

Report of the Executive Director Core Services to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 26th April 2022

One Adoption South Yorkshire (OASY) - Cover Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the regional adoption agency, One Adoption South Yorkshire (OASY), since its 'go live' date in January 2021.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2015, the government set out their plans to regionalise adoption and move towards setting up regional adoption agencies (RAA), citing that system of adoption was highly fragmented which was leading to inefficiencies, high costs and delays for children.
- 2.2 Regional adoption agencies are being set up across England, and the expectation is that large regional organisations will be able to pool together resources and share best practice.
- 2.3 One Adoption South Yorkshire (OASY) was launched in January 2021 as South Yorkshire's regional adoption agency, following on from successful launches of both One Adoption West Yorkshire and One Adoption North and Humber.
- 2.4 OASY brought together the adoption services from Barnsley, Sheffield and Rotherham councils and Doncaster Children's Trust. The service is responsible for recruiting and assessing new adopters, finding families for children with a plan for adoption across the South Yorkshire region and providing ongoing support for adoptive families.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 The attached report (Item 5b) provides an update on the work of OASY since the launch last year including the organisational structure; financial arrangements; performance data for 2021/22 (up to January 2022); and future plans and challenges for the coming year.
- 3.2 Item 5c (attached) is the agency's strategic plan to cover the years 2021-24 which outlines what they plan to do in the form of six priorities, how they plan to achieve those priorities, and what the outcome will be.

4.0 Invited Witnesses

- 4.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the OSC:
- Mel John-Ross, Executive Director-Children's Services, BMBC
 - Sophie Wales, Service Director Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, Children's Services BMBC
 - Claire Brodie, Interim Head of Service Children in Care, Children's Services, BMBC

- Sharon Wood, Service Manager Provider Services, Children's Services, BMBC and Service Manager, OneAdoptionSouthYorkshire
- Michael Richardson, Adoption Team Manager, Barnsley Team, OneAdoptionSouthYorkshire
- Stephanie Evans, Head of Service, OneAdoptionSouthYorkshire
- Cllr Trevor Cave, Cabinet Spokesperson Children's Services, BMBC

5.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

5.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What achievements are you most proud of in the setting up of the new Regional Adoption Agency and how do they benefit adopters and adoptees?
- How has the DFE's Adoption Strategy 2021 impacted upon the work of OASY?
- What impact has the creation of OASY had on adoption timescales in Barnsley compared to performance prior to January 2021?
- How does performance compare to other regional adoption agencies?
- How effective are the re-configured Adoption Panels? How do you know?
- Is there equity amongst the partnership?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure that data is robust and how do you investigate areas of poor performance?
- What are the barriers to improving matching and adoption timescales and how can these be overcome? Do you explore alternative placement types as well as traditional placements?
- What are your plans to make One Adoption South Yorkshire more accessible to potential adopters?
- What steps are you taking to recruit a more diverse range of adopters and what benefits will this bring?
- Do you have the resources to provide the level of post adoption support that you aspire to?
- How is the voice of the child and adopters being used to develop services and what are they telling you?
- What steps are taken to prevent placement breakdown and how prevalent is this in Barnsley?
- How will you ensure a consistent approach to post adoption support across the region and when do you expect this to be in place?
- What post adoption support do you provide to adoptees as well as adopters?

- What support is currently in place for birth parents? Going forward, what would you like support for birth parents to look like?
- How does the agency work with Virtual Schools?
- What can members do to support the work of OASY?

6.0 Background Papers and Links

Item 5b (attached) One Adoption South Yorkshire Report

Item 5c (attached) One Adoption South Yorkshire Strategic Plan 2021-24

Department For Education: Regionalising Adoption June 2015
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/437128/Regionalising_adoption.pdf

Department for Education: Adoption Strategy July 2021
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006232/Adoption_strategy_.pdf

One Adoption South Yorkshire
<https://www.oneadoption.co.uk/about-us/south-yorkshire>

One Adoption South Yorkshire Statement of Purpose 2021-22
<https://www.oneadoption.co.uk/sites/default/files/202202/OASY%20statement%20of%20purpose.pdf>

7.0 Glossary

DfE Department for Education
 OASY One Adoption South Yorkshire
 OSC Overview & Scrutiny Committee

8.0 Officer Contact

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 12 April 2022