

**Select Committee on Children's Services – 17 June 2010**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Annual Report of the Dudley Local Authority Adoption Service**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To present to Select Committee on Children's Services the annual report of Dudley Local Authority Adoption Service for 2009/10.

**Background**

2. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities to maintain an adoption service including arrangements for the provision of adoption support services and an inter-country adoption service.
3. Dudley's adoption service arranges for the adoption of children and in doing so provides recruitment, assessment training and support services to prospective and approves adopters. Service offers advice to childcare social workers in matters pertaining to adoption and works in partnership with social workers to identify a suitable placement for children looked after by Dudley Council for whom adoption is considered to be in the best interest of those individual children. The adoption support service assess and provides tailor made support to all those effected by adoption and the service facilitates contact and information exchange between birth families, adoptive parents and their children.
4. The adoption service also commissions support services to represent and support birth parents where adoption is proposed or has taken place and counselling for individuals who have been adopted.
5. Local Authority adoption services are subject to inspection by Ofsted to ensure that the services meeting the national minimum stated for Local Authority adoption services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Children's Act 2002 and the Adoption Service Regulations 2005. The service was last inspected in June 2007. The overall Judgement for the service was good.

6. Adoption services in Dudley are provided by a dedicated team of adoption social workers, adoption support workers, and a marketing officer which is shared with the other three Black Country Borough plus administrative staff. The team is managed by a service manager and assistant team manager. In addition the service benefits from the support of a clinical psychologist which is funded from the Children and Adolescence Mental Health Grant.
7. Attached at Appendix one is the annual report of the Dudley Adoption Service which outlines all of the services which are provided by the team together with performance and activity levels plus service development for the year 2009/10.

### **Finance**

8. The Local Authority Adoption Service budget for 2010/11 is £1,056,400; this is inclusive of staffing costs.

### **Law**

9. The Adoption Children Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities to maintain an adoption service including arrangements for the provision of adoption support services and an inter-country adoption service.

### **Equality Impact**

10. The maintenance and development of a comprehensive adoption service contributes to improving outcomes for looked after children by providing stable, secure and safe care. It assists the Council in discharging its Corporate Parenting responsibilities to ensure that looked after children are disadvantaged by being in care and that they achieve secure attachments and have experience of family life where they are unable to live with their birth families.

### **Recommendations**

11. Select Committee receive and note the contents of the annual report of Dudley's adoption service report for 2009/10.



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**Mark Wyatt**  
**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: Pauline Sharratt  
(Assistant Director, Children and Families)  
Telephone: 01384 815803  
Email: [pauline.sharratt@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.sharratt@dudley.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Jane Porter  
(Assistant Director, Transforming Futures, Strategic Planning)  
Telephone: 01384 814395  
Email: [Jane.porter@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.porter@dudley.gov.uk)