staffing to Meet Current and Predicted Service Demand (In Line with Planned Service Development)**

Evaluate the Business Support needs of the service while also looking at ways develop ways to be more streamlined and effective such as through the recording of panel minutes.

### **13.3 Ensure Effective Policies, Procedures and Processes Are in Place and Align with Statutory and National Minimum Standards and Best Practice.**

The fostering service has implemented a new approach to ensure that Fostering Reviews are tracked and recorded effectively, and progress is being made in this area. Next steps include a review of panel processes to identify where these can be strengthened further particularly considering having the benefit of permanent panel chair, advanced practitioner and panel coordinator now in post.

The annual review of Fostering Regulations will be undertaken to ensure compliance with National Minimum Standards and assess the maturity of practice for Dorset Fostering

Service. This will be used to inform annual self-assessment and ensure that any areas for development are incorporated into the plan.

Work is also planned to improve Foster Carer Medicals process including:

- Partnership practice standard/
- policy
- Automating Foster Carer
- medicals (between health
- providers, CCG and children's
- services) (to remove delays from
- reviews)

A workshop is being developed to strengthen the interface between the Fostering Service and Locality Teams with a focus on planning better for children in care.

### **13.4 Ensure the Quality of Practice in Dorset's Fostering Service Meet Fostering Regulations and Standards**

Implement monthly dip sampling of Fostering social work supervision.

The learning offer for Fostering Service which includes viability and assessment process training will be designed and embedded.

Fostering Service Practice Standards are to be reviewed to ensure these remain current. Audit activity will be undertaken to evidence standards are being adhered to.

### **13.5 Strengthen Fostering Panel Arrangements**

The fostering service will continue to work to improve the efficiency and impact of the fostering panel.

A review of Fostering Panel processes is underway and focus will be given to implementing reviewed panel processes to ensure this is streamlined, supports effective and timely decision making and is compliant with national and regulatory standards.

### **13.6 Strengthen Foster Carer Support**

Work with DFCA to introduce and develop support groups and peer and buddy systems.

Support the Dorset Foster Carer Association to introduce and implement flexible and professional support for foster carers who are providing care for children and young people with more complex needs, e.g. Training Ambassadors.

Implement a programme of regular training events for foster carers around frequent health issues/strategies to support children and young people e.g. Foster Carer Health Training

Implement specialist support for foster carers who are providing care for children and young people with more complex needs

### **13.7 Implement the Mockingbird Programme.**

The first implementation working group meeting took place on 31/3/2022 led by Di Frake and Caroline Kerley (Fostering Network Mockingbird coach). The draft Operation Protocol is being finalised and information events for foster carers are being delivered throughout April 2022. The advanced practitioner role has been successfully recruited to and the Mockingbird Team Manager post is out to advert.

Dorset Fostering Service intends to establish our first Mockingbird constellation by April 2023.

### **13.8 Strengthen Fostering Recruitment**

Establish long term communications/marketing capacity/expertise to support Fostering recruitment.

Develop Fostering Friendly employer information and support:

- Create Fostering Friendly information.
- Promote Corporately.
- Promote to partners and organisations – including engagement with local business partners to promote Dorset Council as the fostering provider of choice

Undertake recruitment of Harbour Foster Carers.

[Please do not delete the footnote.](#)

#### **Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

## Corporate Parenting Board

28 April 2022

### Aspire Adoption Statement of Purpose 1st of April 2022 to 2023 and Annual Report 1st April 2021 to 31st of March 2022

Choose an item.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):**

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Michelle Whiting

Title: Aspire Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report

Tel: 0300 123 9868

Email: michelle.whiting@aspireadoption.co.uk

**Report Status:** Public

**Brief Summary:** Dorset Council has a duty under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to establish and maintain an adoption service for its area and along with BCP Council discharges this duty through a delegation of functions to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency. Dorset retains overall responsibility for its adoption and special guardianship services, continuing to have parental responsibility for its own Children in Care but most adoption and some special guardianship functions are delegated to Aspire Adoption.

The appended report is the fourth annual adoption report presented by Aspire Adoption, summarising the work of the agency in the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. It has been written to ensure and provides the Council with an opportunity to satisfy itself that the requirements of the Statutory Adoption Guidance 2013 and the Adoption Minimum Standards 2014 are met.

This report provides a summary of the comprehensive self-evaluation of Aspire Regional Adoption Agency

**Recommendation:**

## The Corporate Parenting Board Approve Aspire Adoption Annual Report and Statement of Purpose

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

The Corporate Parenting Board is satisfied that the Aspire Statement of Purpose accurately describes the activities that the agency discharges on behalf of Dorset Council and the Annual Report satisfies the report that these activities were discharged to a high standard in the last year.

#### 1. **Report**

1.1 Please see the reports attached

#### 2. **Financial Implications**

**Aspire Adoption Agency delivered services for the financial year 2021 to 2022 within the agreed budget. Aspire Executive Board will have access to the full financial report**

#### 3. **Climate Implications**

**None**

#### 4. **Well-being and Health Implications**

**None**

#### 5. **Other Implications**

**None**

#### 6. **Risk Assessment**

6.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as: **LOW**



Current Risk: LOW  
Residual Risk: LOW

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

**The service promotes permanence for children through Special Guardianship and Adoption and services to support adopters and Special Guardians. It commissions an independent birth parent service.**

**The statement of purpose outlines the services commitment to dignity, equality and respect for all who come into contact with the service.**

8. **Appendices**

9. **Background Papers**

**Aspire Adoption Annual Report 2021 to 2022**

**Aspire Adoption 3 year financial model**

**Aspire Adoption Statement of Purpose 2022 to 2023**

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# **Aspire Adoption Annual Report for Dorset Council**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Children's Adoption Data
3. Adopter Recruitment
4. National Mystery Shopper Exercise
5. Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Services
6. Adoption Panel
7. Birth Parent Services
8. Special Guardianship Assessment
9. Finance

## Appendices

1. Local authority statutory responsibilities in respect of adoption
2. Division of roles and responsibilities between Aspire and the local authorities
3. Aspire Organisational Structure and Staffing
4. Governance of Aspire Adoption
5. Adoption Panel
6. Aspire Adoption 3-year Financial Model

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This is the fifth annual report for Aspire Adoption Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). We are pleased to report that despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic, Aspire’s partnership with Dorset Childrens’ Services has continued to strengthen and grow. This was confirmed in the 2021 Ofsted inspectors who

“Were pleased with the working relationship between Dorset and Aspire and most importantly it led to good outcomes for children with almost every child with a plan of adoption being successfully placed with a family.”

1.2 Aspire improved the monthly performance reporting to give Dorset a clear view of every child in the adoption process. This was noted by Ofsted

“Senior managers, through regular oversight, assure themselves that children receive an effective service from the regional adoption agency”

## 2. Children’s Adoption Performance Data

### SBPA Decisions

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Dorset	2	4	3	2	11

### Placement Orders

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Dorset	4	4	0	3	11

### Placements

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Dorset	7	3	7	0	17

### Adoption Orders

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Dorset	5	4	5	0	14

### Children with PO waiting for a match

	Jun-30	Sep-30	Dec-31	Mar-31
Dorset	8	8	4	8

**Children with  
PO linked to  
adopters**

	Jun-30	Sep-30	Dec-31	Mar-31
Dorset	2	5	4	8

**Children with  
PO not yet  
linked**

	Jun-30	Sep-30	Dec-31	Mar-31
Dorset	6	3	0	0

2.1 Fewer children had a Local Authority Should Be Placed for Adoption ( SBPA ) plan this year, which meant that there were fewer, placement orders and subsequent adoption orders made. This figure is slightly skewed by the Somerset ruling which meant that 4 children who most likely would have had an adoption order made by the 31<sup>st</sup> March had their adoptions postponed until after the 31<sup>st</sup> of March

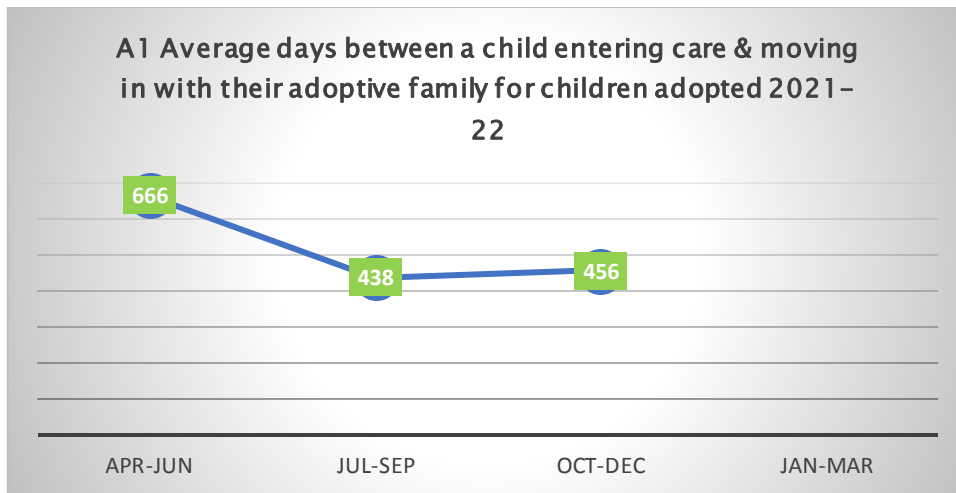
Every child with a plan for adoption is linked to an adopter.

Aspire has worked hard to increase the range and diversity of adopters enabling children labelled the 'hardest to place' find loving adoptive families.

## **2.2 Timeliness of adoption**

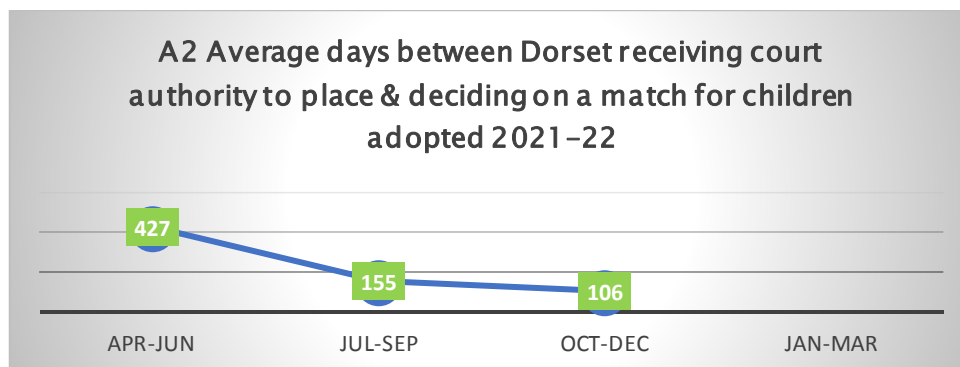
**A1** The most up to date comparator figures available at the time of writing are the Coram BAAF quarter 3 figures to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December. The England average was 485 days and Dorset 456

At the end of quarter 4 the Dorset average remained at 456 days



**A2** The most up to date comparator figures available at the time of writing are the Coram BAAF quarter 3 figures to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December. The England average was 196 days and Dorset 106 days

At the end of quarter 4 the Dorset average remained at 106 days



The quicker children are matched with adopters and placed the better. The performance figures illustrate Ofsted’s conclusion that

*“Adoption is considered carefully and promptly for all children who are unable to return home to their birth families and who need a permanent alternative.”  
Ofsted 2021*

### *Jakes Story*

*Jake was found eating off the floor, severely neglected. Aged 7 with autism, nonverbal and mobility issues the courts doubted we would find adopters. But there was something very engaging about Jake who loves swinging and sensory play.*

*His social workers and foster carers were all determined to find him his own family foster carers, social workers.*

*It took ambition, determination, and the ability to put together a great long term support package with education and health. Aspire found a very special family who love Jake to pieces. Jake is going from strength to strength.*

### 2.3 Early Permanence

EP	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Dorset	2	2	1	5	10

Early Permanence is where children are placed with prospective adopters on a fostering basis. If the courts decide that adoption is the right plan, they become their adopters. This avoids the additional trauma children suffer from changes in their primary carers.

Early Permanence has generally been used for babies. Aspire has placed babies direct from hospital so there are Dorset children who have only known the one carer. We have also been far more creative in our use of Early Permanence with older children to reduce placement moves and breaking avoid delay.

Our adopters have proved that with the right support and information they can manage a high degree of risk, uncertainty, and contact. Two children ended up being returned to their birth families. They worked incredibly hard to make it a smooth transition for the child.

Over half of our adopters will consider Early Permanence

*Mica 11 months story*

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*Due to unforeseen circumstances her foster placement needed to end quickly. Dorset were exploring permanence with extended,*



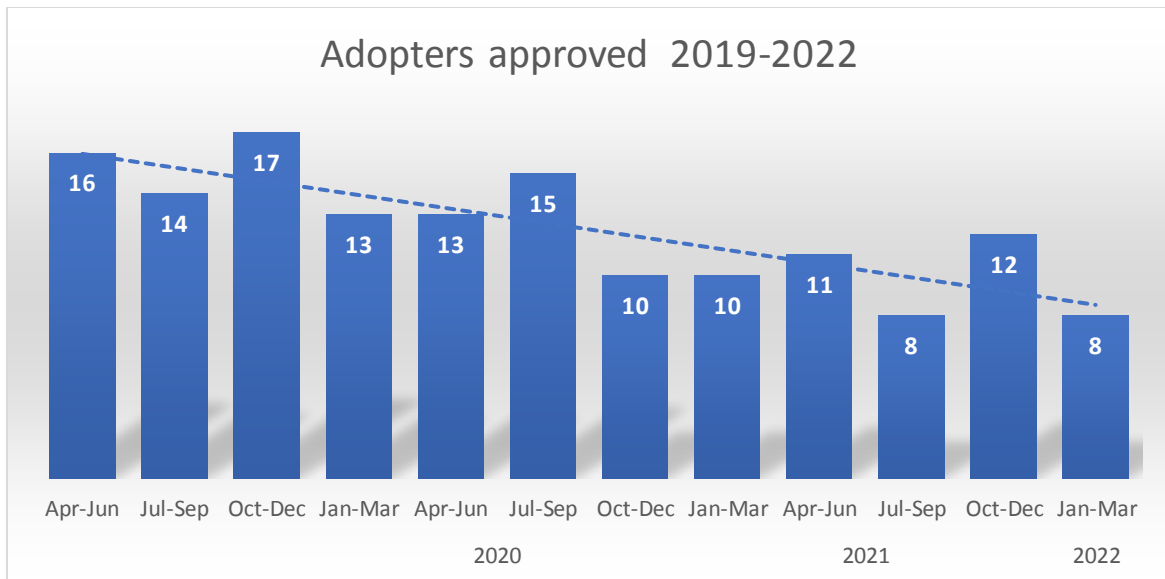
### **3. Adopter Recruitment**

3.1 Aspire recruits a great range of diverse adopters. At any one time, we try to have around 30 families available to meet the needs of Dorset and BCP children.

Subtle changes to our social media messaging and changes to the induction programme have helped attract adopters for older children, sibling groups and children with additional needs that we require.

Aspire is fortunate that we can recruit a wide range of adopters

In the past year we have recruited adopters from 12 different nationalities. We have recruited couples and single adopters, and 1 in 7 approved adopters are LGBTQ+. We have fine-tuned our messaging and work with adopters to flex around the needs of local children. We do adopt some babies, but we are mainly looking for adopters who will consider older children, sibling groups and children with additional needs.



3.2 At any one time we have approximately 30 available approved adoptive households. If adopters are not matched with Dorset or BCP children, we support them to explore children nationally.

### 3.3 Interagency adoptions

Aspire supports national adopter sufficiency adopters

This year Aspire spent £236,500 on adoptive placements and sold £ 200, on placements. A further £103,000 of Aspire adopters are linked with children but will not be progressed until the Somerset guidance is issued.

3.4 The close relationship and tracking we undertake with Dorset means that by the time the placement order is made, we will know whether Aspire has suitable adopters or not, and immediately look elsewhere to avoid delay for children.

3.5 Our relentless focus on finding families for children means that almost all children with a plan for adoption are found families.

## 4. National Mystery shopper exercise

4.1 The Regional Adoption Agencies funded a programme looking at the effectiveness of response to initial adoption enquiries, website, and social media. Aspire received a rating of 82%.

4.2 The website did not require any improvements. Facebook and YouTube were considered good, but it was suggested that Twitter and Instagram needed improvement. We have identified that most of our prospective adopters use Facebook. As a small agency, it makes sense to concentrate on this medium. The larger report commented on the quality and the helpfulness of our Facebook posts.

## 5. **Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Services**

5.1 Aspire offers support to Dorset adopters and Special Guardians until their children reach adult hood. This is a service that families choose to access. We have worked hard

over the last year to eradicate the waiting list and offer an immediate response to families at the lower tiers through a daily duty system.

5.2 The cumulative increase in the number of adopters and special guardians eligible for this support continues to be challenge. This is a small team consisting of just under four FTE social workers and two and half family support workers. We have maximised capacity by reducing bureaucracy.

5.3 The service tries to pre-empt need and offer a greater range of early support services and has increased the range of specialist groups and training. This includes a range of forums and social groups, training in therapeutic parenting, Thera play, therapeutic life story work and great behaviour parenting for teenagers.

**84 parents (Dorset and BCP) attended Aspire training and workshops over 2021-2022. with many more attending the support groups.**

5.4 The service has strong links with and Early Help and universal services who offer bespoke services for our families.

#### 5.6 Education

5.7 Adoption UKs 2021 barometer report found that education is adopters' highest concern. The team has developed strong relationships with Dorset virtual school who offer a mix of direct support and advisory sessions as required. The spring newsletter focused on education and included the Dorset Previously Looked After (PLAC) Information Book. Aspire's service manager is the Virtual School PLAC governor.

5.8 This allows workers to offer short pieces of task centred work for families with more complex needs. **120 Children (Dorset and BCP) are currently receiving direct social work support, with an allocated worker. It generally takes about 3 weeks to be allocated.**

#### 5.9 The Department for Education Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASF)

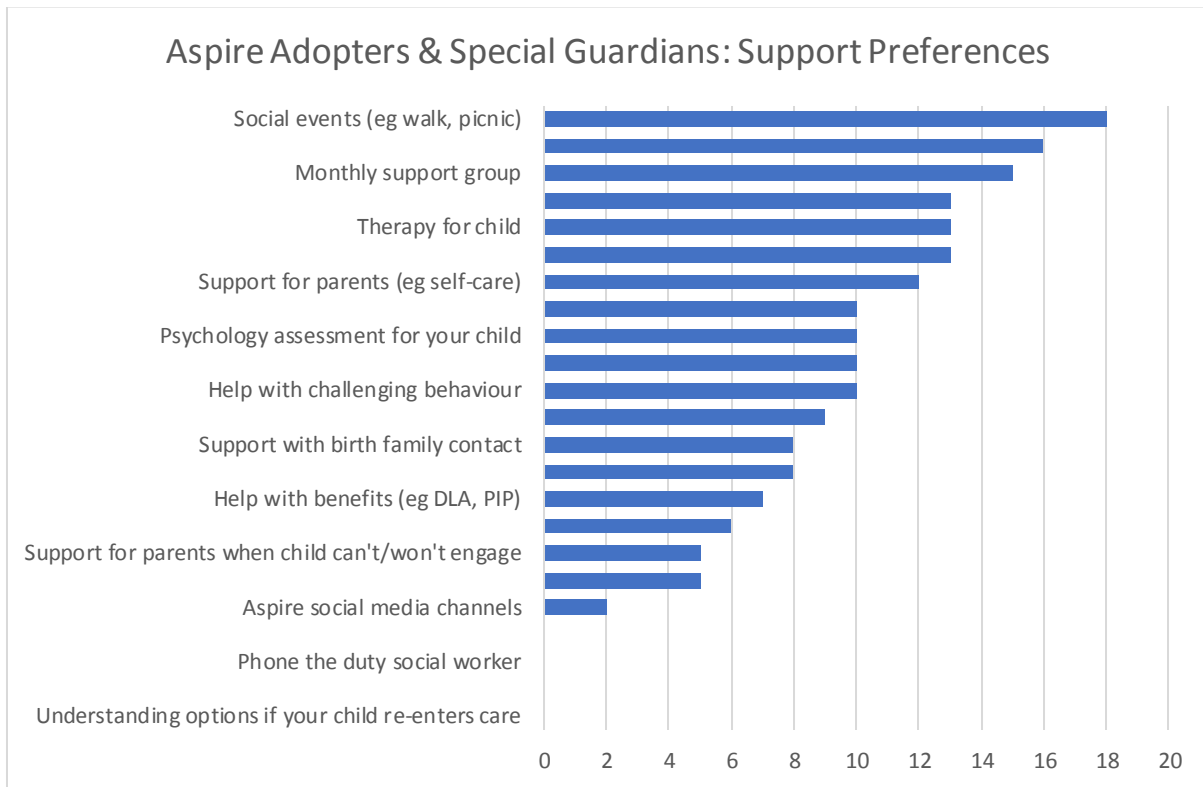
5.10 The post support team help adopters and special guardians to access the ASF fund completing the required assessment and sourcing the therapists using our procurement framework. This has become increasingly important for our families. and cutting the waiting list has meant we have been able to support significantly more Dorset families access therapeutic services

2019 /20	57 Families	£32,845.99
2020/21	130 Families	£186,183.91
20210/22	261 Families	

#### 5.11 Have the changes to the post support service had a positive impact for families?

5.12 Changes were made In consultation with the Adopter and Special Guardianship Forum. While they understood what the service wanted to achieve, there was some anxiety that moving away from a mainly allocated service would reduce the support available to families.

5.13 The forum conducted an independent survey in January 2022 which they kindly agreed we could include in this report.



5.14 The Forums key findings were:-

- **Social events** (e.g., walk, picnic) are the most preferred
- Therapeutic **support for the whole family** is more important than therapy for the child or support (e.g., self-care) for parents
- The **monthly support groups** are highly valued
- The next most preferred support is **Access to ASF, Therapy for the child, and Help with educational settings**

SG story: "We were at breaking point with R being violent to us and her brother. We received support from the team went on the foundations of attachment course and then received some Non-Violence Resistance training. It's not perfect, but home is much calmer now "

Adoption story: twin girls with attachment issues one frequently going missing with risky behaviour. The team worked with the Early help team providing DDP counselling and together prevented the girls coming into care

#### 5.15 Demand for post support services

This service has seen a rapid increase in uptake over the year.

Prior to October, the service averaged 120 calls per month. Since then, it has steadily risen to 200 calls in December and nearly 300 calls each for both January and February.

#### 5.16 The challenge for the Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Service

It is important that Aspire continues to review post support services closely with the Forum to ensure they continue to be accessible, timely, relevant and have impact. But it is clear that an increasing cohort and increasing demand is the greatest issue for the service.

5.17 The board will shortly consider a business case considering whether further efficiencies can be made through developing in house staff to deliver a greater proportion of the ASF therapeutic work which will help build the teams overall capacity.

## **6 Aspire Adoption Panel**

6.1 Adoption panel has continued to meet virtually twice a month.

This year the panel made :-

40 Approvals

28 Matches

4 De-Registrations

6.2 The panel chair reports that the quality of Prospective Adopter Reports always good has improved

Ofsted considered panel minutes and met with the chair. They fed back that that panel was effective and efficient.

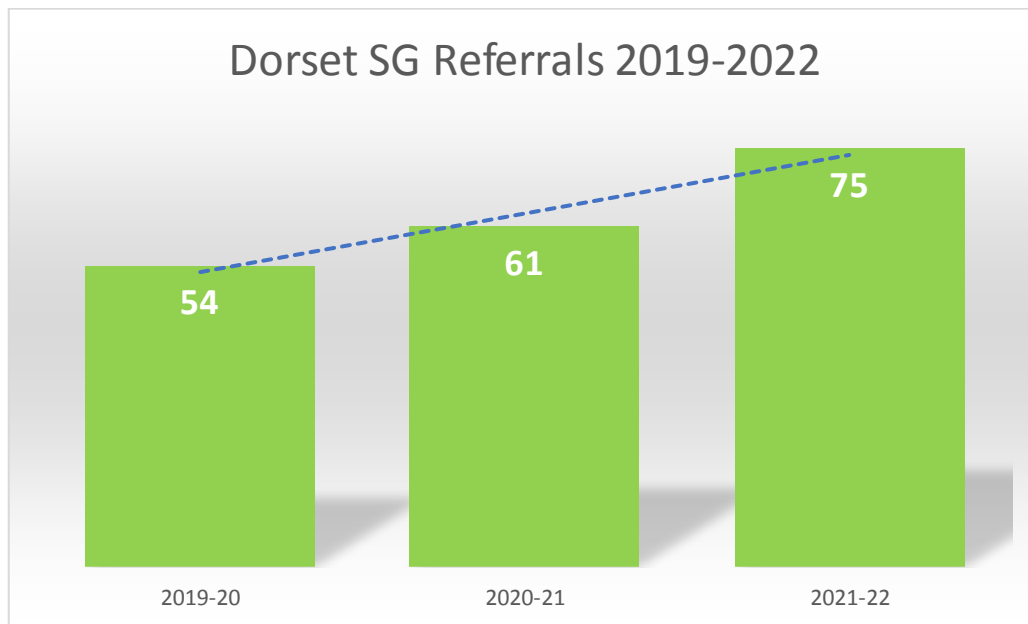
## **7. Birth parent services**

7.1 Aspire commissions an independent Birth Family Matters |(BFM) Support Service from Families for Children. This has been recommissioned from April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2024 with an option to extend for a further 2 years.

7.2 The service is reviewed quarterly with changes being made to better illustrate the amount and quality of the work undertaken by the service.

7.3 The service has around 100 open referrals and actively works with about 40 birth family members in any one quarter. BFM work closely with Aspire sharing experiences helping inform the service and adopters, how to work sensitively with birth families, promote contact and offers advice regarding the experience of birth family members to the court.

## 8. Special Guardianship Assessment



### SG Assessments completed

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Total
Dorset	7	9	9	9	34

8.1 It should be noted that slightly less than half of the Special guardianship referrals result in a full assessment being completed. This dropout rate is to be expected for a variety of reasons. For example the family may decide that they cannot offer permanence, more than one family member is being assessed, issues arise in the course of the assessment or the child’s plan might change.

8.2 In the last 6 months Dorset has supported higher percentage of children to leave care through special guardianship than average.

Dorset last 6 months 20% in 2020-21 Dorset 12% England and Good rate was 14% (1/10/21 to 30/3/22) Children’s Services Analysis Tool

8.3 The number of Special guardianship referrals from Dorset has risen and Dorset indicate that this is likely to remain the case as it is preferred that children live with their families wherever that is feasible.

8.4 Dorset and BCP agreed to expand the service by 1 social worker at the May 2021 board. To increase capacity from 100 to 120 pa for both authorities. Aspire has taken 159 assessments in total this year.

#### 8.5 Special Guardianship Referrals for both Local Authorities

2019-20 110

2020-21 140

2021-22 159

8.6 Where demand exceeds capacity Independent social workers are commissioned. These are more expensive, and parts of the assessment still must be completed by Aspire and the child's worker.

8.7 Dorset have been considering this matter. Aspire has undertaken to complete an options paper for the board.

### **9. Finance**

Aspire is funded 49% by Dorset and 51% by BCP. Considerable work took place to agree a 3-year budget for Aspire from 2022 to 2025. The financial model as agreed by the Strategic Partnership Board is included at Appendix 5

In terms of this financial year although the figures have not been fully signed off it we are expecting to report that Aspire has come within budget.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **1. Local authority statutory responsibilities**

1.1 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 sets out the duty all Local Authorities to establish and maintain an adoption service , to meet the needs in relation to adoption, of children who have or may be adopted, of adults who have been

adopted, parents and guardians of such children and persons who have or may adopt a child in their area

- 1.2 On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 Dorset County Council delegated most of those functions, along with some statutory responsibilities in relation to special guardianship, to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). The division of responsibilities is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Aspire (RAA) is funded by Dorset County Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to deliver adoption and special guardianship services.
- 1.4 Each local authority retains overall responsibility for their adoption and special guardianship services, continuing to have parental responsibility for their own Children in Care, but delegating most adoption and some special guardianship functions to Aspire Adoption.
- 1.5 Aspire works closely with colleagues in the voluntary adoption sector, Families for Children and Parents and Children Together (PACT) are represented on the Aspire Partnership Board.
- 1.6 It is a requirement that elected members satisfy themselves that the Local Authority and the Regional Adoption Agency are working together to meet the needs of children requiring permanence through adoption as laid out by the Statutory Adoption Guidance 2013 and the Adoption Minimum Standards 2014.

The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/336069/Adoption NMS July 2014 for publication.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf)

The 2013 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/270100/adoption statutory guidance 2013.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270100/adoption_statutory_guidance_2013.pdf)

## **Appendix 2**

### **Division of roles and responsibilities between Aspire and the local authorities**

- 2.1 Aspire has been delegated all of the local authority statutory responsibilities for adoption, other than the court work leading to Care and Placement Orders.
- 2.2 Aspire has responsibility for recruiting, assessing and supporting prospective adopters, for non-agency adoption work including partner adoptions and intercountry adoptions.



- 2.3 The local authorities retain overall responsibility for their Children in Care, but have delegated case responsibility for the majority of children with adoption plans to Aspire following the granting of a Placement Order.
- 2.4 Aspire is responsible for family finding for all children with adoption plans. The RAA is also responsible for preparing children for a move to adoption, for preparing moving calendars or diaries, undertaking life story work and creating life story books.
- 2.5 Aspire undertakes special guardianship assessments for court on behalf of the local authority as part of care proceedings, or in private law applications.
- 2.6 Aspire provides support to all parties affected by adoption, including adopters, adoptive families, adopted adults and birth relatives, and also to special guardians, families created through special guardianship, and to the birth families whose children are subject to SGOs.
- 2.7 The table on the following page sums up the division of responsibilities between Aspire and the local authorities.

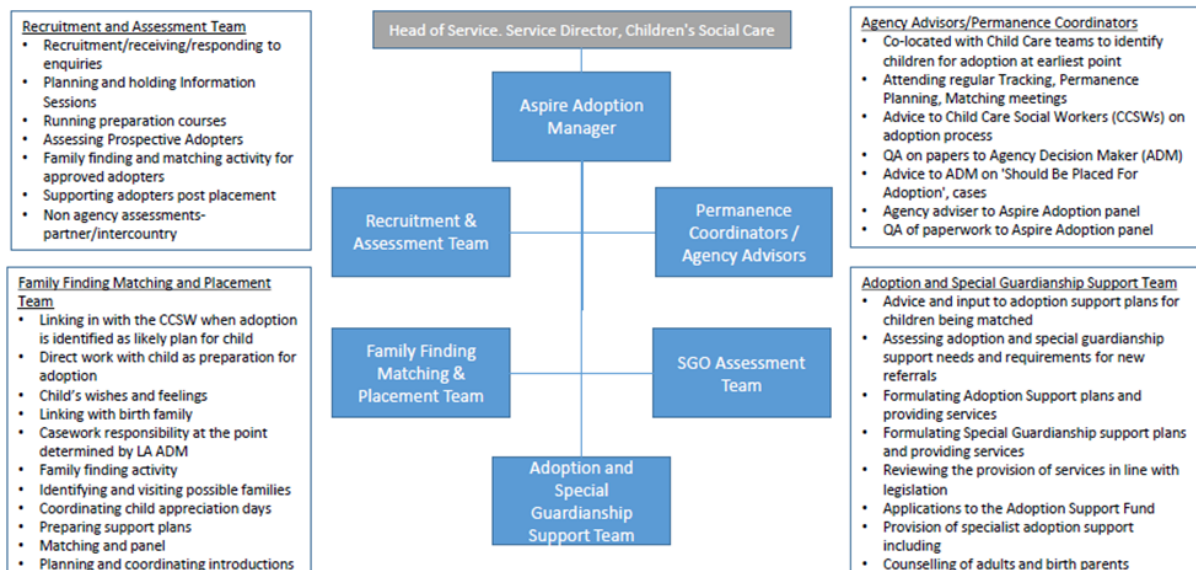
Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
<b>RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT</b>		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters	✓	
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
<b>PERMANENCE PLANNING</b>		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to child care social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments if commissioned by LA	✓	
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		✓
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM	✓	
<b>MATCHING AND PLACEMENT</b>		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child appreciation day	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child	✓	
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book	✓	
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child’s care and care plan		✓

Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter	✓	
<b>ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT</b>		
Assessment for adoption or special guardianship support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption and special guardianship support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post Adoption Order		✓
Adoption and special guardianship support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support groups</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Post adoption/special guardianship training</li> <li>• Independent Birth Relative services</li> <li>• Support with ongoing birth relative contact</li> <li>• Specialist Life Story practitioners</li> <li>• Adoption counselling and training</li> </ul>	✓	
Financial support to adopters and special guardians including adoption and special guardianship allowances		✓
<b>SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS</b>		
Receipt of application or court request for special guardianship		✓
Assessment of applicants for Special Guardianship	✓	
<b>NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS</b>		
Step parent/partner adoption assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	

## Appendix 3

### Aspire Organisational Structure and Staffing

#### Aspire Adoption - Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – Organisation Structure



## 2. Staffing

- 2.1 There are 42.61 permanent full -time equivalent posts in Aspire (reduced from 45 in April 2020), with the permanent staffing establishment supplemented by those on casual or fixed term contracts to increase capacity where needed. Many of the staff work part time, with the total number of staff comprising of social workers, support workers, and business support staff totalling about 54.
- 2.2 The service is led and managed by the Aspire Adoption Service Manager, Jennifer Warr, Jennifer Warr is a qualified social worker, has a management qualification and is registered with Social Work England.
- 2.3 The Recruitment & Assessment Team comprises of a team manager, practice manager, 0.5 Family Support Practitioner and 5.69 social workers. This is a reduction of 1.31 FTE Social Workers since April 2020. All are registered with Social Work England
- 2.4 The Family Finding, Matching and Placement Team comprises of a team manager, 0.81 FTE practice manager and 4.3 social workers (a reduction of 1.2 social workers since April 2020) FTE social workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England, and 3.64 FTE family support workers.
- 2.5 The Special Guardianship Assessment team has a team manager, practice manager and 4.27 social workers – this is a reduction of 1.23 FTE social workers since April 2020. One FTE social worker is on maternity leave and is only backfilled with 0.5 FTE social worker meaning that the actual number of staff in the team currently is 3.77 FTE social workers. All are registered with Social Work England.
- 2.6 The Adoption & Special Guardianship Support team has a team manager, 0.81 FTE practice manager and 4.31 FTE social workers, which is a reduction of 0.69 FTE social workers since April 2020, all of whom are registered with Social Work England. The team also has 2 FTE family support workers, and a 0.4 FTE clinical psychologist.
- 2.7 There are 2 FTE Permanence Coordinators, who also act as Agency Advisers to the Aspire Adoption Panel and Aspire Agency Decision Maker, and to the Agency Decision Makers in the local authorities in relation to decisions as to whether a child should be adopted.
- 2.8 The service is supported by 6 FTE business support staff including a senior business support officer, a panel administrator, and a marketing, media and monitoring officer.
- 2.9 All of the social workers employed by Aspire are registered with Social Work England, and many of the staff, including support workers, have additional qualifications including skills in a variety of therapeutic interventions such as theraplay, sensory integration, mindfulness and DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy).
- 2.10 Aspire also has access to dedicated clinical psychology support for staff and service users.

2.11 No agency staff are employed, and any vacancies attract a high standard of applications across all areas of the work undertaken by Aspire. Casual staff add capacity for one off pieces of work in the Recruitment and Assessment Team and the Special Guardianship Assessment Team. The 3 fixed term contract staff in place at the beginning of the year have now transferred into permanent positions as they became available when staff left. There is one part time social worker contracted to cover maternity leave and another full-time social worker contracted to cover a vacancy.

### 3. Staff training and development

3.1 Staff in Aspire have access to training and courses run by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council as the host authority paying for these from the Aspire training budget of £8,000 a year. They have access to external courses, but only dependent on budgetary restrictions. In 2020/21 12 members staff attended Dyadic Developmental Parenting training.

3.2 Staff have monthly supervision and annual appraisals, and regular team case and practice reflection sessions are facilitated by the clinical psychologists

3.3 A staff forum for all staff in Aspire is held every 4 months to update on Aspire performance data, local and national issues relating to the service and to develop the team service plans.

## Appendix 4

### Governance

The following is taken from the Inter Authority Agreement

#### SCHEDULE 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

##### Governance Structure



##### Part 1 – Strategic Partnership Board

1 **Name:**

The name of the Board for Aspire Adoption shall be the **Strategic Partnership Board** which is established pursuant to an Inter Authority Agreement between Bournemouth Borough Council,

Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole ("the Councils") for the creation of a Regional Adoption Agency.

**2 Role:**

The Board will provide advice, oversight and endorsement of the strategic direction of Aspire Adoption.

**3 The Board will:**

- 3.1 Provide and review the strategic direction of Aspire Adoption;
- 3.2 Oversee, review and endorse budget setting and make recommendations to the Councils for Aspire Adoption;
  - 3.2.1 Oversee, review and endorse the Business Plan annually and make recommendations to the Councils for Aspire Adoption;
  - 3.2.2 Attempt to resolve disputes between the Councils under the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement.

**4 Accountability and Responsibility:**

- 4.1 Each Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that their nominated representative(s) (or named substitute) are available to attend all Board meetings, which will be scheduled in advance.
- 4.2 All members of the Board will be in a position to make decisions within their respective organisation, where appropriate.
- 4.3 All members of the Board will be responsible for reporting to their organisation, through their respective governance arrangements.

**5 Meetings of the Board**

- 5.1 The Board will meet every six months or at a greater or lesser frequency if it so decides.
- 5.2 The Board will elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 5.3 The Chairperson will agree the dates, times and venues for the meetings of the Board. The meeting timetable will be scheduled over the year, to reflect both planned monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- 5.4 The Chairperson shall normally preside at all meetings of the Board.
- 5.5 The Chairperson will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and draft minutes for circulation.
- 5.6 Agendas and papers for the meeting will be sent out at least five working days prior to the meeting in order to provide time for members of the Board to read them and identify actions for their own organisations.
- 5.7 Minutes of meeting will be circulated within 5 working days after the meeting with an action list.

**6 Membership:**

- 6.1 The Board will consist of:

- 6.1.1 Portfolio Holder and Executive Director for Childrens Services for Bournemouth Borough Council;
  - 6.1.2 Cabinet Member for Learning, Skills and Children's Safeguarding and Corporate Director for Children's, Adults and Community Services for Dorset County Council;
  - 6.1.3 Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director for Childrens Services for the Borough of Poole Council.
- 6.2 The Board will consult (so far as it considers proper and appropriate to do so):
- 6.2.1 Representatives from local Voluntary Adoption Agencies/Families for Children; and
  - 6.2.2 A representative from Stakeholders.
- 6.3 Members of the Board should:
- 6.3.1 Commit to attending the majority of meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to exercise the powers of the Member for whom they are substituting. Only Board members or their named representatives can attend Board meetings;
  - 6.3.2 Uphold and support the Board decisions and be prepared to follow though actions and decisions for the Board proposals and declaring any conflict of interest should it arise;
  - 6.3.3 Be prepared to represent the Board at stakeholder events and support the agreed consensus view of the Board when speaking on behalf of the Board to other parties.

## 7 Voting – Quorum

- 7.1 No quorum is necessary for the routine business and the receiving of reports. However where the Chairperson determines that a critical decision is required there must be a representative from all the Councils.
- 7.2 In the spirit of effective collaboration and partnership working, the Board will always seek to come to agreement through consensus and unanimity following debate and discussion where all the members will be encouraged to participate.
- 7.3 The Members of the Board will be expected to subscribe to the seven principles of public life in their work and decision making. The principles are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 7.4 Members will be expected to declare any personal interests in the business of the Board and to withdraw from participation where such interests are prejudicial or pecuniary.

## Part 2 – Operational Management Board

### 1 Name:

The name of the Board for Aspire Adoption shall be the **Operational Management Board** which is established pursuant to an Inter Authority Agreement between Bournemouth Borough Council,

Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole ("the Councils") for the creation of a Regional Adoption Agency.

**2 Role:**

The Board will provide support, advice and management to Aspire Adoption to ensure that statutory requirements and the Business Plan is delivered effectively.

**3 The Board will:**

- 3.1 oversee the implementation of the Aspire Adoption Budget and Business Plan;
- 3.2 oversee the commissioning arrangements and operational performance against agreed local priorities and targets and in line with national priorities and targets.

**4 Accountability and Responsibility:**

- 4.1 Each Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that their nominated representative(s) (or named substitute) are available to attend all Board meetings, which will be scheduled in advance.
- 4.2 This Board will report to the Strategic Partnership Board.

**5 Meetings of the Board**

- 5.1 The Board will meet quarterly or at a greater or lesser frequency if it so decides.
- 5.2 The Board will elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 5.3 The Chairperson will agree the dates, times and venues for the meetings of the Board. The meeting timetable will be scheduled over the year, to reflect both planned monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- 5.4 The Chairperson shall normally preside at all meetings of the Board.
- 5.5 The Chairperson will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and draft minutes for circulation.
- 5.6 Agendas and papers for the meeting will be sent out at least five working days prior to the meeting in order to provide time for members of the Board to read them and identify actions for their own organisations.
- 5.7 Minutes of meeting will be circulated within 5 working days after the meeting with an action list.

**6 Membership:**

- 6.1 The Board will consist of:
  - 6.1.1 Service Director for Children's Social Care for Bournemouth;
  - 6.1.2 Assistant Director – Care and Protection for Dorset;
  - 6.1.3 Head of Children & Young People's Social Care for Poole; 6.1.4 Childrens Services Commissioners from each of the three Parties;
  - 6.1.5 Adoption Aspire Manager.
- 6.2 Members of the Board should:

- 6.2.1 Commit to attending the majority of meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to exercise the powers of the Member for whom they are substituting. Only Board members or their named representatives can attend Board meetings;
- 6.2.2 Uphold and support the Board decisions and be prepared to follow though actions and decisions and declaring any conflict of interest should it arise;
- 6.2.3 Be prepared to represent the Board at stakeholder events and support the agreed consensus view of the Board when speaking on behalf of the Board to other parties.

## **7 Voting – Quorum**

- 7.1 No quorum is necessary for the routine business and the receiving of reports. However where the Chairperson determines that a critical decision is required there must be a representative from all the Councils.
- 7.2 In the spirit of effective collaboration and partnership working, the Board will always seek to come to agreement through consensus and unanimity following debate and discussion where all the members will be encouraged to participate.
- 7.3 The Members of the Board will be expected to subscribe to the seven principles of public life in their work and decision making. The principles are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 7.4 Members will be expected to declare any personal interests in the business of the Board and to withdraw from participation where such interests are prejudicial or pecuniary.

## **Appendix 5 -**

### **Aspire Adoption Panel**

- 5.1 Aspire Adoption operates an Adoption Panel, constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations and guidance. The panel has an independent chairperson, and 16 members on a Central List from which each panel is drawn. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, a maximum of 6 or 7 attend each panel, including the panel chair and a social worker. The designated doctor for looked after children in the local authorities funding Aspire is also the agency medical adviser and is a full member of the panel.
- 5.2 The panel is serviced by a panel administrator and has access to legal advice if needed. The professional advice to the panel is provided by the two Permanence



Coordinators, one of whom attends each Panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.

- 5.3 Current membership includes individuals with personal experience of adoption as adopters and adopted adults. It also includes experienced social workers with direct experience of adoption work, a psychotherapist with experience of working in a child and adolescent mental health setting, and panel members with experience of working in an educational setting.
- 5.4 Members of the Central List from which individual panel membership is drawn reflect the diversity of modern society as far as possible, and include those who are single, in heterosexual and same sex relationships. One panel member on the Central List has personal experience of disability. There is some diversity in terms of age, with panel members in their 30s and others who are retired. Although most panel members are of white British ethnic origin, one panel members is of black African ethnicity and another is of Indian descent.
- 5.5 The functions of the panel in relation to adoption matters are
- to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child;
  - to recommend whether a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters is a suitable one.
  - In circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no Placement Order is applied for, the panel will recommend whether the child should be placed for adoption
- 5.6 The panel can also give advice about the numbers and ages of children in relation to prospective adopters, also about post adoption contact, delegated parental responsibility and adoption support. The panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the time scales set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.
- 5.7 The Aspire Adoption Panel makes recommendations based on detailed written reports prepared by the child's social worker and adoption social worker, and the social worker and team manager's attendance at panel to clarify points if needed.
- 5.8 When considering the approval or deregistration of prospective adopters or a match between prospective adopters and a child, adoptive applicants have the option of attending panel in person, to provide scope to discuss and clarify any

issues relevant to the application. Applicants who decide not to attend in person are not disadvantaged in any way and no judgement is made from their decision not to do so although every effort will be made to assist their attendance.

5.9 The recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final agreed minutes of the meeting, to the Agency Decision Maker, for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

5.10 The Panel chair is independent, is an experienced chair and an adopter of 2 children. He attends the Aspire Strategic Partnership Board and presents a report to the Aspire Operational Management Board and Strategic Partnership Board every 6 months in line with standard 17 of the Adoption Minimum Standards, on the quality of reports being presented to the panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement. His most recent report is included as Appendix 5

5.11 In 2020/21 the Adoption Panels have all been held virtually due to the covid 19 pandemic. The panels have adjusted well to the new way of working and business has been uninterrupted.

## **Appendix 6**

**Aspire Adoption 3 year Financial Modal attached**

## Aspire Adoption Aspire Adoption 3 year Financial Model

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### Financial model for 2022/2023 to 2024/2025

- 1.1 The meeting of the Aspire Strategic Partnership Board on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 requested a 3-year financial model of Aspire for 2022/2023 to 2024/2025 incorporating additional investment agreed at previous boards plus additional investment shown below. The 3-year financial model is shown in Appendix A.
- 1.2 It was identified at the last board meeting that work is required to update the use of Mosiac and performance reporting. This business critical activity is over reliant on one member of staff. The modifications and training require 0.5 fte band H project worker for a period of 6 months, this has been built into the figures in Appendix A for 2022/2023.
- 1.3 It was identified at the last board meeting that staff required specialist training to support recruitment and support. It is proposed that this is agreed on the basis that there are sufficient funds within the Aspire training budget and within the calculations for the project worker in 1.2 to cover the additional £10,000 spend on Training.
- 1.4 The Board in September also agreed in principal that Aspire would receive Pay award inflation, this has been built into the 3 year model with an assumption of a 2% pay award. It is currently assumed this would be the maximum pay award level, however the 2021/2022 pay award is currently unresolved, the current offer of 1.75% having been rejected by the Unions. Further papers would be presented to the board if pay awards vary significantly from the 2% level.
- 1.5 Contribution rises are shown in Appendix A but in summary assuming the pay award principal is agreed would be as below, using the agreed funding ratios 41% Dorset Council, 59% BCP.

Contribution levels;	2022/2023 Increase	2023/2024 Increase	2024/2025 Increase	Total Increase
Dorset Council	17,400	17,800	18,100	53,300
BCP Council	25,000	25,500	26,100	76,600
<b>Total Contribution Increases</b>	<b>42,400</b>	<b>43,300</b>	<b>44,200</b>	<b>129,900</b>

- 1.6 Central to the 3 year budget position is that Interagency Fee Expenditure costs are picked up by the local authorities and also that the Interagency income exceeds the £200,000 budget. Income in excess of £200,000 can be redistributed to Local Authorities to offset Interagency expenditure spend. If Income is not sufficient to be redistributed then the Local authorities have agreed to pay their Interagency expenditure costs entirely.
- 1.7 Whilst every year is different in terms of the balance between interagency Expenditure and Income the current position for 2021/2022 is shown below for reference;

<b>Interagency Income and Expenditure October 2021</b>	
	<b>£</b>
<b>Interagency Income</b>	
Received to date/Due	<b>(101,479)</b>
Further sums expected	<b>(334,000)</b>
<b>Total Income available</b>	<b>(435,479)</b>
<b>Income available to redistribute</b>	<b>(235,479)</b>
<b>Interagency Expenditure</b>	
BCP Cases	<b>149,986</b>
Dorset Council Cases	<b>106,188</b>
<b>Total forecast Expenditure</b>	<b>256,174</b>
<b>(Surplus)/ Deficit after Redistribution</b>	<b>20,695</b>

- 1.8 From the above position on interagency and the general position for Aspire in Appendix A it appears the provisions in the Partnership Agreement for recharging overspends would not be required in 2021/2022. Although there may be a small deficit on the Interagency position after redistribution this would be able to be absorbed within other underspending areas within Aspire.
- 1.9 In addition, the Adoption Support fund may deliver some income for Aspire, the exact amount does not become clear until later in the financial year, however in excess of £20k is usually available in each financial year which can help smooth the position in year.
- 1.10 It is not expected that there will be any additional funding provided via the Covid Support funding in 21/22 but all potential funding streams will be monitored during the year.
- 1.11 It is hoped that this new arrangement could deliver some surpluses which could be added to an Aspire Reserve. This was set up in the first year of Aspire in 2017 but was utilised in full in 2018 to meet the pressures on the service.

### **Budget Setting 2022/2023**

- 2.1 The immediate requirement is to set a balanced budget for Aspire for 2022/2023 before February 2022. The increases required for 2022/2023 based on the 3 year financial model in Appendix A are **£17,400** Dorset Council and **£25,000** BCP Council.

Stephen MacDonald  
Jo Collis- Heavens  
Michelle Whiting

Management Accountant – Childrens Services  
Finance Manager  
Aspire Adoption Service Manager

November 2021

### Aspire Adoption 3 year financial model - 2022/2023 to 2024/2025

Spend Areas	Notes	2022/2023 Base Budget	2022/2023 Inflation	2022/2023 Final Budget	2023/2024 Inflation	2023/2024 Final Budget	2024/2025 Inflation	2024/2025 Final Budget	Total Contribution Increase over 3 years
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Staffing Teams</b>									
Aspire Manager	Assumed Permanent Appointment 1 x FTE April 2022	94,300	1,900	96,200	1,900	98,100	2,000	100,100	
SGO Assessment	1 x TM, 1 x ATM, 5 x SW	356,100	7,100	363,200	7,300	370,500	7,400	377,900	
Family Finding	1 x TM, 1 x ATM, 4.6 x SW, 3.7 x FSP	457,400	9,100	466,500	9,300	475,800	9,500	485,300	
Recruitment and Assessment	2 x TM, 1 x ATM, 6.6 x SW	459,800	9,200	469,000	9,400	478,400	9,600	488,000	
Adoption and SG Support	1 x TM, 1 x ATM, 3.8 x SW, 2.5 x FSP	367,200	7,300	374,500	7,500	382,000	7,600	389,600	
Business Support	0.8 TM, 5.8 BSO, 1 x Media Marketing. 0.5 x Additional Mosaic	228,800	4,600	233,400	4,700	238,100	4,800	242,900	
Permanance Coordinators	2 x Permanence Coordinator	114,400	2,300	116,700	2,300	119,000	2,400	121,400	
Additional staffing spend	Additional zero hours spend e.g. SGO assesments	13,600	300	13,900	300	14,200	300	14,500	
<b>Total Projected Spend Staffing</b>		<b>2,091,600</b>	<b>41,800</b>	<b>2,133,400</b>	<b>42,700</b>	<b>2,176,100</b>	<b>43,600</b>	<b>2,219,700</b>	
Other Employee Costs	Training, Medical expenses	11,300		11,300		11,300		11,300	
Premises	Cost of Kinson Hub or equivalent in future	30,000		30,000		30,000		30,000	
Transport	Mileage - reduced during Covid pandemic	30,000		30,000		30,000		30,000	
Supplies and Services	ICT, Accountancy, Equipment, Legal fees	51,800		51,800		51,800		51,800	
Adoption Panel	Costs of running panels	28,000		28,000		28,000		28,000	
Infant Birth Records Service	IBRS costs to Families for Children	30,000		30,000		30,000		30,000	
Psychologist	Including inflation	30,000	600	30,600	600	31,200	600	31,800	
Interagency Income	Sums in excess of this used to offset BCP and Dorset Interagency Fee costs	-200,000		-200,000		-200,000		-200,000	
<b>Total Budget / Budget Movements</b>		<b>2,102,700</b>	<b>42,400</b>	<b>2,145,100</b>	<b>43,300</b>	<b>2,188,400</b>	<b>44,200</b>	<b>2,232,600</b>	
<b>Contribution levels;</b>									
<b>Dorset Council</b>		857,840	17,400	875,240	17,800	893,040	18,100	911,140	53,300
<b>BCP Council</b>		1,244,860	25,000	1,269,860	25,500	1,295,360	26,100	1,321,460	76,600
<b>Total Contributions</b>		<b>2,102,700</b>	<b>42,400</b>	<b>2,145,100</b>	<b>43,300</b>	<b>2,188,400</b>	<b>44,200</b>	<b>2,232,600</b>	<b>129,900</b>

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## **Aspire Adoption**

# **Statement of Purpose 2022 - 2023**



## **Introduction**

Aspire Adoption is a Regional Adoption Agency, established in July 2017, with delegated responsibility for discharging most of the adoption functions of Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, as a result of local government reorganisation, the councils funding Aspire are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Council. Aspire Adoption works in partnership with the Voluntary Adoption Agency, Families for Children (F4C) and Parents and Children Together (PACT)

This statement of purpose has been written in accordance with the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and associated Regulations, and the Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013. It fulfils the requirements of Regulations 2 and 4 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; Regulations 3 and 24B and Regulations 4 and 24 C of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003; and of Regulations 5 and 6 of the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005. It also fulfils the requirements of Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014.

The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/336069/Adoption\\_NMS\\_July\\_2014\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf)

The 2013 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-statutory-guidance-2013>

## **Principles and Value Statement**

The principles of the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and accompanying Regulations and Statutory Guidance, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Education and Adoption Act 2016, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014, all underpin the work of Aspire Adoption.

The values statement in Appendix A is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards, and sums up the important principles which underpin all adoption work within Aspire and within the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and Dorset Council in their permanency planning for children for whom adoption is the care plan. These values are equally applicable to children for whom special guardianship is the care plan.



Aspire is committed to promoting diversity and non-discriminatory practice.

### Aims and objectives

In accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, all local authorities have a duty to establish and maintain an adoption service in their area, to meet the needs in relation to adoption, of children who have or may be adopted, of adults who have been adopted, parents and guardians of such children and persons who have or may adopt a child. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council have delegated most of those functions to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency. Further information can be found about this in the Schedule of Responsibilities in Annex B, part of the Inter Authority Agreement between the local authorities. It explains in more detail what functions remain in the local authority and which have been delegated to Aspire. Aspire Adoption is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council.

Aspire Adoption aims to ensure that children who are unable to live with their birth family and for whom adoption or special guardianship has been agreed as the plan, can live in a permanent, stable and loving family in which their needs will be fully met throughout their lives. This can only be achieved if the needs of all of those touched by adoption are also supported, including adoptive parents, adopted adults and birth relatives of those who have been adopted or made the subject of Special Guardianship Orders

The name "*Aspire Adoption*" reflects the aspiration to learn, to build on existing good practice and achieve practice improvements in the delivery of services for children, adopters and others who benefit from or need adoption and special guardianship services in the area covered by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council and Dorset Council.

Aspire's vision and the objectives aimed for are to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults affected by adoption and special guardianship by:

- Working closely with our partner local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs.
- Targeted recruitment and the establishment of a wide and diverse pool of prospective adopters.

- Matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families.
- Undertaking special guardianship assessments which are thorough, evidence based, and timely.
- Providing creative and outstanding adoption and special guardianship support services.
- Investing in our workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.
- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working.
- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults and staff with whom we work to develop and improve the services provided.

#### The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer

The Registered Manager for Aspire under regulation 5 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 is Michelle Whiting, Interim Service Manager, Aspire Adoption Services.

The Responsible Officer for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council is Jane White, Director of Children's Social Care and YOS Children's Services, BCP Council.

The Responsible Officer for Dorset Council is Paul Dempsey , Corporate Director Children's Services, Care and Protection Dorset Council.

There are five Agency Decision Makers (ADMs).

Jane White Director of Children's Social Care and YOS Children's Services and Aleksandra Zabielskia Service Manager CAHAD are ADMs for decisions about whether BCP Council children in the care of the local authority should have a plan for adoption, and for matches for those children.

Lisa Reid( Consultant Quality Assurance) and Louise Drury (Head of Service for Children in Care) are ADMs for decisions about whether Dorset children in the care of the local authority should have a plan for adoption, and for matches for those children.

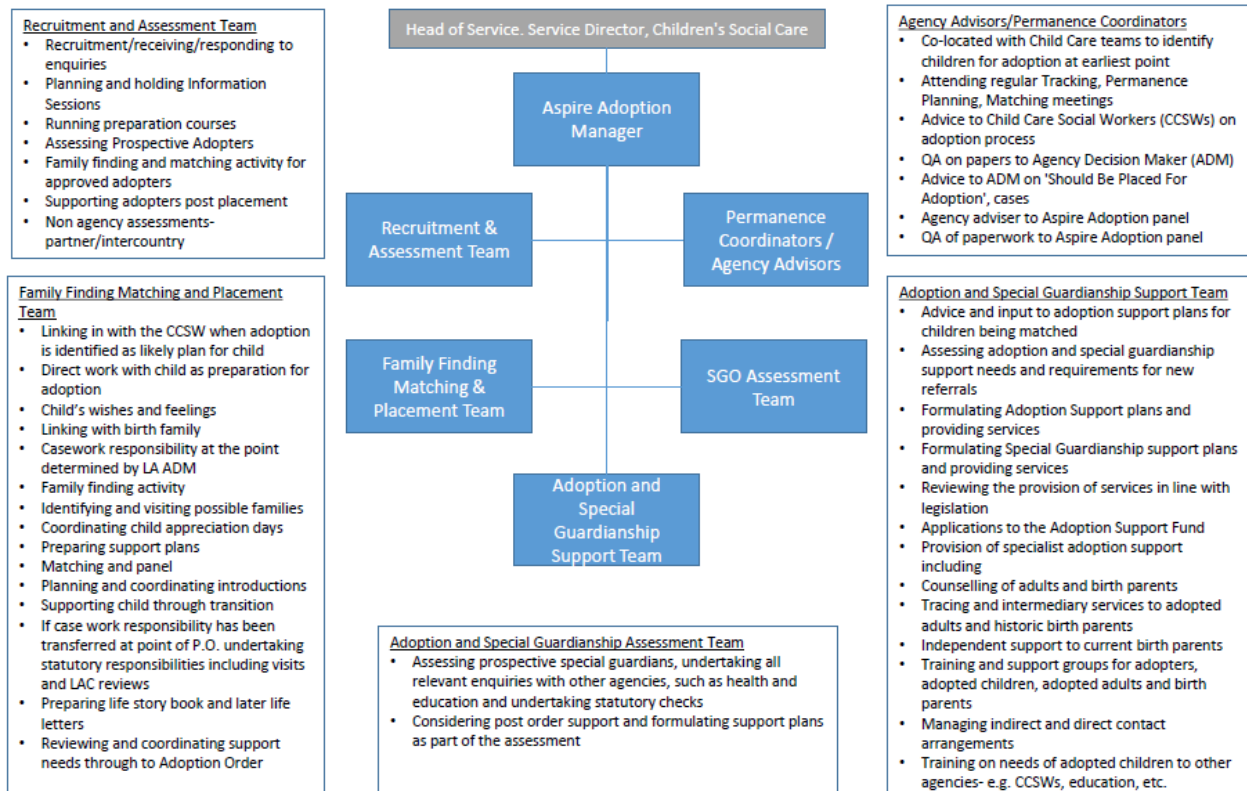
The ADMs in each of the authorities are also responsible for decision making in respect of the temporary approval of adopters as foster carers for early permanence placements.

Michelle Whiting, Interim Service Manager for Aspire Adoption, is ADM for decisions about the suitability of prospective adopters.

All have social work and management qualifications and are registered with Social Work England.

## Organisational Structure of Aspire Adoption

### Aspire Adoption - Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – Organisation Structure



The service is led and managed by the Aspire Adoption Interim Service Manager, Michelle Whiting. Ms Whiting is a qualified social worker, has a relevant management qualification and is registered with Social Work England as a social worker.

The Recruitment & Assessment Team comprises of a team manager, practice manager, 7.44 FTE social workers. All are registered with Social Work England as social workers. The team also has a 0.5 FTE family support practitioner.

The Family Finding, Matching and Placement Team comprises of a team manager, practice manager, 5.39 FTE social workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England as social workers, and 3.71 FTE family support practitioners.

The Special Guardianship Assessment team has a team manager, practice manager and 4.65 FTE social workers. All are registered with Social Work England as social workers.

The Adoption & Special Guardianship Support team has a team manager, practice manager and 4 FTE social workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England as social workers. The team also has 2.59 FTE family support worker posts, and access to a 0.4 FTE clinical psychologist.

There are 2 full time Permanence Coordinators, who also act as Agency Advisers to the Aspire Adoption Panel and Aspire Agency Decision Maker, and to the Agency Decision Makers in the local authorities in relation to decisions as to whether a child should be adopted.

The service is supported by 6 FTE business support staff including a senior business support officer, a panel administrator and a marketing, media and monitoring officer.

All staff are based at the Aspire Adoption headquarters which is at the Kinson Hub, 1599 Wimborne Rd, Bournemouth BH11 9AW. Social workers and support workers have lightweight laptops and smart phones and can work from home or from touch down points across Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset or further afield.

### Roles and responsibilities

The successful delivery of the services provided by Aspire is dependent on a high level of joint working between Aspire and Aspire's partner local authorities. The table below sets out how Aspire and the three local authorities will ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families affected by or created through adoption or special guardianship. More detail is provided in Appendix B in the Schedule of Responsibilities which forms part of the Inter Authority Agreement between the local authorities. Aspire also works in partnership with the local Voluntary Adoption Agency, Families for Children, running joint training and support groups for service users and commissioning out to Families for Children an independent support service for birth relatives, Birth Family Matters. Then voluntary adoption agencies; Families for Children and PACT – parents and children together, attend the regular 'Children Waiting Meetings' to promote prompt matching of children with prospective adoptive families.

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
<b>RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT</b>		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters	✓	
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
<b>PERMANANCE PLANNING</b>		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to child care social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments if commissioned by LA	✓	
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		✓
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM	✓	
<b>MATCHING AND PLACEMENT</b>		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child appreciation day	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child	✓	
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	

Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book	✓	
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child's care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter	✓	
<b>ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT</b>		
Assessment for adoption or special guardianship support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption and special guardianship support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post Adoption Order		✓
Adoption and special guardianship support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support groups</li> <li>• Social events</li> <li>• Post adoption/special guardianship training</li> <li>• Independent Birth Relative services</li> <li>• Support with ongoing birth relative contact</li> <li>• Specialist Life Story practitioners</li> <li>• Adoption counselling and training</li> </ul>	✓	
Financial support to adopters and special guardians including adoption and special guardianship allowances		✓
<b>SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS</b>		
Receipt of application or court request for special guardianship		✓
Assessment of applicants for Special Guardianship	✓	
<b>NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS</b>		
Step parent/partner adoption assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	

## **Aspire Adoption Panel**

Aspire Adoption operates an Adoption Panel, constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations and guidance. The panel has an independent chairperson, 15 members on a Central List from which each panel is drawn and two medical advisers who share the Panel attendance. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, usually a maximum of six attend each panel. To be quorate, the panel needs to have a minimum of five members present, which must include the chair or vice chair, an independent person (who could be the chair or vice chair) and a social worker. One of the agency medical advisers for the two local authorities attends the Aspire Adoption Panel where possible and is a full member of the panel when they do so. The panel is serviced by a panel administrator and has access to legal advice if needed. The professional advice to the panel is provided by the two Permanence Coordinators/Agency Advisers, one of whom will attend each Panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.

Current membership includes adopters and adopted adults with personal experience of adoption. It also includes experienced social workers with direct experience of adoption work, a psychotherapist with experience of working in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services setting, a former magistrate, and a social worker with experience as a CAFCASS guardian. The Central List reflects the diversity of modern society, with some panel members in a same sex or heterosexual relationship, others who are single with experience of bringing up children as single parents. Most of those on the Central List are white British, with two panel members who are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. One panel member has a registered disability, another has a relative with Down's Syndrome. There are more women than men on the Central List, with proactive efforts being made to recruit more men.

The functions of the panel in relation to adoption matters are

- to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child;
- to recommend whether a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters is a suitable one.
- In circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no Placement Order is applied for, the panel will recommend whether the child should be placed for adoption.

The panel can also give advice about the numbers and ages of children in relation to prospective adopter approval, also about post adoption contact, delegated parental responsibility and adoption support. The panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the time scales set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.

The Aspire Adoption Panel makes recommendations based on detailed written reports prepared by the child's social worker and adoption social worker, and the social worker's attendance at panel to clarify details if needed. When considering the approval or deregistration of prospective adopters or a match between prospective adopters and a child, adoptive applicants have the option of attending panel in person, to provide scope to discuss and expand on any issues relevant to the application. Applicants who decide not to attend in person are not disadvantaged in any way and no judgement is made from their decision not to do so, although every effort will be made to assist their attendance.

The venue of the panel meeting is in a modern purpose -built building with disabled access. During the period since March 2020, in response to the Coronavirus restrictions, Aspire Panel has met virtually using Microsoft Teams.

The recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final agreed minutes of the meeting, to the relevant Agency Decision Maker, for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

### **Systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of services**

The Aspire Adoption Service undergoes regular internal and external scrutiny to ensure that services are robust and of good quality. This will be achieved by:

- Collection and scrutiny of data, recording outcomes for children and adopters, including data as required by the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board and Ofsted.
- Tracking systems, internally and in conjunction with the local authorities, to measure the timescales involved in providing services.
- Aspire Adoption's Operational Management Board meets quarterly and reviews outcomes against key performance indicators and national standards. It also reviews budgets and the financial state of the agency. The Board consists of representatives from both local authorities



at Service Director and Service Manager level. Others attend by invitation, and there is a standard Focus on Practice agenda item at each meeting.

- The Aspire Strategic Partnership Board meets every 3 months, and membership consists of the Executive Corporate Directors in BCP Council and Dorset Council, and the lead members/portfolio holders for Children and Families representing elected members. A representative of the CCG attends, also the panel chair, a service user representative and the Chief Executive of the Voluntary Adoption Agency with which Aspire is partnered, Families for Children, who is also the chair. The role of the Board is to oversee and review the service from a performance and financial perspective, also, to attempt to resolve disputes between the Councils under the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement.
- The Permanence Coordinators/Agency Advisers and the Aspire Adoption Panel chair provide quality assurance feedback every six months on the quality of reports being presented to the panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement.
- Six monthly performance reports are provided by the Aspire Adoption Service Manager to the Aspire Strategic Partnership Board and to the executive officers of each Council. The local authorities still retain corporate responsibility for their own Looked After Children, even where they have delegated functions to Aspire. These reports address the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency, and monitor the management and outcomes of the service, to satisfy the local authorities delegating adoption functions to Aspire that the agency is effective, achieving good outcomes for children and other service users, and complying with the conditions of registration.
- Each team has regular team meetings and there are staff meetings for all of those working in Aspire every 4 months, to analyse performance across the service and take part in practice development sessions.
- Service user feedback is sought at different stages of the adoption process, and in relation to special guardianship services.
- A Service User Consultative Forum meets every 3-4 months to feedback to the agency on specific issues. The chairperson of the Forum sits on the Strategic Partnership Board.
- Second opinion visits to prospective adopters take place where there are issues arising during the assessment.

- Statutory Child in Care reviews, chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers, and planning meetings provide a structure for the agency to record progress in individual cases where a child is looked after by either of the local authorities.
- Where Aspire has case responsibility for children with adoption plans, the local authority audit schedule includes these cases. Aspire has also set up an audit schedule to audit a sample of cases in each of the four teams on a rolling monthly basis, with feedback to the case holder, team manager and Aspire Service Manager. Themes from the audits are drawn together every 3 months by the Permanence Coordinators/Agency Advisers.
- Staff performance is routinely monitored during regular supervision sessions and appraisals with line managers.
- Appraisals for Aspire Adoption Panel members, including the chair take place annually.
- Annual updates take place of the *Statement of Purpose* and *Children's Guides to Adoption* and *Children's Guide to Adoption Support*.

#### Complaints and compliments

All of those receiving a service in relation to adoption or special guardianship by Aspire Adoption are advised of their right to make representations or complaints.

The complaints officer for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole (BCP) Council collates and progresses all complaints and compliments according to Local Authority procedures and produces reports on an annual basis. The Aspire Adoption Service Manager monitors the progress of all complaints and compliments specifically relating to the service. There is a protocol in place which defines how complaints are managed which are received by or about the services provided by staff in Aspire's partner local authorities. Details of this can be found in one of the Schedules to the Inter Authority Agreement, attached as Appendix D.

*A Children's Guide to Adoption* is given to all children where the decision has been made that they should be placed for adoption. This contains local information about adoption, a summary of what happens at each stage of the adoption process, including at court, how long each stage should take, how a child can find out about their rights, how to contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, how to secure access to an independent advocate, how to make a complaint and how to contact the Children's Rights Officer and Ofsted.

*A Children's Guide to Adoption Support Services* is given to all children at the time of placement dependent on age and understanding and those in receipt of adoption support services, and contains the information laid down in the Minimum Standards about how a child can find out about their rights, how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted, if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors and how to secure access to an independent advocate.

#### Contact details for Aspire Adoption

Aspire Adoption,  
First Floor,  
Kinson Hub,  
1599 Wimborne Road,  
Bournemouth BH11 9AW

Tel - 0300 123 9868

Email - [enquiries@aspireadoption.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aspireadoption.co.uk)

#### Contact details for complaints

Tel 01202 458712

[acomplaint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:acomplaint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Freepost RTKS-LEBR-YTAR

W. BCPCouncil.gov.uk/complaints

#### Contact details for Ofsted

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

General enquiries 0300 123 1231

Contact form <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk>

Contact Ofsted about concerns on 0300 123 4666

The helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

## **Appendix A**

The values statement below is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards for Adoption and reflects those of Aspire Adoption.

### **Values - children**

- The child's welfare, safety & needs are at the centre of the adoption process
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, & benefit from excellent parenting & education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents & skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes & feelings are important & will be actively sought & fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.
- Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health & development of the children waiting to be adopted.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language & sexuality need to be properly recognised & positively valued & promoted.
- The particular needs of disabled children & children with complex needs will be fully recognised & taken into account.
- Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, intercountry adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family.
- Children, birth parents/guardians & families & adoptive parents will be valued & respected.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential for the National Minimum Standards to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies & Adoption Support Agencies.

### **Values- adopted adults & birth relatives**

- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved- adopted adults, & birth & adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate & resurface at different times & stages throughout an individual's life.
- Adopted people should have access to information & services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life.
- Agencies have a duty to provide services that consider the welfare of all parties involved & should consider the implications of decisions & actions for everyone involved.

- Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views & wishes in decision making.
- Agencies should acknowledge differences in people's circumstances & have established policies that provide non-discriminatory services.
- Adopted adults have their adoptive identity safeguarded & the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members.

**Values - adopters**

- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child will be valued and respected.
- All adoptive applicants will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. No applicant will be discriminated against on grounds of disability, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, gender, financial status or marital status.
- All applicants are entitled to know what issues will be considered in their assessment and will be kept informed of progress throughout. They will receive a copy of their assessment report before an adoption panel meeting, have the opportunity to comment on the report and to attend panel and be heard if they wish.

## Appendix B

### Schedule of Responsibilities

The successful delivery of the services provided by Aspire will be dependent on a high level of joint working between Aspire and Aspire's partner local authorities of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. This document summarises respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families touched by or created through adoption or special guardianship.

### **Aspire Adoption, Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council, and the Borough of Poole**

This document summarises the respective roles and responsibilities between Aspire Adoption and partner local authorities which are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council regarding the delivery of adoption and special guardianship services.

#### **The Vision**

Aspire's vision is to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults whose lives have been touched by adoption and special guardianship by:

- Working closely with our partner local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs.
- Targeted recruitment and establishment of a wide and diverse pool of prospective adopters.
- Matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families.
- Undertaking special guardianship assessments which are thorough, evidence based, and timely.
- Providing creative and outstanding adoption and special guardianship support services.
- Investing in our workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.
- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working.
- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults and staff with whom we work to develop and improve the services provided.

### **Summary of roles and responsibilities**

The successful delivery of the services provided by Aspire will be dependent on a high level of joint working between Aspire and Aspire's partner local authorities which are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. This document summarises respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families touched by or created through adoption or special guardianship.

### **THE CHILD**

<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Case responsibility</b>	The local authority will take primary casework responsibility for all children for whom adoption or special guardianship is being considered to the point of Care and Placement Orders. In the case of relinquished babies, the local authority will take primary casework responsibility until the formal witnessed CAFCASS consent has been obtained.	Aspire will provide specialist advice and support to help the local authority workers to understand the adoption process, influencing and promoting best practice. This will be via the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and allocated Aspire social worker and support worker.	
	The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in each local authority may make a decision, at the time of making a Should Be Placed for Adoption (SBPFA) decision about a particular child, as to the point of transfer of case responsibility for that child to Aspire. For the majority of children, this will be at the point of Placement Order or formal witnessed CAFCASS consent.	Aspire will take primary casework responsibility for all children for whom the ADM in that child's authority has decided that the case should transfer to the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). For those children not transferring to Aspire, the role of the Aspire workers will be primarily family finding and providing specialist support and advice via the allocated workers and the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser.	The funding formula used to establish the Aspire budget has been calculated on 100% of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's children transferring to Aspire at the point of Placement Order and 20% of Dorset children. If the proportion of Dorset children transferring in to

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
			Aspire exceeds that percentage, additional funding will be required.
<b>Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO)s</b>	Where a child is Looked After, the IRO in the local authority will remain responsible for monitoring and overseeing the child's care plan to the point of an Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order regardless of whether case responsibility has transferred to Aspire or not.		
<b>Early identification of children with adoption plans</b>	The local authority is responsible for care planning and for identifying the children who may require an adoptive family, and of then notifying the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser at the earliest possible stage. For some children, this will be pre-birth.	Aspire will provide support to the local authority in the care planning process via the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser. Aspire will allocate a social worker and support worker from the Family Finding and Placement team within 48 hours of notification by the local authority of a child with a possible adoption plan.	
	The local authority will keep the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser informed of progress in care planning and will invite the Permanence Coordinator to relevant meetings such as legal gateway meetings, permanency planning meetings, and tracking meetings where adoption is being considered for a child.	The Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser will attend relevant local authority planning meetings about a child where adoption is being considered. The allocated Aspire social worker or support worker will draft a profile of the child and begin to identify suitable adopters as early as possible.	
<b>Early Permanence</b>	The local authority will consider whether an Early Permanent (Fostering for Adoption) placement	The Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and the	



SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	<p>would be appropriate for any child for whom they are considering adoption, in line with Section 22c (9B) (c) of the Children Act 1989.</p> <p>If so, they will notify the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and the allocated Aspire family finding social worker.</p>	<p>allocated Aspire social worker will provide advice and support to the local authority in identifying which children are suitable to be considered for an Early Permanent (EP) placement.</p>	
		<p>Where available, a suitable family able to provide an Early Permanent placement will be offered to the local authority for a named child, with ongoing support to the carers.</p>	<p>In recruiting, assessing and preparing prospective adopters, Aspire will encourage those applying to adopt to positively consider the benefits for the child of Early Permanence.</p>
	<p>The local authority social worker will prepare the relevant paperwork for the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in the child's authority to agree to a placement under Regulation 25a of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.</p> <p>They will also progress this paperwork to the ADM in the child's local authority via the Aspire Permanence Coordinator for consideration and will be responsible for any formal notifications to their fostering service, the prospective foster carers/adopters, birth parents and court.</p>	<p>The Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and allocated family finding social worker will support and assist the local authority social worker in completing the relevant paperwork for the ADM decision under Reg 25a. The Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser has responsibility for the quality assurance of reports to the ADM.</p>	
	<p>The local authority social worker will set up all payments to the prospective adopters/foster</p>		

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	carers whilst the placement remains an Early Permanent one.		
<b>Tracking</b>	The local authority will continue to maintain tracking systems in relation to all children in care proceedings or accommodated under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act.	Aspire will maintain tracking systems for all children notified to them by the local authority with a plan for adoption or for whom initial information suggests that adoption may become the plan (children in the pipeline) for that child. Aspire will also maintain tracking systems of all children in placement up to the Adoption Order and tracking systems of assessments and prospective adopters approved and either waiting or with a child in placement.	
<b>Adoption Medicals</b>	The local authority social worker will be responsible for obtaining completed CoramBAAF M and B reports (Obstetric and Neo Natal Reports), CoramBAAF PH reports (reports on the birth parents' current and family health history) and liaising with the Agency Medical Adviser to arrange the Adoption Medical. The child's social worker should arrange with the foster carer to take the child to the medical and should also attend in person.		
<b>Completion of Adoption Reports</b>	The local authority social worker will be responsible for the completion of the Child Permanence Report (CPR) for the Agency Decision as to whether a child should be placed for	The Aspire family finding social worker will support and assist the local authority social worker in the completion of the CPR for the agency decision.	It will be necessary for the local authority worker and Aspire worker to work closely

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	<p>adoption. They will also be responsible for updating the CPR following the making of Care and Placement Orders, prior to any transfer of primary responsibility for the child to Aspire.</p> <p>The line manager of the allocated social worker is responsible for reading and signing off the CPR prior to submission to the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser.</p> <p>The local authority social worker will be responsible for updating the CPR eg for matching if case responsibility remains with the local authority.</p>	<p>The Permanence Coordinator, in their role of Agency Adviser, will be responsible for the QA of all reports being presented to the local authority or Aspire ADM, and it is for them alone to decide whether the report is adequate for submission to the panel and to the ADM. The Aspire family finding social worker will be responsible for updating the CPR e.g. for matching, if case responsibility for the child is transferred to Aspire post Placement Order.</p>	<p>and collaboratively to ensure that all relevant information is included in the CPR and that the report is of a high standard.</p> <p>Cases will not be transferred into Aspire until the Case Management System (CMS) is up to date and the CPR has been updated.</p>
	<p>The local authority social worker will be responsible for completing a draft support plan for the child at the point of ADM decision (SBPFA) based on the assessed needs of the child in line with the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005, and for obtaining 'in principle' agreement from the child's local authority to any financial support post placement. This plan will be reviewed and updated as further information becomes available about the child's needs.</p>		
	<p>If casework responsibility has not been transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the local authority social worker will collaborate with the Aspire social worker in reading Prospective Adopters' Reports (PARs), shortlisting and visiting potential families as soon as legally possible.</p>	<p>The Aspire social worker will lead on identifying potential adoptive families and will shortlist and visit potential families as a priority as soon as legally possible.</p>	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		If casework responsibility has not been transferred to Aspire at the point of the Placement Order, the Aspire worker will collaborate with the local authority social worker in shortlisting PARs and visiting potential families as soon as legally possible.	
	<p>The local authority social worker will be responsible for obtaining agreement, prior to the matching panel, from the child's local authority to any financial support identified for the placement and included in the support plan, if casework responsibility has not transferred to Aspire.</p> <p>This should include any one off or setting up costs specific to the proposed placement, any ongoing financial support in the form of an adoption allowance, the cost of accommodation for prospective adopters who live too far to travel on a daily basis for introductions, the cost for the submission of the adoption application to court and any costs in relation to the management of direct contact.</p>	<p>The Aspire social worker will be responsible for obtaining agreement, prior to the matching panel, from the child's local authority to any financial support identified for the placement and included in the support plan, if casework responsibility has transferred to Aspire.</p> <p>This should include any one off or setting up costs specific to the proposed placement, any ongoing financial support in the form of an adoption allowance, the cost of accommodation for prospective adopters who live too far to travel on a daily basis for introductions, and the cost for the submission of the adoption application to court and any costs in relation to the management of direct contact.</p>	<p>The ADM in each local authority will need to agree to any financial support included in the support plan, or to delegate responsibility for that decision to a budget holding senior manager within the local authority.</p> <p>The funding of any finance to support an adoption placement, whether a one-off payment or ongoing payments remains the responsibility of the child's local authority.</p>
<b>Direct work with children</b>	The local authority social worker is responsible for all statutory duties and direct work with the child in relation to permanency planning and care proceedings.	The allocated Aspire family finding social worker and support worker will advise and support the local authority social worker in planning any direct work with	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		the child, to ensure that they understand why they are in care and the court process (dependent on their age and understanding).	
	Post Placement Order, if the primary responsibility for the child has not transferred to Aspire, the local authority social worker will undertake all stat visits and all direct work with the child, to prepare them for placement, with advice and support from the Aspire social worker and family support practitioner.	Post Placement Order, if the primary responsibility for the child has transferred to Aspire, the allocated Aspire social worker will undertake all stat visits and the Aspire social worker and Aspire family support practitioner will take responsibility for all direct work with the child, including life story work, to prepare them for placement.	
<b>Life story book</b>		The Aspire support worker will prepare the life story book for all children moving to an adoptive placement. The first draft will be handed to the prospective adopters at the latest by the second review with the final version being handed over within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing. An electronic version of the life story book will be made available to adopters as well as a paper copy.	
<b>Later life letter</b>	If casework responsibility is being transferred to Aspire, the local authority social worker will complete the first part of the later life letter prior to transfer.	If casework responsibility is transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the allocated Aspire worker will complete the later life letter and handing it to the	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	If casework responsibility is not being transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the local authority social worker will be responsible for completing the later life letter and handing it to the adopters within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing.	adopters within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing.	
<b>Adoption Panel</b>	There are no Adoption Panels remaining in the local authorities. For quoracy, Adoption Panels require the attendance of a social worker as a member of the Panel. Social workers from the local authorities are welcome to approach the Agency Advisers if they are interested in becoming a panel member and should talk with their line manager in the first instance.	Aspire will take on all responsibility for the setting up and running of an Adoption Panel to consider the suitability of prospective adopters, matches between prospective adopters and children, and whether adoption should be the plan for the child in the case of a relinquished baby where there are no court proceedings to scrutinise the planning for the child. Aspire will appoint a Panel chair and maintain a Central List to ensure that at all times the Aspire Adoption Panel is set up and run in accordance with regulations and guidance and that it is quorate for all meetings. Aspire will take responsibility for the minuting of all panels and for the distribution and storing of those minutes securely.	
<b>Agency Adviser</b>	There will be no Agency Adviser post in the local authorities.	The Aspire Permanence Coordinator is a combined role with that of Agency Adviser. The Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser will act as the Agency Adviser to the ADM in both	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		local authorities in relation to SBPFA decisions and matches, and to the Aspire ADM in respect of approvals and as Agency Adviser to the Aspire Adoption Panel, with responsibility for the QA of all reports being presented to the local authority or Aspire ADMs. It is for them alone to decide whether the report is adequate for submission to the panel and to the ADM.	
<b>Panel Administrator</b>	There will be no post of panel administrator within the 3 local authorities.	Aspire will be responsible for providing business support in the role of panel administrator to service the Aspire Adoption Panel.	
<b>Formal notifications following ADM decisions</b>	The local authority will take responsibility for informing birth parents of SBPFA decisions, within statutory timescales.	Aspire will be responsible for the written notification of birth parents in relation to BCP SBPA decisions and the referral to the independent birth parent service. Aspire will be responsible for informing prospective adopters of ADM decisions re their suitability as adopters. Aspire will also be responsible for informing birth parents and prospective adopters of matches agreed by the Aspire ADM.	
<b>Formal notifications prior to the</b>		Regardless of whether casework responsibility transfers to Aspire at Placement Order, the Aspire panel administrator will take responsibility for	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
<b>placement of a child</b>		sending out formal notifications of a child's placement in advance of that placement to health, education and to the local authority where the child will be living post placement.	
<b>Access to child's CMS</b>	The local authority will provide access to an individual child's record in their CMS to the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and the allocated Aspire social worker, support worker, their business support worker and team manager, for any children for whom adoption is likely to be the plan.	Aspire workers will record all activity in relation to the child on the child's CMS.	Case recording will be completed within the timescales of each local authority's policies and procedures.

#### ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
<b>Adoption enquiries</b>	The local authority will ensure that the Council website contains information about Aspire and a weblink to the Aspire website. The local authority will signpost any adoption enquiries which are in scope for Aspire, including enquiries about adopter recruitment, whether domestic or intercountry, adoption and special guardianship support, and partner (step-parent) adoptions to Aspire, within 24 hours.	Aspire will maintain a website giving general information about adoption and special guardianship and outlining the services which Aspire provides. The website will have clear contact details including a dedicated telephone number and an email contact address. Within office hours, a duty worker will be available to respond directly to enquiries from other professionals and from members of the public.	
<b>Pre-assessment stage</b>		Aspire will hold regular information events for prospective adopters at	



	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
		geographic locations across the Aspire region.	
<b>Stage One</b>	The local authority will provide all information required for statutory checks of prospective adopters currently resident in the local authority or previously resident in the local authority within 15 working days.	Aspire will carry out all stage 1 functions, including running the preparation course for prospective adopters.	
<b>Stage Two</b>		Aspire will carry out all stage 2 functions and be responsible for the preparation of the Prospective Adopter's Report.	
<b>Approval of suitability</b>		The Aspire Adoption Panel will consider the suitability of prospective adopters and the Aspire ADM will make the decision. Aspire will be responsible for all formal notifications to the prospective adopters of suitability, including where prospective adopters are not seen as suitable. Aspire will have responsibility for appeals against qualifying determinations and for any case referred to the IRM.	

### **POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Adoption support</b>	The local authority will signpost enquiries and referrals for adoption support to Aspire within 24 hours.	Aspire will maintain a daily duty service to ensure that all of those making an enquiry about adoption support or requesting an adoption support	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	This might be an adoptive family in need of support, an adopted adult, or a birth relative.	assessment are responded to within 24 hours.	
	If the primary reason for the referral is that the child is at risk of significant harm and/or the child is on the edge of care, the local authority will retain primary responsibility for the case, to undertake S47 enquiries and allocate a social worker where LSCB thresholds are met.	<p>Aspire will provide core adoption support to the family in the form of newsletters, invitation to support groups, and access to Aspire's therapeutic support services including clinical psychology support. The following are the core services on offer to all adoptive families for whom Aspire, undertaking the function as a delegated function from the local authority, is responsible for offering services to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephone or email advice and information services;</li> <li>Liaison, short-term counselling, assessment and social work or support worker support, referral to in house clinical psychology or other specialist services if appropriate;</li> <li>Access to training, workshops support groups for adopters and adopted children;</li> <li>Access to and information about resources such as DVDs, books and specialist services;</li> <li>Opportunities for networking with other adoptive families, including social events for adoptive families;</li> </ul>	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
		Agency updates for adoptive families, e.g. newsletters and other communications whether digital or paper.	
<b>Out-of-hours services</b>	Adoptive families will have the same access to the Dorset, or Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Out of Hours service, as other families living in the area.	Aspire will operate a daily duty service within office hours but will not operate an Aspire Out of Hours service.	
<b>Indirect/ letterbox contact</b>		Aspire will operate the indirect exchange of information between birth families and adoptive families including arrangements set up before July 2017.	
<b>Supervised direct contact</b>	<p>The local authorities will remain responsible for funding any direct post adoption contact arrangements agreed prior to July 2017 but can delegate the responsibility to Aspire to supervise those arrangements in individual cases, if the funding is provided by the local authority for Aspire to do so.</p> <p>Arrangements for direct post adoption contact made after July 2017 should form part of the adoption support plan at the time of matching, with the funding for these arrangements agreed by the local authority prior to presentation to the Aspire Adoption Panel for matching.</p>	<p>Responsibility for the management of direct post adoption contact arrangements set up after July 2017, provided that the funding has been agreed at the time of matching.</p> <p>Aspire will supervise direct post adoption contact arrangements made before July 2017 if the funding is provided.</p>	
<b>Adoption allowances and other financial support to</b>	The agreement to, means testing, administration, payment and review of adoption allowances or other financial support to adoptive families, including costs incurred in managing direct contact		Harmonisation of adoption and special guardianship allowances across the local authorities will be

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>adoptive families</b>	<p>arrangements will remain the responsibility of the relevant local authority.</p> <p>The local authority will be responsible for setting up costs and for costs incurred during introductions between a child and prospective adopters, including the costs of providing accommodation if the prospective adopters live too far from the foster carers to travel daily, if agreed by the local authority as part of the support plan at the time of matching.</p> <p>The local authority will remain responsible for the costs of lodging adoption applications.</p>		undertaken at some future point.
<b>Adoption Support Fund</b>	<p>The pan Dorset therapeutic provider list will continue to be maintained by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council (BCP) as host authority. Any new providers will be checked out by the BCP Access to Resources (ART) team, prior to their addition to the list.</p> <p>The ART team will also set up and monitor contracts to providers of services funded by the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).</p>	Aspire is responsible for all applications to the Adoption Support Fund, based on assessments of need undertaken by Aspire social workers.	
<b>Independent support to birth parents</b>	<p>The local authority will include details of the independent birth relative support service (Birth Family Matters) in their formal letter to birth parents notifying them of an ADM decision that their child should be placed for adoption.</p> <p>It will be an opt out approach i.e. birth parents will be contacted if they do not inform Aspire within 4</p>	Aspire commissions an independent birth relative support service (Birth Family Matters) from Families for Children. The panel administrator will refer all birth parents who have not opted out of contact with the BFM services following an SBPFA decision to the service.	<p>The Birth Family Matters (BFM) service is a support, advice and counselling service.</p> <p>It is not an advocacy service.</p>

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	<p>weeks that they do not wish to be contacted by the BFM worker.</p> <p>A copy of the letter will be sent to the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser</p>	<p>The panel administrator will refer all birth parents who have not opted out of contact with the BFM worker following a match.</p> <p>The BFM worker will contact all birth parents who do not opt out and any other birth relatives who self- refer or who are referred by other professionals, to offer support, advice and counselling.</p>	<p>The BFM service will be funded from the Aspire base budget and is not an additional charge to the local authority.</p>
<b>Birth Records Counselling and intermediary services</b>	<p>All requests received by the local authority via the General Register Office or directly from a service user, for access to birth and adoption records, will be signposted by the local authority to Aspire within 24 hours, as will requests by adopted adults for counselling, advice and support or for intermediary services.</p> <p>Requests for independent support from birth parents or other relatives received by the local authority pre or post Adoption Order and including requests for support from birth relatives whose children were adopted in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s, will be signposted to Aspire within 24 hours.</p>	<p>Information about access to records and services for adopted adults and birth relatives will be available on the Aspire website, with links to relevant organisations.</p> <p>The daily duty worker will respond to all referrals, via the General Register Office or directly from a service user, for access to birth and adoption records, within 1 working day.</p> <p>The daily duty worker will respond to all requests by adopted adults or birth relatives for counselling, advice and support or for intermediary services within 24 hours.</p>	
		<p>Aspire will not offer a tracing service unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. terminal or hereditary illness. Service users will be given advice and information about tracing and</p>	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
		signposted to Adoption Support Agencies who undertake tracing services.	
<b>Intermediary services</b>	All requests by adopted adults or birth relatives for intermediary services to establish contact with their birth relative will be signposted by the local authority to Aspire within 24 hours.	All requests by adopted adults or birth relatives for intermediary services to establish contact with their birth relative will be responded to by the duty worker in Aspire within 24 hours.	
		Aspire will offer support and advice but will not offer a tracing service unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. terminal or hereditary illness. Service users will be given advice and information about tracing and signposted to Adoption Support Agencies who undertake tracing services.	

### **NON-AGENCY PLACEMENTS**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Partner (step-parent) adoptions</b>	All enquiries about partner (step-parent) adoptions and all formal notifications of intent to adopt in such cases which are received by the local authority will be signposted to Aspire within 24 hours.	Information about partner adoptions will be available on the Aspire website, with links to relevant organisations. The daily duty worker will respond to all enquiries and referrals about partner adoptions within 24 hours.	
	The local authority will respond to requests, from Aspire or other local authorities or Regional Adoption Agencies, for local authority statutory checks on those living in their area who have	Aspire will be responsible for the formal written response to notifications of intent to adopt in partner adoption applications. Aspire will allocate a social	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	applied to adopt, including in respect of non - agency placements, will be responded to within 15 working days.	worker to counsel and advise the family, and to complete the Annex A report for court if an application is lodged.	
	If legal advice or support at the court hearing is required, the local authority legal team where the child and family live will be responsible for providing advice to or support to the Aspire social worker at the court hearing if this is required.	The allocated Aspire social worker will be responsible for attending all court hearings in relation to the application.	
<b>Intercountry adoption</b>	All enquiries from prospective adopters about intercountry adoption received by the local authority will be signposted to Aspire within 24 hours.	Information about intercountry adoption will be available on the Aspire website, with links to relevant organisations. The daily duty worker will respond to all referrals about intercountry adoption within 24 hours.	Local authorities will need to identify who in the local authority will respond to these requests in a timely way, as currently these are undertaken by their adoption team staff.
		Aspire will be responsible for all intercountry adoption assessments, preparation and support for prospective adopters living in the geographic area of the 3 local authorities of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.	
		The Aspire Adoption Panel will consider all applications for suitability to adopt from overseas and the Aspire ADM will make the Agency Decision.	

**DATA COLLATION AND SUBMISSION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Data collation and reporting	The local authority will retain responsibility for collating and reporting internally and to external bodies such as the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board on information about children in need and children in care. If Aspire has primary responsibility for a child, the Case Management System (CMS) in the child's authority will be the CMS for the Aspire social worker to record any information relating to the child. This will enable reports to be run by the child's local authority from their own CMS.	Aspire will take responsibility for collating and reporting, internally and to external bodies such as the Department for Education, Ofsted and Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board on information about prospective adopters, adopters, adoption support. If Aspire has primary responsibility for a child, the Case Management System (CMS) in the child's authority will be the CMS for the Aspire social worker to record any information relating to the child. This will enable reports to be run by the child's local authority from their own CMS.	
	The local authorities will identify the data they require Aspire to produce in order to fulfil their own responsibilities in relation to children in care, including those with adoption plans.	Aspire will be responsible for producing the Annual Adoption Report for each local authority in relation to adoption services within their area. This will be presented to the Aspire Management Board and to the relevant Council Boards.	
Freedom of Information requests	The local authority will be responsible for responding to any Freedom of Information requests relating to care planning for children and data about ADM decisions, Placement Orders and	Aspire will be responsible for responding to any Freedom of Information requests relating to adoption assessments and adoption support.	Where a request relates to both the local authority and Aspire, an agreement will have to be reached



	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	Adoption or Special Guardianship Orders made in respect of children who are or were in their care.		on a case by case basis as to who is best placed to collate and respond to the request.
Complaints	The local authority will be responsible for all complaints received in relation to the child, to the point of transfer of case responsibility to Aspire.	Aspire will be responsible for all complaints relating to prospective adopters and adopters, children post transfer of case responsibility to Aspire, adopted adults, letterbox.	
	Where a complaint relates to services pre and post transfer of case responsibility to Aspire, a decision will be made following consultation with the complaints officer in the child's authority as to how to manage the complaint and as to who will take responsibility for investigating the complaint and for funding any stage 2 and stage 3 investigations.	Where a complaint relates to services pre and post transfer of case responsibility to Aspire, a decision will be made following consultation with the complaints officer in the child's authority as to how to manage the complaint and as to who will take responsibility for investigating the complaint and for funding any stage 2 and stage 3 investigations.	

### **SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Special guardianship in care proceedings</b>	The primary responsibility for the child remains with the local authority in respect of permanency planning, court proceedings, parenting assessments, and viability assessments of family or friends.	Following a positive viability assessment of a family member or friend and referral into Aspire, a social worker will be allocated within 48 hours to complete a full assessment.	
	The local authority will refer into Aspire for a full assessment of a family member or friend as soon as	If the family to be assessed lives outside of England, Wales, Northern Ireland or	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	<p>possible following the conclusion of a positive viability assessment.</p> <p>To enable court timescales to be met, this could be before a full assessment is ordered by the court but where the viability assessment is positive and where the local authority is recommending a full assessment to the court.</p> <p>If the family to be assessed lives outside of England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland, the assessment will need to be undertaken by an international organisation such as Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB) or via ICACU, with access to local systems for undertaking statutory enquiries and medicals, and knowledge of the local cultural and legal context. It is the responsibility of the local authority to fund this.</p> <p>Any assessments of family members from overseas if they travel to this area for a time limited period will be undertaken by the local authority social worker. In these circumstances, any assessment can only be undertaken at the level of a viability assessment, given the need to undertake statutory and medical checks of the applicants in their country of residence, to explore their home conditions and financial circumstances, and also to visit referees.</p>	<p>Scotland, Aspire will offer advice and assistance upon request, but will not undertake the assessment.</p>	
	<p>The local authority will respond to all requests for local authority statutory checks for anyone living in their area within 15 working days.</p>	<p>The Aspire social worker will undertake all relevant enquiries and investigations relevant to completing a full assessment.</p>	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	If English is not the first language for any applicants, the local authority will fund the cost of interpreters to enable the Aspire worker to undertake the assessment.	Once completed and signed off by the team manager, the report will be submitted to the local authority legal team and to the social worker with primary responsibility for the child for submission to court.	
	The local authority social worker will retain primary case work responsibility for the child and for the court case throughout.	The Aspire social worker will attend court to give evidence on their assessment if requested.	
<b>Direct applications for Special Guardianship Orders</b>	Enquiries and notifications about Special Guardianship Order applications, which are received by the local authority where the child is not the subject of care proceedings, will be referred to Aspire within 24 hours.	Enquiries and notifications about Special Guardianship Order applications, where the child is not the subject of care proceedings, will be responded to by the Aspire duty worker within 24 hours.	
	The local authority will respond to all requests for local authority statutory checks for anyone living in their area within 15 working days.	Aspire will allocate a social worker to undertake all enquiries and complete all reports in respect of Special Guardianship Order applications, where the child is not the subject of care proceedings.	
	If legal advice or support at the court hearing is required, the local authority legal team where the child and family live will be responsible for providing advice to or support to the Aspire social worker at the court hearing if this is required.	The Aspire social worker will attend all relevant court hearings in respect of such applications.	

## FOSTER CARERS WISHING TO ADOPT OR APPLY FOR A SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDER FOR A CHILD IN THEIR CARE

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	Where a foster carer expresses an interest in adopting or applying for a Special Guardianship Order in relation to a child in their care, the local authority will contact Aspire for a social worker to be allocated to undertake a joint visit to explore further.	Upon request, Aspire will allocate a social worker to undertake a joint visit with the child's allocated social worker in the local authority to explore further.	
		Should the foster carer wish to proceed following the joint visit, Aspire will undertake either an adoption assessment within statutory timescales of 4 months, or a special guardianship assessment in line with legislation.	
	The local authority social worker will continue to take primary responsibility for the child. If the foster carer is a local authority foster carer, they will continue to support the carer in line with fostering regulations whilst the assessment is being undertaken by Aspire. If the foster carer is an Independent Fostering Provider (IFP) carer, that agency will continue to support the carer whilst the assessment is being undertaken.		
	Responsibility for funding any support including financial support post order will be held by the local authority.	Post order, Aspire will provide core support services as provided to other adopters or special guardians.	

## SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	The local authority will signpost enquiries and referrals for special guardianship support to Aspire within 24 hours.	Aspire have information about special guardianship core support services on their website.	
	If the primary reason for the referral is that the child is at risk of significant harm and/or the child is on the edge of care, the local authority will retain primary responsibility for the case, to undertake S47 enquiries and allocate a social worker where LSCB thresholds are met.	Aspire will maintain a daily duty service to ensure that all of those making an enquiry about special guardianship support or requesting a special guardianship support assessment are responded to within 24 hours.	
	The local authority social worker will be responsible for formulating a support plan where a Special Guardianship Order is the outcome for the child in care proceedings.	The Aspire Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Team will offer advice and give information about core special guardianship support services offered by Aspire to inform the support plan for the court.	
	If a Supervision Order is made alongside a Special Guardianship Order, the local authority will retain responsibility for the Supervision Order.	If a Supervision Order is made alongside a Special Guardianship Order, Aspire will offer the family access to the core special guardianship core support services of counselling, advice and information and access to support groups, but will not take responsibility for the Supervision Order.	The funding formula agreed in the Business Case did not include Aspire taking responsibility for Supervision Orders made alongside Special Guardianship Orders.
	The agreement to, means testing, administration, payment and review of special guardianship	Aspire will take responsibility for managing direct contact arrangements if	Harmonisation of adoption and special

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	allowances or other financial support to special guardians, including the costs of managing direct contact arrangements and any costs incurred in the provision of therapeutic support, will remain the responsibility of the relevant local authority.	agreed as part of the support plan submitted to court, and if funded by the local authority.	guardianship allowances across all the local authorities will be undertaken at some future point.
	Where the child was not looked after immediately prior to a Special Guardianship Order, the local authority has discretion but is under no duty to offer an assessment of the need for special guardianship support services, including any assessment of need for financial support.	Where a Special Guardianship Order is made as a result of a direct application to court and not as part of care proceedings, the Aspire worker completing the report for the court will consider the need for support after the order is made. In such cases, special guardians and their families will be offered access to the core support services of counselling, advice and information and access to training and support groups offered by Aspire.	

## LEGAL

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Children</b>	The local authority social worker will have primary responsibility for permanency planning and all court proceedings in relation to Looked After Children, including applications for Care and Placement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders.	Aspire will have responsibility for the completion of special guardianship assessments referred to them by the local authority but will not have primary responsibility for the child or court proceedings.	

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	The local authority social worker will be responsible for any appeals against the making of Care and Placement Orders within the timescales allowed by the court at the time of making those orders, even if primary responsibility for the child has been transferred to Aspire.		
	If casework responsibility is not transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the local authority social worker will be responsible for all legal challenges by the birth family to the Care and Placement Orders until an Adoption Order has been made.	If casework responsibility has transferred to Aspire, the Aspire social worker will be responsible for responding to legal challenges until an Adoption Order has been made, other than an appeal against the Care and Placement Orders within the timescales allowed by the court at the time of making those orders.	
	The local authority legal team will be responsible for supporting the primary case holder, whether this is the local authority social worker or Aspire social worker, in responding to legal appeals against or challenges to the making of Care and Placement Orders or Special Guardianship Orders, where the child was previously a Looked After Child in that authority.		
<b>Adults affected by adoption</b>	As host authority, any legal advice in relation to an assessment or other matter relating to prospective or approved adopters, or other service users will be provided by the BCP Council legal team.		
<b>Adoption Panel</b>	If the Aspire Adoption Panel require legal advice in relation to any matter under their consideration,		

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	<p>this will be provided by the BCP Council legal team, as BCP is the host authority.</p> <p>The exception to this is where a relinquished child is presented to the Aspire Adoption Panel prior to a local authority decision as to whether he or she should be placed for adoption. In such cases, the child's originating local authority remain responsible for providing all relevant legal advice to enable the panel to reach a recommendation.</p>		

### **ARCHIVING AND ACCESS TO RECORDS**

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	<p>The local authority will retain responsibility for storing and maintaining electronic and paper adoption records archived prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, in accordance with Regulations and Statutory Guidance.</p> <p>This includes records in relation to prospective adopters and adopters, adopted adults, adoption support to families, birth parents, indirect exchanges of information (letterbox), children subject to adoption plans and adopted.</p> <p>This also includes records in relation to special guardianship assessments and support.</p>	<p>Aspire will take responsibility for storing and maintaining electronic and paper records in line with Regulations and Statutory Guidance for any case open to them and archived after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 in relation to prospective adopters and adopters, adoption or special guardianship support to families, adopted adults, birth parents where a separate case management record to their child's record has been opened, and indirect (letterbox) exchanges of information.</p>	
	<p>The local authority will retain responsibility for storing and maintaining electronic and paper records archived after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 in accordance</p>		



	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
	with Regulations and Statutory Guidance, in relation to children with adoption plans and adopted.		
	The local authority will provide access to Aspire to any records in their archive in relation to prospective adopters and adopters, adopted adults, adoption support to families, birth parents, indirect exchanges of information (letterbox), children subject to adoption plans and adopted, which are required for new referrals to Aspire after 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2017 where those records are required to inform or assist Aspire in the work they are undertaking.	Aspire will take responsibility for the data storage and security of any information accessed by an Aspire worker from archived records held in the local authority in line with Regulations and Statutory Guidance. Once the case is closed, Aspire will either return that information if requested to the originating local authority or will dispose of it confidentially.	

Appendix C

**Protocol for the Handling of Inter Organisational Complaints in Relation to Aspire Adoption**

**Between**

Aspire Adoption (Hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council)

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council

Dorset Council



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### **Reason and Purpose for the Protocol**

Aspire Adoption is a Regional Adoption Agency which has been formed through an inter authority agreement with Bournemouth Borough Council as the hosting authority. From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 adoption staff from Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole will be transferred to Bournemouth Borough Council under TUPE arrangements. Bournemouth Borough Council hold management responsibility for staff working within Aspire.

Aspire is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, training and support of prospective adopters, matching and placement, adoption panel and support work. In addition, Aspire staff will be undertaking Special Guardianship Order assessments and hold some case holding responsibilities post Placement Order. Please see the attached case holder timeline in Appendix 1 for further information.

Aspire is overseen by a Management Board comprising of senior management representatives from Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and Borough of Poole.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide a guide for the management of complaints, to demonstrate a commitment to work together to provide a positive outcome, ensure ownership of complaints, to reduce confusion and ensure clarity for the complainant. All complaint investigations will take place under relevant complaints legislation and guidance.

All organisations party to this protocol will ensure that any complaints arising from the joint working are handled in line with this protocol.

### **The Protocol**

#### **Complaint Manager Role**

For each signatory organisation, the designated Complaints Manager is responsible for co-ordinating whatever actions are required or implied by this protocol.

As host authority, Bournemouth Borough Council's Complaints Manager will act as the Complaints Manager for Aspire.

They will co-operate with other Complaint Managers and agree who will take the lead role in inter-organisational complaints.

In the unlikely event that Complaints Managers are unable to reach agreement about any matter covered in this protocol, they should each refer the matter promptly to the relevant senior Manager in their respective authorities.

### **The Process**

#### **Single Authority Complaints – See flowchart in Appendix 2**

The receiving authority will establish case and therefore complaint responsibility. Where the complaint responsibility lies solely with one authority, the responsible authority will investigate and respond to the complainant through their usual statutory processes.

If the complaint needs to be passed from one authority to another to achieve this, the receiving authority should always obtain **consent** from the complainant to pass their complaint to the responsible authority to respond. Consent should be in writing and kept by the receiving authority for their records.

The responsible authority will progress the complaint in accordance with their procedure from the point of acknowledgement onwards.

#### **Joint Authority Complaints – See flowchart in Appendix 3**

Where this document refers to joint authority complaints, it is understood that this could also refer to authority / Aspire complaints. In this case, Bournemouth's Complaints Manager will act on behalf of Aspire.

Where it is established that the complaint is jointly held between two authorities, the receiving authority's Complaints Manager will obtain consent to share with the responsible authorities.

The Complaints Managers from the responsible authorities will discuss and agree which authority is to take the lead in managing the complaint process. In determining this, consideration will be given to the number of complaint elements for each authority and the 'weight' of the complaints being made, or this role will default to the receiving authority if the number and weight of complaints is equal.

The lead authority Complaints Manager will be responsible for acknowledging the complaint and managing the complaint process at Stage 1 and in coordinating a joint response.

Should a request for a Stage 2 consideration be received, the Complaints Managers will review the aspects of complaint being brought to Stage 2 to ensure that the lead authority is still relevant. The split of investigation costs between authorities will be agreed and the lead authority Complaint Manager will be responsible for appointing an Investigating Officer and an Independent Person at their agreed rates.

The investigation will produce a joint report and the authorities Adjudicating Officers will consider the aspects of the investigation report relevant to their authority and respond to these. The lead authority Complaint Manager will combine the responses to provide a joint response to the complainant.

Following a Stage 3 review request, the Complaints Managers will review the aspects of complaint being brought to Stage 3 to ensure that the lead authority is still relevant. The lead authority Complaint Manager will make arrangements following their own procedures. Both Adjudicating Officers will attend if complaints remain unresolved for both authorities. As in Stage 2, the cost will be split between the authorities as agreed and a joint response to the Panel's report and any recommendations issued to the complainant.

The authorities will work together where complaints are considered by the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure that joint working is maintained.

### **MP Enquiries**

In the event of an MP enquiry, joint discussion and agreement will take place between Complaints Managers and Aspire where appropriate regarding who to take the lead with management of the enquiry. This will then follow the usual process of the lead authority.

### **Compliments**

Each authority to process their own compliments in their usual way. Compliments for Aspire staff should be passed to the Bournemouth Complaint's Manager to record.

### **Recording and Learning**

Each authority will remain responsible for recording and reporting complaints and learning made about its staff and service in line with the statutory guidance.

Joint complaints may be reviewed to ensure that any inter authority learning is embedded in service improvements.

**Aspire Adoption**

**Case Holder Timeline**

**Aspire Adoption – pre Placement Order**

Recruitment, assessment, training and support of prospective adopters - for all authorities.  
  
Special Guardianship Order Assessments – for all authorities

**Aspire Adoption – post Placement Order involvement**

Majority of children Social Worker case holding responsibility taken over from originating authority post Placement Order  
Matching and placement – for all authorities.  
Adoption support work – for all authorities (not financial).  
Post adoption indirect contact (letterbox)  
Adoption Panel - for all authorities.  
Special Guardianship Order support – for all authorities (not financial).  
Agency Decision Maker - for decisions about the suitability of adopters.

Placement Order Made / Special Guardianship Order Made



**Originating Authority – pre Placement Order or Special Guardianship Order**

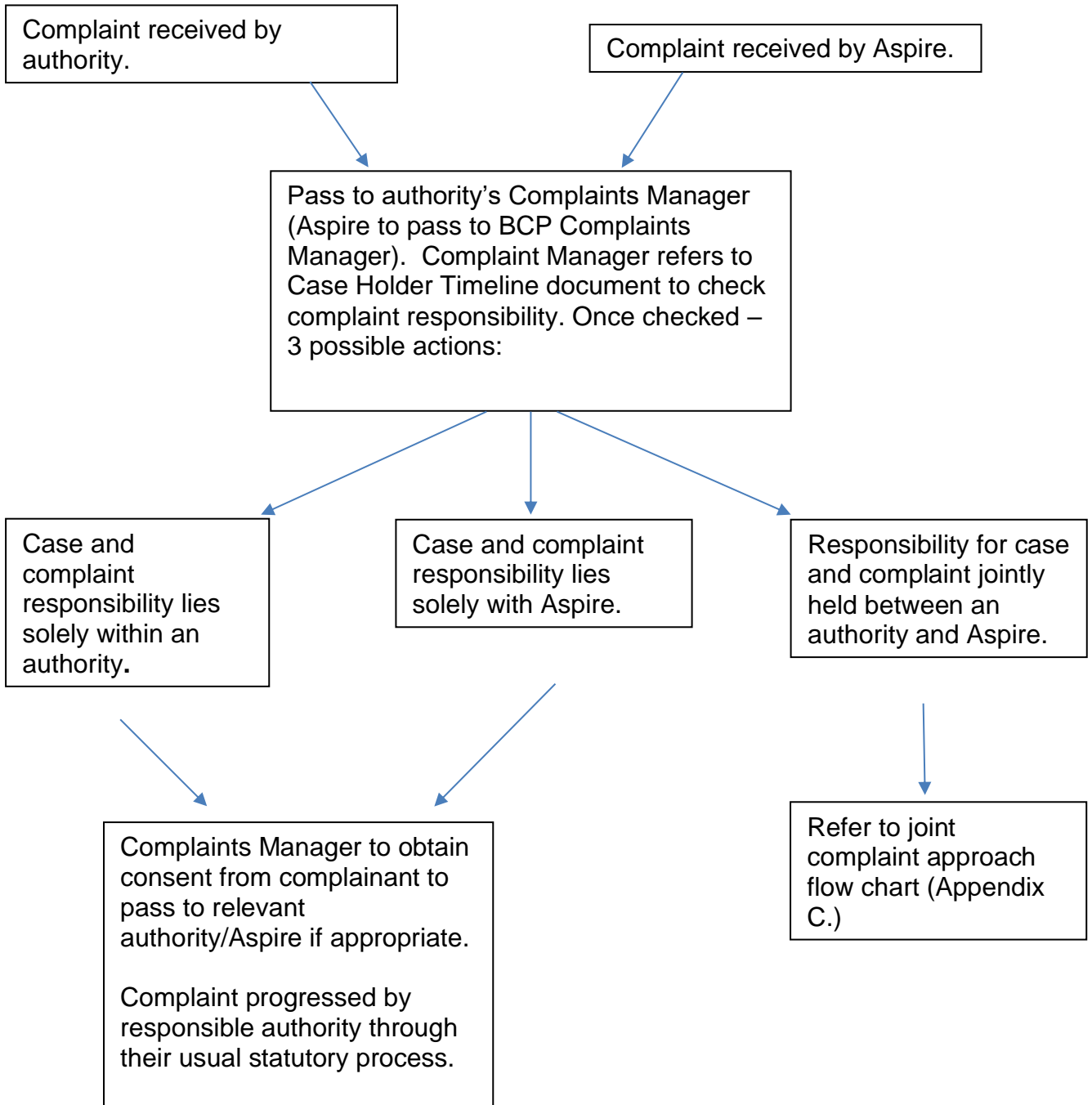
Permanency planning, court process and early identification of child requiring adoption:

- all adoption case holding responsibility up to Placement Order, including Agency Decision that the child should be placed for adoption.
- case responsibility for care planning and court process for Children in Care where a Special Guardianship Order is the permanency plan.

**Originating Authority – post Placement Order or Special Guardianship Order**

**Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole** – All adoption case holding responsibility transferred to Aspire following Placement Order – local authority retain responsibility for Independent Reviewing Officer/Children in Care reviews.  
**Dorset** – Approximately 20% of adoption case holding responsibility transferred to Aspire following Placement Order – local authority retain responsibility for Independent Reviewing Officer/Children in Care reviews.  
**Dorset/ Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole-** responsibility for any Supervision Orders made alongside a Special Guardianship Order.

**Protocol for Dealing with Complaints in relation to the Regional Adoption Agency – Aspire and its partners  
Flowchart following initial contact from complainant**



**Protocol for Dealing with Complaints in relation to the Regional Adoption Agency – Aspire and its partners  
Flowchart following identification of joint complaint**

Responsibility for case and complaint identified as being jointly held between originating authority and Aspire.



**Stage 1 process** - Receiving complaints manager to obtain consent from complainant to share complaint with other authority / Aspire as appropriate.



Complaint referred to service for response within each authority by relevant Complaints Manager.

Joint discussion and agreement between Complaints Manager and Aspire where appropriate regarding who to take lead with management of

The Lead authority will take responsibility for Stage 1 management with input from the other authority or Aspire as per their own processes.



Lead authority to monitor statutory timescales and follow up where necessary. Responses collated by lead authority.

Lead authority to send response on joint headed paper to complainant once agreed by all parties within statutory timescales. Include information on next stages and Local Government Ombudsman. Both authorities responsible for own learning and recording.



**Stage 2 process** – review complaint to ensure lead authority still relevant. Agree between relevant complaint managers how investigation cost will be split. Lead authority appoints investigators with agreement of other authority and provides information to complainant. Complaint to be investigated in accordance with procedure of lead authority following the Statutory Guidance. Joint report and adjudication to be issued to complainant on completion.



**Stage 3 process** – Same costs split as the Stage 2 process as this is a review of Stages 1 & 2. Lead authority appoints panel with agreement of other authority and provides information to complainant. Review to be completed in accordance with procedure of lead authority following the Statutory Guidance. Both authorities Adjudicating Officers to attend review. Joint adjudication to be issued to complainant on completion.



**LGO Referral** – Authorities to work together on principal of Local Government Ombudsman enquiry to provide Local Government Ombudsman with information.



## Contacts



### **Children and Young People's Services Complaints Manager**

Karen Mayo 01202 714740 [k.mayo@poole.gov.uk](mailto:k.mayo@poole.gov.uk)



### **Senior Assurance Manager – Complaints Team**

Julie Taylor 01305 225076 [julie.taylor@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:julie.taylor@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

### **Adult and Children's Complaints Manager**

Teresa Salmon 01202 458712 [socialcarecomplaints@bournemouth.gov.uk](mailto:socialcarecomplaints@bournemouth.gov.uk)



### **Aspire Adoption Manager**

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