

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on Wednesday 14 September 2022.

PRESENT:	Councillors C Hobson (Chair), B Cooper, D Davison (Vice-Chair), A Hellaoui, Z Uddin and D Coupe
PRESENT BY INVITATION:	Councillor Dodds
ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:	E Craigie (gazette)
OFFICERS:	V Banks, S Blood, R Brown, S Butcher, Davies, T Dunn, R Farnham, R Hamer, Jefferson, P Jemson, Peacock and G Nicholson
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:	Councillors T Higgins, M Saunders, J Walker, T Parkinson, P Rudd, D fenny and Dudding

22/10 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and a round of introductions took place.

Members observed one minute's silence as a mark of respect following the recent death of Queen Elizabeth II.

22/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by Councillors Higgins, Saunders and J Walker.

22/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

22/13 MINUTES- CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD- 27 JULY 2022

The minutes from the Corporate Parenting Board held on 27 July 2022 were submitted and agreed as a true record.

22/14 OFSTED UPDATE

Sue Butcher, Director of Children's Services provided members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update from the Ofsted Monitoring visit held in July 2022.

The monitoring visit was the fifth visit by Ofsted since the full inspection of Children's Services in November/December 2019 which judged the service as inadequate overall. (Report published Jan 2020). Children's services were given two weeks preparation and the visit took place over 2 days on 13/14th July 2022. The monitoring visit was undertaken by two inspectors and reviewed the following:

- The front door service that receives contacts and referrals
- Child protection enquiries,
- Early help assessments
- Step-up and step down to early help

The Director outlined the positives and areas that need focus for each area. However the headline findings were as follows:

Positives

- Front door services have continued to develop and improve overseen by the

Improvement Board

- Robust and comprehensive quality assurance programme ensures leaders have an accurate understanding of practice and its impact on children and families Expansion of the offer of early help support to vulnerable children
- Stronger and wider partnerships in the Multi agency children's hub (MACH)
 - Improving the quality of information,
 - The richness of information-sharing
 - Leading to better informed decision making.

Areas needing focus

- Workforce instability and increased demand in the assessment service have slowed down throughput
- Additional pressure on some social workers' caseloads and quality of practice
- Unfinished assessments and incomplete records have led to delays and risks being fully assessed for some children

The Board were advised that the areas needing focus would become part of the refreshed Children's Services Improvement Plan which was monitored on a six-weekly basis by the Multi-Agency Strategic Improvement Board (MASIB).

The most significant area of concern remained the recruitment and retention of experienced, permanent social workers as this affects all of the area needing focus as set out above. Colleagues from Human Resources are reporting to the next MASIB meeting on the continuing efforts to recruit and retain such staff. Further information on this would be brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

Next steps were as follows:

- Next monitoring visit would take place in November 2022 focusing on Care experienced young people.
- Annual engagement conversation (across children's services) in December 2022.
- Judgement inspection – possible February 2023.
- The Director lastly thanked everyone across the service for their dedication to evident that 'Middlesbrough Children matter'.

Following the presentation, the panel had a conversation regarding social workers and demand on the front door. In May and June they had been significant demand on the service in terms of children's assessments due to social workers leaving the local authority. Whilst this wasn't the case in July 2022, Ofsted were made aware of this flux in demand.

Another Board member also raised concern about potential future challenges that might hit the service as social world changes and the financial pressures. This in turn would create more demand on social workers. Whilst it was difficult to predict the future however, the service would look at current demand and look at future recruitment of social workers to try and mitigate the pressures and also continue to encourage collaborative working. The Department of Education had also provided additional funding to assist with pressure.

AGREED

That the update be noted.

The Head of Looked after Children and Corporate Parenting was in attendance and provided the Board with information relating to the Corporate Parenting Board scorecard.

The Head of Service advised that the scorecard was in place for the Corporate Parenting Board to see how our performance was progressing and have the opportunity to challenge.

Key findings August 2022 were as follows:

CP1: Number of children in Care in Middlesbrough- Trend

- Number of children and young people open to social care, in particular Children looked after shows a fluctuated trend since September 2021.
- Children looked after numbers vastly improved. They dropped down below the 500 mark in January 2022, reaching 535 in August 2022- a 1% decrease prior to last month.
- Children looked after are down 1% in comparison to 12 month prior.

CP2: gap between Middlesbrough and Regional Children in Care (CiC) per 10,000- trend

- The rate of Looked after children per 10,000 shows a fluctuating trend in the last 12 months reaching the lowest rate in January 2022 at 39.91.
- The rate increased in recent months, reaching 53.49 in August 2022- still a 3% decrease in comparison to the previous month.
- Middlesbrough remain above all external benchmarks, and have fallen below our 2020/21 outturn.

CP3: Ration of children entering to leaving care- Trend

- The number of children starting a period of care remaining stable, until recent months when the ratio increased. Scorecard shows that in August 2022, for every 09. Children starting care 1 ceased. The ratio still remains below the 2020/21.

CP4: Average number of weeks children spend in care (Ceasing care in month) –Trend

- The average number of weeks children spend in care has shown a fluctuating trend in the last 12 months. The number of weeks reached in September 2021 at 249.73.
- In August 2022, the average number of weeks fell below the 2021/22 target (132.40) again, reaching 97.90.

CP8: % of permanence arrangements resulting in Special Guardianship order (SGO)- trend

- The % of permanence arrangements resulting in SGO remains above or meets the 2020/21 target, 20%, the last 12 months.
- This shows great improvements across Children's social care, with regard to the reasoning for CLA ceasing.

CP10.1: % of children who ceased to be looked after in the period, who were adopted- Trend

The % of children who ceased to be looked after during the period, who were adopted has remained relatively stable across the last 12 months.

In August 2022 the % reached 10%, a 1% decrease in comparison to last month and a 1% increase in comparison to 12 months prior.

CP9: % of CiC placed with parents on care orders at home- trend

- The number of children in care placed with parents on care orders at home exceeds the 2020/21 target (5%) across all months.
- The % slowly declined, reaching the lowest recorded in February 2022 at 7.20%. Though the % has since increased reaching 9.35% in August 2022.
- There are currently 51 children placed at home with a parent. This has increased from the lowest point in February when there were 41 children recorded as being cared for at home by a parent.
- This has reduced from an overall high of 99 children in September 2020.
- This is an overall reduction of 48.4%

CP13: % of CiC placed in in-house foster placements- 12 month trend

- The % of in-house foster carer placements has remained relatively stable in the last 12 months.
- The % remains below the 21% 2020/21 target in August 2022 reaching 19% - 0.55% in comparison to 12 month prior.

CP14: % of CiC placed with Connected Carers- 12 month trend

- The % of connected carer placements has slightly fluctuated in the last 12 months.

- The % remains below the 2020/21 target of 29% across all months recorded.
 - In August 2022 the % reached 25.80%, -0.26% in comparison to 12 month prior.
- Following the presentation, a board member queried whether the target of 21% for foster careers would increase? In response, the officer advised that the presentation specifically on fostering would provide further clarity of how the service was looking to increase the number of foster placements.

AGREED- That the information be noted.

22/16

FOSTERING QUARTER 1

The Head of Looked after children and Corporate Parenting Board provided the 2022-2023 quarterly report in relation to fostering in Middlesbrough for the period April- June 2022. The Head of service provided a table with key data, including for example, number of initial enquiries, number of fostering families and information on number of children placed within in-house fostering and Independent fostering agencies (IFAs). Key statistics included, were as follows:

Number of enquiries - Quarter 1 (22/23) 63 (28 at Quarter 4 21/22)

Number of initial visits – Quarter 1 (22/23) 5 (14 at Quarter 4 21/22)

Number of children placed in-house fostering- Quarter 1 (22/23) 191 (180 at quarter 4 21/22)
 IFA – Quarter 1 (22/23) 145 (same as quarter 4 21/22)

In terms of what was going well the Board were advised of the following:

- Middlesbrough now have the highest number of children placed with in-house fostering families.
 - March 2019 IFA 154 Inhouse **124 - 44%**
 - March 2020 IFA 160 Inhouse **158 - 50%**
 - March 2021 IFA 163 Inhouse **164 - 50 %**
 - March 2022 IFA 145 Inhouse **180- 55%**
 - June 2022 IFA 145 Inhouse 191 - 57 %**
- There has been an increase in fostering enquiries due to the sustained marketing campaign; to date. Middlesbrough have received 63 enquiries which exceeds our target of 46 by the end of July 2022.
- 88% of Foster Carer reviews were held within timescales
- No connected carers assessments have gone out of the 24 week timescale
- Middlesbrough have timescales and practice guidance on connected assessments making them more robust and child-focused
- Middlesbrough have a stable team and two agency workers have now been recruited into permanent posts.
- The introduction of Birth Child, Therapeutic Parenting Support Groups, and a Men Who Foster Group are underway
- 10 workers within the team are undertaking a 12 month programme of Trauma-Informed Practice training with John Scadden.
- Trauma-Informed supervision sessions with foster carers, Children looked after social workers, and Education and supervising social workers have been introduced to support fragile placements.
- Management oversight and grip continues to increase and is supporting the improvement of practice and compliance across the service.
- The Pilot Constellation for the Mockingbird Project is in place and due to launch in September.

The Head of Service advised that there were concerns regarding the following:

- Connected Carer Referrals have increased by 33% due to influx of children coming into the care of the Local authority, which has increased workload for social worker,

creating pressure on timescales and performance. This has seen a rise in 8 week extensions and tasks not completed in 16 weeks.

- While initial enquiries have increased many enquirers do not progress often choosing to progress with an Independent fostering agency (IFA) due in part to the current financial offer.
- In June a fostering family, long-term matched with 3 Middlesbrough children, transferred to an IFA at a considerable long-term cost to the LA; in addition, another fostering family has registered their intention to transfer to an IFA to improve their financial situation.

In terms of foster carers transferring to IFAs, the Head of Service outlined that at present Middlesbrough pay newly approved carers £0 per week and a banding payment can only be awarded once carers have completed their Training Support and Development Standards, usually at the point of their first review (12 months after approval) IFA's pay a full weekly rate per child from the day of approval recognising the crucial and professional role that carers play in caring for and supporting our children looked after.

The current financial package offered by Middlesbrough cannot compete with that offered by IFA's and is hindering our campaign to recruit and retain our fostering families.

Despite this, it was encouraging to see that there is no shortage of interest in fostering, and Children's services were looking at Middlesbrough's financial offer and a report would be submitted to the Executive for formal approval later in the year.

Finally the Board were advised of the plan to increase foster carers:

- Middlesbrough aim to be able to meet the needs of 70% of our looked-after children through in-house fostering provision by the end of 2024 and need to recruit a substantial number of fostering families to achieve this.
- Middlesbrough aim to review our financial offer to foster carers in order to compete with IFA's and support our campaign to 'keep Middlesbrough children with Middlesbrough Carers'.
- We are seeking support from an agency social worker, to relieve pressure on the team and service. To continue to ensure that children's permanency under connected carers remit remains timely and robust.
- The aim is that with increased and sustained marketing activity throughout 2022 the initial enquires will increase to 200 in 2023 which should result in 20 fostering families being approved in 2023.

Following the presentation, the Chair outlined that if possible all councillors should promote fostering through their local communities and social media platforms. There was concern amongst the Board surrounding the financial offer provided by IFAs, however under the current financial situation, they could see the benefits to foster families, despite adding extra challenges on the local authority. The Director also added that the IFAs do not offer the same level of support to foster carers as the local authority so it was hoped the marketing campaign would help to raise that level of knowledge.

The Director of Children Service's also advised the Board that they had been unsuccessful in recruiting a foster carer to represent the Corporate Parenting Board, however further correspondence would be undertaken with contacts.
AGREED- That the information be noted.

Rob Hamer, Service Manager for Future for Families was in attendance to provide the Board with a project end report.

He advised the Board that The Future for families service was within the strengthening families protecting children programme from September 2022 until August 2022. The service has now come out of the project stage and the partnership with North Yorkshire has ended.

The Manager provided information on the following:

- *Our referrals and support*

Within the 2 year pilot, the Manager advise that they had support over 100 young people. The service begin to with heavy support with outreach but this started to reduce in the summer of 2021 and the resources went to support the complex cases within the residential hub. It is proposed that the edge of care service will restart again in November 2022.

- *Our specialist support*

-

Overall within the Authority there has been a 12.3% reduction in the number of missing episodes.

59% of young people supported by the service, has received some form of specialist service e.g. speech and language

- *OFSTED*

Within the 2 years, the service has been Ofsted inspected 2 times since the service was registered in August 2020. In October 2021, the service was rated good with outstanding leadership and management. In context, the service was rated the highest amongst the programme.

- *Our impact (cost avoidance)*

This tracks the cost of the child up until their 18th birthday. The manager advised that there was an estimated cost avoidance of 56% of forecasted spend.

- *OUR young people*

The manager finally provided some facts in relation to the hub over the last 2 years, including for example:

- Future for families has supported 102 young people
 - 29 young people have accessed the HUB.
- 100% of young people accessing the hub received support from all specialist support.

The Manager also advised after a number of queries, that where possible they try to keep and support young people in Middlesbrough, as long as the support provided fits their need.

There is evidence that inhouse support is better rather than outsourcing, and therefore the fostering offer, social work and residential offer was also discussed, due to the demand for this service and referrals from the MACH.

The manager was thanked for his presentation.

AGREED- That the information be noted.

22/18

NOMINET DIGITAL REACH PROGRAMME

The Chair welcome Ralph Jordinson , Risk and Resilience manager and Louise Jefferson to the meeting to provide an update on Nominet – REACH- Digiwise.

As way of background the manager advised that in March 2021, Middlesbrough Council were successful in a funding application for £36,220 which is to research, consult and produce a policy/practice document for digital safeguarding for Children Looked After and Children Leaving Care.

Funding by Parentzone and Nominet was allocated to 9 interlinked projects under 3 key areas

of which Middlesbrough's sits within Design Challenge 3, that is:

Elevating young peoples' voice to influence the services that impact on their digital safety and opportunity.

Care experienced young people have invaluable insight which is currently under-utilised in relation to digital and online safety policy development.

More specifically the project was to ensure care experienced young people can influence the service policies, process and practice that impact on their digital lives. We need to extend participation; diversify and improve channels of communication and feedback.

This is based on significant risks posed to Children Looked After (CLA) being at risk of online grooming and exploitation, exposure pornography, peer pressure to send youth produced sexual imagery and access to drug sales and other harmful products usually via social media.

Since reporting at the last board meeting, the manager provided information on the progress so far;

- a) Employed and trained a care experienced apprentice training in Impact Measurement and Management.
- b) Steering group formed inclusive of young people representation and developed action plan with progress milestones. Established the project name '**Digiwise**'.
- c) Designing and implementing consultation for young people with care experience.
- d) Hosted a series of consultation workshops, focus groups and events capturing young peoples views.
- e) Consulted with 35 young people within quantitative surveys, 5 young people within qualitative 'deep dive' surveys and multiple others within focus groups and workshops. The target was 100 young people but sadly this wasn't met.
- f) Promoted recognised CPD programme of learning for foster carers, residential workers and social workers.
- g) Promoted the adoption of the UKCIS Digital Passport for children and young people in care.
- h) Developed with young people a smartphone holder for all care experienced young people with QR code for a quick and easy access to resources.

Since the last Corporate Parenting Board in February 2022 the survey has been completed and the key findings of the Digiwise project were as follows:

- Most of our young people are exposed to some form of adversity in online spaces, these issues are far reaching and usually involve social media.
- Young people want data plans and do not want data limited.
- That internet speeds are slow and could be better across all settings.
- There was limited evidence of consistent approaches and overall effectiveness of acceptable use agreements and use of online safety contracts in care homes. This is sometimes that needs to be explored further e.g a digital pledge
- Young people want quick and easy access to reporting and support mechanisms, with tools to enable their fast access when faced with crisis.
- Lack of consistent guidance on appropriate filtering on both foster home broadband, mobile phone providers and settings on applications with the concept of "safety gates" being employed.
- Educating young people through workforce development programme such as the 'Fostering Digital Skills' programme.
- That Middlesbrough need to educate young people on the risks of being online along with practical tips on how to keep social media counts safe including how to block, report and delete.

The Manager outlined that the final report will be ready in November 2022, with the Digiwise draft policy in January 2023 and completion was still on target for March 2023.

From the findings of the survey, a number of recommendations have been put forward:

- Take all necessary steps to ensure harmful content such as violent, graphic, sexual, hateful and extremist content is minimised and filtered at source within all settings, through the use of various “safety gates” on networks and devices.
- To ensure that our workforce and professionals, carers and residential staff have the skills, knowledge and skills to support young people to gain all of the benefits to being online, whilst still managing their risk.
- Being able to offer age appropriate, high quality education, interventions and conversation starters when they are needed.
- Offer quick and easy access to resources and support for our children and young people.
- Consideration to the adoption of the governments UKCIS Digital Passport and the role it can play in building collaborative approaches to digital resilience in care between carer and child.
- The existing policy *Short breaks and residential services Wi-Fi & Internet use policy* is in place but will be reviewed in light of this research and national guidance.

The manager finally outlined that online spaces pose risks to young people just as there are risks in physical locations, these recommendations are designed to safeguard young people whilst in online spaces.

Research from Internet Matters UK shows young people who are vulnerable such as children looked after are at greater risk than their non-care experienced peers due to being more frequently withdrawn, anxious and have lower self-esteem.

In the UK, there are over 65,000 children and young people currently living in foster care with 55,000 foster families.

In Middlesbrough in May 2022 there were 618 children and young people currently living in care with 449 living within foster care, 209 of which are aged 11- 18. It was hoped that adopting the recommendations of digiwise would take those steps to further protecting are children and young people when being online.

The Board were pleased that this area was being looked at and would become policy. Clarity was also sought that all foster carers are provided with guidance on how to educate their foster children regarding using online spaces and this was the case, as all foster carers receive a foster carer handbook.

AGREED

- That the information on Digiwise be noted
- That the board fully endorse the recommendations devised for the Digiwise project.

22/19

PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Chair welcome Kathy Peacock, Voice and Influence Manager to the meeting to provide the Board with the standard item regarding the participation of Middlesbrough’s children and young people.

The Manager firstly advised the purpose of the Team, which was to:

facilitate open, safe, and inclusive spaces for care experienced young people/adults to come together.

We provide fun activities for them to tell you what is important to them, so you

can improve the support they and others receive.

The Team support

- Care experienced young people to get involved, have a voice and create events to hear from more young people/adults.
- Young people to share their views with key decision makers and professionals, who will act on what they say and positively change services to meet their needs.

Membership of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) for 10-16 year olds. Meet fortnightly.

- Three young people in the same foster placement
- One young person in foster care
- One young adult in supported housing (Young Leader for the group)
- One young person with SEND in a residential home (he is seen at his home to capture his views)

Membership of the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) for 16 - 25 year olds. This will however be put on pause whilst the weekly pop up cafes take place- see below information)

- One young adult in supported housing (same person who attends the CiCC)
- Care leaver who has a young child

Over the last 6 weeks, the Board were advised of the following activities of the Team:

Activity	Impact
Started delivering our Communication and Language training - Seven professionals attended. Two Social Workers A Personal Advisor Senior Resource Worker Deputy Manager Head of Resources ISSS Care Manager	One of the keys things the young people did was reading out statements telling Professionals what looked after young people and care leavers want (outlined within the agenda pack)
Met with Ralph Jordinson from Digiwise (Middlesbrough Council).	He listened to the young peoples' views and these will influence next steps.
Collaborated with Pathways and Middlesbrough Football Foundation and held our 'Stepping up Together' Football event on the 4th August.	31 young people joined in (including from Redcar and Cleveland). All the young people had a great time, met people and had burgers/bacon sandwich for lunch. 26 staff supported the event including Pathways, Middlesbrough Foundation, Digiwise team, Paula Jemson, Rob Brown and Carlos Dos Santos.
Three members of the CiCC and a member of the Middlesbrough Youth Council	Young people heard about how long things take to degrade and what things we can do to save

<p>went to the Climate Change Conference at Redcar and Cleveland College</p>	<p>energy and save the planet.</p>
<p>Held a Picnic in Stewart's Park for care experienced young people. Nine young people came along. We were visited by Cllrs Barrie Cooper, Cllr Alma Hellaoui, Paula Jemson and Rachel Farnam. Two foster carers, a social worker and her dog, one support staff from Holly Lodge, a resource and two staff members from strategic services . We played games, got to know each other and chatted about being part of the CiCC. The new young people were interested in joining.</p>	<p>A fantastic day out.</p>

Adam Hart, Member of the CiCC and also apprentice for the Council provided the Board with the plan for the next few months:

Activity	Impact
<p>Increase membership of the groups and hold more events –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip to Jump 360 is booked for 5 October 2022. • Celebration event/party for care leavers to take place during Care Leavers Week 24-28th October. • Christmas party for looked after young people 	<p>So we have more young people plan engagement events.</p> <p>As well as having fun, ask young people what is going well for them and what they would like to change</p>
<p>Invite other senior decision makers and Corporate Members to our groups. Look at having specialised BBOTS sessions for care experienced young people</p>	<p>Ensure we are being heard by decision makers and they are changing the support</p>
<p>Going to work on the Participation structure (adapting the idea from the Mayor) and how we have our voice heard along with other young people.</p>	<p>Co Produce the Participation strategy and identify what we want as care experienced young people.</p>
<p>Work with Pathways to deliver sessions with Care leavers to look at the Local Offer. Pop up café will be held weekly and have themed engagement activities looking at:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Care Leavers • Positive Relationships - Family, friends 	<p>Make sure what is offered meets care leavers needs.</p> <p>An ASK During the meeting, Adam invited Corporate Parents to act as a Champion for each theme and come to the pop up café and help the care</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, Training and Employment • Health and Emotional Wellbeing • Somewhere to call home • Finances • Having and Voice and Being Heard • Our Rights and Responsibilities <p>For those who cannot attend the café, they will be given postcards to fill in that cover all the themes. We will be offering all care leavers an incentive if they complete all the themes.</p>	<p>leavers make changes?</p> <p>Members of the Board were keen and volunteers were asked to contact Kathy directly.</p>
<p>Continue to deliver the Communication and Language training</p>	<p>Ensure as many Professionals as possible hear what we want.</p>
<p>Design logo's for the groups and get hoodies for them to form their group identity</p>	<p>Create an identity for our groups</p>

Following the presentation, a board member queried what support was in place for care leavers into adulthood, to which Paula Jemson, Head of looked after children and corporate parenting provided information on the transition, including where support would be provided from the Pathways Team including support for education/ health / mental health.

In terms of future engagement with care experienced young people, the Head of Assess to Education added that Secondary school Heads are fully on board so this may be a future avenue.

The officers were thanked for their presentation.

Agreed: That the information be noted.

22/20

ADOPTION TEES VALLEY- ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair welcome Vicky Davison – Boyd Service Manager for Adoption Tees valley (ATV) to provide an overview of the key findings and information from the annual report.

The annual report covered the period 1.4.2021- 31.3.2022.

Overall ATV has continued with slightly lower levels of adoption activity overall within this year, with numbers of children being placed with adoptive parents.

Within the Tees valley and Middlesbrough:

- Slight reduction in children referred overall
Middlesbrough has had an increase with 61 referrals, 58 previous year
- Fewer children with an adoption plan (ADM)
Middlesbrough has remained the same- 33 ADM each year

- Marginal reduction in Placement Orders (POs)
Middlesbrough has had a marginal reduction 28 PO's, 30 previous year
- Fewer children placed
Middlesbrough has increased placements with 26 placements, 24 previous year
- Fewer adoption orders granted
Middlesbrough has had a slight decrease – 24 AO's, 25 previous year
- 1 disruption in this year- finding the right family for the child.
- 4 of the 13 children placed for adoption have been from ethnic minority background.

The Manager provided some statistics for the Tees Valley in respect to placements and placement orders as well as early permanence. The board were advised that it is a fully system change and takes a great deal of consideration before placing a child on their journey to adoption. There has been a great deal of training undertaken with local authorities and sharing good practice.

The Child's adoption journey was also shared with the Board.

In terms of timescales, there has been a real improvement and there has been a lot of work undertaken into early permanence and early family finding and supporting children in finding placements close to their home.

There has been a significant improvement in the time between starting care and moving in with adoptive parents;

- Middlesbrough 301 days , 385 previous year (target is 426 days)
- Overall ATV – 383 days, compared to 445 England average
- Significant improvement in time from Placement order to match
Middlesbrough 189 days, 301 days previous year (target is 121 days)
- Overall ATV – 174 c/w 198 days England Average
- On 31.3 22 only 1 child with a Placement order was not linked

In terms of National and regional trends:

- slight increase in adoption orders nationally , decrease regionally in 2021-22, c/w previous year
- Fewer placements nationally and regionally c/w 2020-21
- Fewer ADM's and PO's than previous year

The manager also referred to the somerset ruling, which had previously been discussed with the Board. The Somerset ruling was a legal case around requirements of the medical advisor in relation to ADM. It was impacted on adoption activity and ATV know that 14 children were delayed in being matched and placed due to the ruling.

In terms of adopter approvals, there have been fewer adopters approved than previous years, 46 compared to 64 previous year. Fewer people have enquired, however ATV are now seeing the longer term impact of the pandemic and there are significant delays with adopter medicals.

The Manager finally spoke around other elements of adoption work and within the annual report:

- ATV were awarded the Early Permanence Quality Mark (Coram BAAF) – one of 2 Regional adoption agencies to achieve this last year
- Secured funding for regional Early permanence Sufficiency Project
- Brought young people together to make a film around their experiences of education
- Collaborative work with the Virtual Schools- funding an Education Support worker,

14 September 2022

and delivering education support - helping 90 children. This post has now been made permanent.

- Independent Adoption Support Audit – positive findings- more strategic work with health required.
- Under 11s group and Teenage adoption group would also be regrouping over the next few weeks.

Following the presentation, the support in place for adopted children in schools was discussed and offering advice to schools in supporting adoptive children and their families e.g. premium plus is available for adoptive children and supporting children with an ECHP. It was evident as well that not all children who are adopted are known to teachers and this should be the case.

AGREED- that the annual report be noted.

22/21

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.