

**FAMILY ADOPTION LINKS - REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY**

**COMMENTS FROM THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

At a virtual meeting on 4 September 2020, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the report and unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions, when the following points were confirmed:

- It was encouraging to hear that the Council was learning from other organisations about where they had problems and where it had gone wrong, so that the same mistakes were not repeated, as this would affect vulnerable children and could lead to financial repercussions if there was an increased reliance on external placements.
- The performance of the Regional Adoption Agency would be measured by a number of agreed performance measures including the length of time taken from permission to place to the placement happening; whether the Council had been able to place more complex children as a result of being in this arrangement; aligning the timescales to see if they could be improved; an increase in adopter recruitment; and an increase in matches. A key objective to achieve, moving forward, would be a wider matching pool from the adopters coming through to take more sibling groups, older children and children with more complex needs.
- There would be no restrictions in placing children outside of the partner agencies involved in the Regional Adoption Agency. Neighbouring regional adoption agencies were being engaged with and there were already relationships in place with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Ideally children would be placed within Lincolnshire or with partners in the Regional Adoption Agency but sometimes placement in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire would be closer and a better match, and there were mechanisms in place to enable that through a broader Midlands partnership.
- The direct impact of Covid-19 on the project itself had been minimal as the focus was now leading up to the launch and the majority of the work had been completed within the partner authorities. However, Covid-19 had resulted in adoption panel meetings, preparation groups, and information evenings being held virtually. Feedback had been positive, particularly in relation to the virtual adoption panels, where adopters had highlighted that the virtual meetings had been less daunting to attend. Consideration would now be given to what could be done differently in future post Covid-19.