

# Report



meeting SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE

date 28<sup>th</sup> September 2004 agenda item number 6

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW ON ADOPTION – PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- (a) provide members with information on the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan relating to the Adoption Services
- (b) allow members to comment on the issues raised.

#### **2. Information and Advice**

- 2.1 The Best Value Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix 1 and the progress on each action is indicated.
- 2.2 As can be seen, virtually all actions have been progressed and completed. This report highlights and develops some of these areas.
- 2.3 The percentage of children looked after children who are adopted continues to be high (national performance indicator) at 18% for the year 2003/04 (74 adoptions in all).
- 2.4 There is now a policy and procedure in place for a permanent foster care scheme. It is likely that some of these permanent foster carers will become special guardians (new provision of Adoption and Children Act) once this part of the Adoption and Children Act is implemented in 2005.
- 2.5 As anticipated in the previous report to the Standing Select Committee, measures to reduce the timescales to adoption (see key improvement activities 2.1-2.14) have begun to have an impact on reducing delays. In the year April 2003/04, the average length of time that it had taken to

achieve adoption was 38 months. The average length of time to achieve adoptions in the first 4 months of this year (1st April 2004 – 31st July 2004) has fallen to 32 months which is clearly a considerable reduction. It is anticipated that this reduction will not only be sustained, but that further necessary reductions will be achieved over the next 12 months.

- 2.6 The County Adoption Team continues their success in recruiting adopters for Nottinghamshire's children within timescales of 8 months. A recent postal survey of all adopters approved by Nottinghamshire in the last two years revealed a very high level of satisfaction with their experiences of recruitment, assessment, approval, matching and support.
- 2.7 The increase of foster carers who adopt their foster children which was noted in the last progress report has continued – the percentage for 2003/04 was 16%, slightly up on the previous year and more than double that of 2001/02.
- 2.8 Post adoption support services are developing at a great rate. New provisions in the Adoption and Children Act 2002 have enormous implications for this part of the Adoption Service. The Departmental Adoption Strategy Group is taking a lead in consulting on the new provisions of the Act and feeding these views back to the Department for Education and Skills.

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 All items identified for improvement on the Adoption Best Value Improvement Plan have been either implemented or progressed.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Select Committee note the progression made on the Adoption Best Value Improvement Plan and achieving the recommendations of BVSR. No further work will involve the Select Committee at this stage and it is proposed the BVSR on Adoption be deleted from the Select Committee's Programme of Work.

**STUART BROOK**  
**Director of Social Services**