

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	5 February 2013
Title:	Adoption Scorecard : November 2012
Reference:	4595
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Summary

1.1. This is a report setting out Hampshire's performance against the Department for Education's Adoption Scorecard targets published in November 2012 (see Appendix A).

1.2. The data used to monitor the three key indicators within the adoption scorecard:

Average time taken for a child entering care to moving in with their adoptive family.

Average time to match children with a family after the courts have agreed a placement order.

Children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (%).

1.2 Overall there is a small drop in performance in the first two targets, which was expected. This is due to some management and staffing changes in the Adoption Service. Also set out are the measures being put in place to improve performance in 2013.

The number of children waiting less than 21 months from entering the care system and being placed with their adoptive family has improved.

2. Contextual information

2.1. This is the second Adoption Scorecard published.

3. Performance

3.1. The three scorecard targets are as follows:-

3.1.1 Average time taken for a child entering care to moving in with their adoptive family.

The current statutory threshold is for this to happen within 14 months – the *Action Plan for Adoption* set an initial performance threshold of 21 months or 639 days, which will be lowered to 14 months within four years. Hampshire's score in November 2012 is 540 days which is not improved on the previous score but still within the current threshold.

Measures to improve performance:-

- Early identification of children likely to need adoption via the new Permanency Planning Policy and process.
- Limiting the Public Law Outline (PLO) process to six months (unless not in the child's interests) and front loading as much assessment work as possible during this time.
- Discussions are underway with His Honour Judge Levey to develop a framework for meeting the 26 weeks for care proceedings and how this can be met on a Hampshire-wide basis.
- Adoption staff will be invited to Legal Strategy Meetings from the start – to be part of planning and early identification for adoption.
- Early Identification of the need for sibling together or apart assessments and contact assessments.
- Developing/adapting data collection systems to identify 'drift' and to take and record actions.

3.1.2 Average time to match children with a family after the courts have agreed a placement order.

The *Action Plan for Adoption* said that the initial performance threshold would be seven months or 213 days, lowering to four months within four years. Hampshire's score in November 2012 is 163 days which means the threshold is met.

Measures to improve performance:-

- Early pre-matching system for child to identify potential adopters in time for the Placement Order being made.
- Permission from court to advertise harder to place children in advance of the conclusion of care proceedings.
- Family Finding process has been developed for individual harder to place children with complex needs.
- Marketing for specific children.

- Re-structuring the Integrated Assessment Team to create two separate teams, one focussing on assessing adopters and the other on assessing foster carers.
- Increasing the target for the recruitment of adopters from 50 – 65 each year to ensure more adopters are available.
- Increase the number of direct/concurrent placements of babies.
- Using fostering for adoption pragmatically where this is in the child's best interests.
- Preparation for the new two stage recruitment process for adopters including re focussing the preparation training – to have more adopters available and able to take more complex children.
- Increase the number of profile events and look to develop Activity Days to promote more adopter led matching.

3.1.3 Children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (%)

This is the proportion of children in each local authority waiting less than 21 months to be placed with their adoptive family. Hampshire's score in November 2012 is 60% which is improved from 58% in the previous scorecard (the higher the percentage the more children wait less than 21 months).

Measures to improve performance:-

- Early identification and Permanency Planning for children.
- Adoption Teams are invited to Legal Strategy Meetings from the start – to look at adoption.
- New developing systems to identify 'drift' and to take action
- Same as No. 1 above.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the performance indicated by the Adoption scorecard and acknowledge the measures to improve this performance in order to meet the national thresholds set by the Department for Education.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Increased access to Adoptive for Children in the Care system

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. More children in stable families may in time reduce crime

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? : No impact

b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? : No impact

4.