

**Report for:**  
**ACTION/INFORMATION**

**Item Number:**

12

<b>Contains Confidential or Exempt Information</b>	<b>YES/NO</b> <b>YES (Part)</b> No
<b>Title</b>	Adoption Figures Briefing
<b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>	Judith Finlay, Director, Children and Families Services
<b>Author(s)</b>	Carolyn Fair, Operations Manager, Children's Placements Services
<b>Portfolio(s)</b>	Children and Young People.
<b>For Consideration By</b>	Corporate Parent Committee
<b>Date to be Considered</b>	
<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	
<b>Affected Wards</b>	None
<b>Keywords/Index</b>	

**Purpose of Report:**

This report serves to brief the committee on the interim Adoption figures for 2013 -2014.

**1. Recommendations**

Members are invited to note this report and identify any additional information they would like to receive.

**2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered**

This report updates members on the Ealing's adoption and permanence figures for 2013/2014

### **3. Key Implications**

Ealing's Adoption service is responsible for ensuring that children whose permanence plan is adoption are matched with adopters who best meet the needs of those children. The team is also responsible for the assessment of prospective adopters and on-going support to those adopters post placement. The child's social worker will present a care plan for adoption to the agency decision maker who will then make a decision regarding the permanence plan for a child. Once agreement is given to a plan of adoption, the adoption team, in partnership with the child's social worker will begin the process of active family finding. When suitable adopters are found, this match is presented to the Adoption and Permanence panel for a recommendation. The panel also makes recommendations regarding the approval of prospective adopters. A child can only be placed with their prospective adopters once the courts have made that child subject to a Placement Order, an order that allows the local authority to place the child for adoption. Once a child is placed with their prospective adopters, the adopters are able to make an application to the courts to adopt the child – although adopters can make the application as soon as the child is placed, the courts will not hear it for at least 10 weeks. It is the government's expectation that adoptive placements are identified for children within 6 months of the date that the agency decision maker agrees that child's plan of adoption.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2013, it was also be the government's expectation that adopters are approved at panel as adopters within 6 months of the date of their application to become adopters. Ealing has implemented the new two stage assessment process.

As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Ealing had 391 looked after children.

#### **Current position 2013 – 2014**

##### **Adopters**

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, Ealing Adoption Panel has approved 36 couples as adopters. Of those 36 approvals, 2 were for inter country adoption. 2 families were approved within 0-3 months of application, 14 were approved within 3-6 months of their application and 17 were approved within 6 – 12 months of their application.

There are currently 19 domestic adoption assessments underway. 7 of these are in Stage One and 8 are in Stage 2. There are 4 fast track adoption assessments underway.

There are 17 approved adopters awaiting placements, of which 2 are being considered for Ealing children and 6 are linked to children from other authorities. 8 adoptive families are therefore still awaiting a placement and are NOT currently linked to any children. One of these families was approved for a specific child who was returned to his birth mother.

## **Children**

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, 25 adoption orders have been granted.

- Of these 25, 11 children were placed within 12 months of the agreement to their plan of adoption.
- There were 3 sibling groups of two.
- There were 13 boys and 12 girls.
- The eldest was aged 5 years, and the youngest was aged 15 months at the point of the adoption order.
- 2 children were transracially placed.
- 8 children were from an ethnic minority background.
- 17 children were adopted by Ealing adopters
- 8 children were adopted by external adopters

There are currently 14 children in their adoptive placements. Of these ;

- 4 are aged 6 years,
- The youngest is aged 9 months
- There are 3 sibling groups of 2.
- There are 7 boys and 7 girls.
- 9 children were placed within 12 months of the agreement to their plan of adoption.
- 5 children are placed with Ealing approved adopters
- 9 children are placed with externally approved adopters

There are 17 children with placement orders awaiting adoption placements, or with adoption plans, or on referral for active family finding. Of these 17 children;

- There are 3 sibling groups of 2.
- There is 1 sibling group of 3.
- 3 are already matched or in the process of being matched to adopters, or due to be placed with kinship carers.
- 3 are linked to couples.
- Active family finding continues for 9 children. We are awaiting Placement Orders for 2 children and the plan for adoption is to be rescinded for one sibling group of three children.
- The eldest child is aged 7 years.
- The youngest child is 9 months old.

## **Special Guardianship Orders**

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, 37 Special Guardianship Orders have been granted.

## **Ealing's Performance**

Ealing performs well in the area of adoption, although needs to continue to strive to ensure that timescales are met, both for approving adopters and placing children with adopters within 6 months.

Our current numbers are high, with regards to the number of adopters being approved, and the number of children being adopted.

In 2012/13, Ealing approved 13 adopters. As of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, Ealing had approved 36 adopters between the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

In 2012/2013, 10 adoption orders were granted. As of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, there had been 25 adoption orders granted.

Ealing made it's first concurrent (foster to adopt) placement in 2013/2014, and are working with the CORAM Concurrent project to place children with prospective adopters at entry into the care system. Concurrent placements ensure that the child is placed with carers who have dual approval as both foster carers and adopters. The child will either be rehabilitated back to the birth family through the court process or be adopted by the carers, therefore ensure minimal number of placements for the child. Ealing have also made 5 referrals to IAMS, Social Impact Bond that is committed to placing those children who are considered hard to place.. Additionally, Ealing are using Profiling Events to family find for children which has proved very successful, and took part in a London wide adoption activity day in October 2013 and a further one in May 2014.

In addition, Ealing have signed up to Adoption Link, an online family finding service currently used by 794 prospective adopters, and 435 social workers, from 163 different local authorities and voluntary agencies across the country. The service allows adopters to take the lead in searching for matches and is proving successful in achieving matches for children.

Ealing has also been invited to take part in the pilot of the new National Adoption Register. The pilot begins in September 2014.

## **4. Financial**

### **a) Financial impact on the budget (mandatory)**

No financial implications.

## **5. Legal**

S 23 (1) Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to maintain a 'looked after' child in other respects as well as providing accommodation that meets all their needs.

## **6. Value For Money**

Financial aspects are monitored within existing budgets and existing value for money assessments and reviews.

## **7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal**

None

## **8. Risk Management**

None

## **9. Community Safety**

None

## **10. Links to the 5 Priorities for the Borough**

The work of the Children's Placements Service links to the Corporate Strategy. Targets to improve the number of adopters and improve the speed of placing children in permanent homes are set within the wider objective of creating a great place for every child and young person to grow up.

## **11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion**

Equality Impact is consistently reviewed and evaluated in terms of service delivery.

## **12. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:**

To be determined

## **13. Property and Assets**

No property implications

## **14. Any other implications:**

To be determined

## **15. Consultation**

N/A

## **16. Timetable for Implementation**

## **17. Appendices**

## **18. Background Information**

**Consultation (Mandatory)**

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
<b>Internal</b>				
Judith Finlay	Director			
				e.g. 5. Legal
				e.g. 4. Financial
<b>External</b>				

**Report History**

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>
For information	No
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries: Carolyn Fair, Operations Manager Childrens Placements, x8815
	First and surname, job title