Bi Annual Report

1st April 2019 - 30th September 2019

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Executive Summary

Adoption Tees Valley began operating as a Regional Adoption Agency, as defined in the Education and Adoption Act (2016) on the 01.05.2018.

It brings together the former Local Authority adoption services of Darlington; Hartlepool; Middlesbrough; Redcar and Cleveland; and Stockton.

This report is a review of adoption activity for the period of 1.4.19 - 30. 9.19.

The report provides a half year review of adoption activity in the Tees Valley region. It is provided to the 5 Councils; staff; democratically elected members; and wider users and stakeholders of the RAA on how adoption is being progressed, managed and developed in Teesside, in line with the national programme of modernisation of adoption through regionalisation.

This report will show strength in recruitment of adopters which is now progressing and improving following a period of lower activity prior to the implementation of Adoption Tees Valley, and during the early months of the RAA as new systems and processes were agreed and bedded in.

The numbers of children being referred and presented with a care plan of adoption has been rising and has increased significantly over the last 12 months. Due to this increase in demand for adoptive families, while recruitment has improved greatly, it is still not meeting sufficiency needs, because of the numbers of children coming through. The RAA has been reliant on external adoption agencies for placements, to meet the "demand" which is a current local and national challenge.

Another area of success and development is in adoption support: the service has established a clear "support offer" to adoptive parents, and there is significant increase in the access to the national Adoption Support Fund, enabling adopted children and their families to benefit from therapeutic support in many more cases.

The service is seeking to work strategically in line with national development work in relation to adoption support, and outcomes for children placed. A key regional imperative is to embed adoption, and the needs and services to adopted children and their families within the wider corporate parenting structures locally. ATV and the Virtual Schools within this region have worked closely together and through this successful partnership have brought a new post to ATV of an Education Support Worker, working as part of the ATV Adoption Support Team, to help children within the education setting get what they need.

The national development towards Early Permanence (EP) has been a focus for development in Tees Valley, and plans are underway to work strategically, across ATV; the 5 LA care planning teams, and wider stakeholders, to

promote early permanence, more timely placement of children with their permanent families, and to reduce moves for children prior to placement for adoption.

Timescales for children waiting have shown a dip in this period. Deeper analysis is offered within this report, highlighting that a small number of children have waited a significant period of time to be adopted, but are now adopted, and have achieved the security they need within loving permanent families. Their "waiting day counts" now are part of the RAA timescale figures, thus showing a dip in timeliness.

ATV have started to collate timeliness figures for children who are placed within the quarter, (not yet adopted) and the cautious indications for the cohort who are placed, not yet adopted, are of reducing waiting times for children.

1. Introduction

Regionalising Adoption in Tees Valley

ATV is the local government regional adoption service for the whole of the Tees Valley.

As the service has entered its second year of operation, policy and practice is becoming embedded, and there are continued efforts to ensure that the adoption service is well integrated into the Children's Services Departments of the 5 Local Authorities.

The first year of operation was one of establishing new ways of working, managing a very significant change process across the region. The numbers of children placed in the first year dipped, (reported within the Annual Report of 2018-19). This trend has been seen in many regions across the UK where new Regional Adoption Agencies have gone live.

This Bi Annual Report for the adoption service for the periods Q1 and Q2 (1.4.19-30.9.19) will report on performance of the RAA in relation to key aims of:

- reducing timescales for children waiting for adoption;
- reducing waiting times for adopters who have been approved;
- Improving the support being provided to adopted children and their families within the regional footprint.

Strategic Development

During this period, the service has undergone more strategic developments, to plan towards achieving the objectives now and in the future.

A focus for development is Early Permanence, by which we mean finding permanent adoptive families for children more quickly, and placing them more quickly with those families. Early permanence sounds like a simple goal to achieve, but in practice requires a "whole system" approach to ensuring planning for children is timely, and that early family finding work is undertaken as quickly as possible for children, while care proceedings are underway. This doesn't mean that either ATV, or the Local Authority Children's services teams are acting without authorisation of the court, but rather that where it is appropriate to consider this, prospective adopters are fully prepared to consider that plans may not be fully developed at the time of placement, and they may change.

Several managers and senior practitioners attended a one day conference in Gateshead, where the Northern Local Authorities have been working alongside regional Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA's) to develop early permanence in practice, supported by PIF funding from the DFE. This

conference stimulated further work within ATV, and cross regional work, reported to the Regional Adoption Leadership Board.

Adoption Tees Valley has developed an Early Permanence Strategy, and is currently rolling out a training and communications plan, across Tees Valley, with key stakeholders.

One Adoption West Yorkshire have been a leading RAA in practice on EP and ATV have now undertaken training delivered by them, to help develop practice in this region.

Legal advice has been sought, through Cygnet Law, who offer advice to Adoption Tees Valley, in addition to 3 of the Local Authorities within the Tees Valley region.

Performance

The first half of 2019-20 has seen a steady increase of children being placed across Tees Valley, with previous placement performance being resumed, and more children coming forward and being placed.

Timeliness of children's plans is measured through 2 key indicators- the "A1" indicator, which is number of days between a child entering care, and moving in with their adoptive family.

The second key indicator is "A2" which is the number of days between the court giving authority to place a child for adoption (Placement Order) and the date that the match with a family was presented to Panel.

Adoption Tees Valley is measured on these performance indicators, and each Local Authority monitors performance. There are performance meetings held with each LA individually to consider the overall timeliness of finding families for children within each individual LA, and also to discuss reasons where delay has taken place.

While ATV are being very successful in finding families for children, it remains the case that there are children, now adopted who have had lengthy delay, and who are now represented in current statistics. This has meant that overall average timescales are showing increase, however, reflecting a positive picture that children who have waited a long time are now adopted.

Also, there are some children who are harder to place, typically falling into cohorts which are regionally and nationally harder to find families for. In this region, these children are typically siblings; or children over the age of 4; or children with minority ethnic heritage; or children with additional health or developmental needs.

Where children have more than one of these factors, they are found to wait even longer, sadly a picture that is evident across the UK as a whole.

In this period, published national data showed that 40% of children nationally wait upwards of 18 months from entering care to moving in with their adoptive family.

Also, that the numbers of children waiting for adoption exceeds the numbers of approved adopters, by a ratio of 3:1.

This means that there are challenges in finding families for children, in a timely way, as "competition" for approved families is high.

Sufficiency

The key to reducing waiting times for children is to recruit more families, with the skills and motivation to look after children with needs which reflect the needs of those children waiting.

Adoption Tees Valley has focussed on recruitment of adopters within this second year of operation, and now more adopters are being approved, and matched to children more quickly. This has been a key success of ATV in the first half of the year, and provides the basis for some optimism in achieving reduced waiting time for children in the future.

Additionally, there has been strategic work with the regional Voluntary Adoption Agencies, with the aim of achieving more local and regional placements for children, where ATV does not have suitable or available approved adopters for waiting child/ren.

This Bi Annual report will provide more detail around key performance indicators, associated with timeliness of finding families for children, and recruiting sufficient adopters with which to place children.

Adoption Support

ATV is working with an increasing number of families who are accessing the developing and defined support offers at Tiers 1,2, and 3.

Some significant successes and positive developments include:

- Implementation of regular therapeutic parenting training available to all approved adopters, and provided by a range of specialist providers.
- The creation of, and appointment to a specialist education support worker post, based in ATV, and working with the 5 Virtual schools across Tees Valley.
- Significant increase in adoption support assessments, and access to therapeutic services by adopted children and families in this region. This is all funded by the Adoption Support Fund, which the service is making better use of, to support families. There has been a 150% increase in funds successfully applied for in this period.

2. Benchmarking

Included within this section is information about adoption across the Tees Valley in previous years, and the half year position of ATV against some key performance and Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) scorecard indicators.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Population of children aged 0-17 Tees Valley	144,531	144,996	145,691 (mid 2017)	146,120 (mid 2018)
Looked After Children (end of period) Numbers Tees Valley	1,370	1,585	1872	2029
Adoptions- Tees Valley	65	60	70	83

At 31.03.19 for the full year 2018-19		At 30.09.19 for the half year 2019-20	
Average time in days for child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family during year, Tees Valley **ALB scorecard A1**	446	Average time in days for child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family during year, Tees Valley	517
Average time between Placement Order and a match, across Tees Valley **ALB scorecard A2**	211	Average time between Placement Order and a match, across Tees Valley	288
Number of approved adopter families waiting to be matched **ALB scorecard A11**	7	Number of approved adopter families waiting to be matched	16
Number of adopters approved in year	19	Number of adopters approved year to date	27
Percentage of adopted families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to match **ALB scorecard A12**	75%	Percentage of adopted families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to match	20%
Number of adopters in assessment **ALB scorecard A13**	28	Number of adopters in assessment	31

Number of children looked after with a plan for adoption, not yet placed **ALB scorecard A9**	94	Number of children with a plan for adoption, not yet matched	97
Number of children with a plan for adoption and Placement Order, not yet placed **ALB scorecard A14**	53	Number of children with a plan for adoption and Placement Order, not yet placed	64
Number of children in a Foster For Adoption placement **ALB scorecard A17**	5	Number of children in a Foster For Adoption placement	7
Number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds adopted from care in the year **ALB scorecard A6**	5	Number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds adopted from care year to date	4
Number of children aged 5+ adopted from care in the year **ALB scorecard A7**	12	Number of children aged 5+ adopted from care in the year to date	1
Number of sibling groups waiting to be adopted	32	Number of sibling groups waiting to be adopted	33
Number of children in sibling groups waiting to be adopted, or placed, together	69	Number of children in sibling groups waiting to be adopted, or placed, together	72
New Agency decisions that a child should be adopted within the year **ALB Scorecard A15**	107	New Agency decisions that a child should be adopted within the year to date	44
Number new Placement Order granted within year **ALB scorecard A16**	73	Number new Placement Order granted within year to date	29
Number of children for whom permanence decision has changed away from adoption **ALB scorecard A5**	35	Number of children for whom permanence decision has changed away from adoption year to date	10
Number of adoptions from care in year **ALB scorecard A4**	83	Number of adoptions from care year to date	28

Brief summary and analysis of the benchmarking information:

- Looked after children's numbers are rising across the Tees Valley;
- Timeliness of placing children for adoption has decreased as an average;
- This has been investigated further to analyse the reason. See below.
- Timeliness of achieving a match following court authority to place (PO) has decreased.
- This has been investigated further to analyse the reasons. See below.
- At the outset of ATV, there were 45 adopter families waiting to be matched, and "transferred in" to the new agency. By the end of the first year, there were 7 waiting to be matched, with many of those waiting at the end of 2017/18 having been matched with children and progressing to placement. By the end of Q2 (this reporting period) the number approved and waiting had risen to 16. A number of these were linked to children, but not yet formally matched at the period end.
- ATV has recruited a steadily rising number of adopters, with 31 prospective adopters still in assessment at the end of Q2.
- 27 adopters have been approved in this period.
- Overall, recruitment has improved, and the timeliness of matching adopters with children following their approval has improved, with only 20 % having waited longer than 3 months to be matched, following approval.
- The number of children waiting with an Agency Decision and Placement Order, has increased although a number of those children have been matched, and further children are linked at the time of reporting.
- The number of children for whom Agency Decisions and Placement Orders are being granted reduced in the first half of this year, although these numbers have risen sharply during Q3- not yet formally reported.
- The numbers of children adopted is showing a decreased rate in the year to date, in comparison to the last year, and this is reflective of a dip in placement numbers during 2018-19, during year 1 of the regional adoption agency.
- Foster For Adoption is being more widely used as a means of achieving early permanence for babies and infants. This is in keeping with national strategy, best practice; and the local drive to improve early permanence.
- Across Tees Valley, there continues to be a high need for adopters for siblings, and for adopters for children in the older age range, of five years of age and above. Some children aged five and over also need to be placed alongside their sibling(s).

With average timescales for children being matched and placed having increased during the first half of 2019-20, further understanding is sought to identify the reasons for this.

Timeliness data is generated once children are adopted. Once an adoption order has been granted, the child's A1 and A2 timescales are then added to the figures for the year in which that adoption order was granted. During Q1 and Q2 of 2019-20, there were fewer children adopted, and closer scrutiny of these children has highlighted that a small number have waited a considerable time for the right adoptive family. There are 9 children who have waited a considerable time for an adoptive family, extending back in excess of 18 months. For one child there has been a wait of around 4 years, due to a multiplicity of "hard to place" factors, including ethnicity and needing to be placed alongside a sibling.

The positives are that these children have now been adopted, and have secured a permanent loving family for the future, in which they can grow and thrive. Additionally, there are children in this cohort, now adopted, who have a very quick route to finding an adoptive family, with very short timescales. One child was matched just 39 days after the court granted authority to place for adoption.

National and local challenges, as identified in section (1) above demonstrate how important it is to recruit more adopters, for the children waiting. These are the challenges for this region, if we are to secure a permanent loving family, through the legal route of adoption for children referred.

Although the 9 children highlighted above have now been adopted, there are a small number of children waiting who also have multiple complex needs, and have waited some time.

3. Staffing

New Posts

Within this period the service has been able to establish a new Education Support Worker post (one year contract) which has been co-funded by the 5 Virtual Schools within Tees Valley.

The need for education support has quickly become evident when ATV has started up, and begun to deliver a more comprehensive adoption support service. A short audit of open adoption support cases identified that 70 % of the children referred for adoption support had difficulties within the education setting.

ATV is working collaboratively with the 5 Virtual Schools and there is a shared vision that we have a responsibility to help and support children within this setting, and also to provide support and education to teaching staff, and schools about how children may be helped.

It is therefore a positive development to have recruited an educationalist, who is now part of the ATV team, and works alongside the Adoption Support Team, to help and respond to needs within educational setting, including provision of signposting and advice. ATV is one of the first Regional Adoption Agencies to recruit a dedicated educational worker, and recognition is due to the Virtual Heads, who have committed some of their grant funding for additional duties to formally looked after children (adopted) to this post.

ATV has also created a specialist Post Box Co-Ordinator post which has been appointed to within this period. This post holder has a dedicated role in managing post box arrangements, and the flow of letters and cards being exchanged by families securely.

Staff Changes

The service has had no turnover in staff since setting up, however, there have been some temporary appointments to cover for parental leave.

Staff Structure

The staffing structure is appended to this report (Appendix 1).

1 x Service Manager	17 FTE Social Workers	1 x Business Manager
2 x Team Managers	1.5 Adoption Support Workers	3.1 x FTE Business Support Workers
2 x Assistant Team managers	1 FTE Education Support Worker	0.5 x Marketing and Recruitment Worker

The service has continued with an overall structure which allocates staff to one key lead area, with a second key area identified, to allow for flexibility in operations, and for staff satisfaction in work. The 3 key areas are:

- Recruitment and Assessment;
- Family Finding; and
- Adoption Support.

Staff Engagement

From the outset of Adoption Tees Valley, we have set out to establish a culture of engagement, support and staff contribution to best practice in the new RAA.

There has been one team building event during the period under review, which focussed on developing service plans for the 3 key teams with all team members, who contributed to the planning and development.

Early permanence is an overall team development priority, and this theme was considered throughout the day.

All staff receive supervision from their named line manager, on a monthly basis.

There are monthly team meetings, which are well attended and staff contribute items to the agenda.

Staff Training and Development

All social work staff are qualified and are registered with Social Work England.

Staff have undertaken a range of training within this period. 4 team members attended a regional conference on Early Permanence in April 2019, which was influential in supporting the team and regional development plan for more EP placements.

The team building day took place in May 2019, as detailed above.

The team day included a session on improving the customer journey, led by a facilitator who had undertaken "mystery shopping" to reflect how ATV compared with other adoption agencies, in relation to responding to a new enquirer. This was a lively and fun session, which highlighted to the team the importance of responding with a clear and customer focussed approach.

All staff have undertaken on line GDPR training, in readiness for data sharing and information security, including new legislative changes.

Some staff attended the 2 day course in June 2019 facilitated by Bridget Betts for adopters: talking about adoption.

Staff also attended the 2 day Nurturing Attachments training, again provided as part of the post placement support programme for adopters.

Managers worked with the data and business intelligence team from Stockton to do a performance Workshop in June 2019, looking at developing performance management and information presentation methods. Managers also did a one day workshop as part of the RAA leadership programme, to develop leadership skills in the team.

Social workers have had the opportunity to elect to do training in specific areas, for example, Undertaking Sibling Assessments, through the Northern Regional Consortium.

Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers have attended events run by other RAAs, to consider developing national practice initiatives. For example, One Adoption West Yorkshire's "Early Permanence Planning" training.

The Service Manager is engaged with the national RAA Heads of Service leadership programme, focussed on leadership of change in adoption under regionalisation programmes.

All staff will have an appraisal and Personal Development Plan within the second year of operation of ATV.

4. Recruiting Adopters

The service has worked with a more strategic approach to recruitment of adopters, and has set out a sufficiency strategy, which supports a clearer understanding of our market position, and needs analysis. Recruitment is underpinned by a marketing strategy, and plan, and a commitment to improve the customer journey.

The service has set out targets for recruitment for this financial year, based on the previous years' needs, and adoption numbers.

> **ATV is keen to recruit adoptive families from diverse backgrounds and with diversity in family life and circumstances. We know this works well for seeking suitable matches for the children that require an adoptive family in this area.**

Marketing

During April to September there was a dedicated marketing campaign which was a supported radio advertising campaign, with digital and a range of ongoing marketing approaches, through social media. A film was produced by the commissioned company, which showed the regional landmarks, thus personalising the need for adopters within this region. Adopters were interviewed on the film, and gave inspiring stories of their journey as adoptive parents.

The service has a facebook site, and twitter account, which is used to promote the need for more adopters. Facebook is proving to be an effective medium for generating adopter interest.

"Pipeline"- Prospective adopters in assessment

Year to date data to the end of Q2 (September)

April to September	
Enquiries to Adopt	101
Stage 1 starts	33
Stage 2 starts	29
Agency Decisions on suitability to adopt – Adopter Approvals	27

Adopter recruitment is a priority for ATV. It is imperative that we align our marketing efforts with the profile and numbers of children in the Tees Valley area requiring adoption, and with projected needs moving forward.

Adopter approvals have increased this year and are close to targeted numbers. Marketing is generating many more enquiries and over this period, numbers attending the service Information Events has steadily increased.

Staffing capacity to manage the assessment business has been a challenge, and additional temporary staffing has been introduced to assist with the flow.

Preparation for Adoption Groups

There have been three Preparation for Adoption training groups held within the period of this report, and the frequency required is bi monthly to manage the volume, and provide prospective adopters with valuable preparation for adopting a child.

The service has now established an experienced lead co-ordinator (social worker) for the preparation groups, which has brought more consistency to the programme, and allows for the co-ordinator to develop the training in line with learning and needs of the service, and the group.

Each preparation group now includes a session with a birth parent, who talks about her experiences; the circumstances of how the child came to be adopted; and her feelings about this, including post box contact on an ongoing basis. The service now has 4 birth Mums who attend on a rota basis, and their support and information to help new adoptive parents understand this key aspect of the child's life is extremely valued. Without them, there would be a huge gap in preparation. We are extremely grateful.

Each group also includes a session with experienced adopters; a virtual school head; foster carers; and a legal care planning solicitor.

The groups were attended by 26 prospective adopter families. This included 15 heterosexual couples; 6 same sex couples and 5 single adopters.

One of the families was of black/Asian/minority ethnic (BAME) background.

Feedback has been positive from prospective adopters about the preparation group training.

Prospective adopters said about the birth Mum's contribution:

"A very emotional and inspiring story "

"Valuable on many levels - Contact is really important for the child"

"She was amazing And Very helpful –
Invaluable in helping me understand the importance of contact for the child and birth parent"

"Changed my views on initial meeting as I was not keen before"

"Has given me more empathy for birth parents"

…. And about the preparation training…

"This group has made me feel more comfortable that adoption is for us and that I feel more prepared to "parent plus" my children "

"The four days has been excellent preparation and has turned some of my thinking completely on its head (birth parent meeting and contact) it has been lead fantastically with care and consideration as well as great theory!"

"Feel very supported and looking forward to the next stage"

5. Panel

A Panel Chair's Report has been co-produced by the two independent panel chairs, as required under Adoption NMS (2014) Standard 17.2.

The report has been made available in full to Adoption Tees Valley managers and the team; to the ATV board; to the panel members, and wider stakeholders. For the purposes of this Half Year Report, a summary of the information is included here.

Panel runs each week, and is one half day, considering a maximum of three cases. However, in this period, due to increased business, the service has put on additional panels, to meet demand in a timely way.

The panel is constituted under Adoption Agency Regulations (2005), and National Minimum Standard 17.

The ATV panel considers all adopter applications for approval within the Tees Valley region, and the agency decision is made within ATV by the Service Manager.

The ATV panel considers all matches of children in Tees Valley Local Authority care with adopters, including adopters from outside of the Tees Valley region. The panel makes a recommendation on matches, and the agency decision is made by the Local Authority Agency Decision Maker.

Number of cases considered

Number of Panels held during period All were quorate.	23 (21)
Number of Panel dates cancelled and reason	3 2 were not required and 1 was panel training day
Number of Panels re-arranged and reason	None
Impact of cancellation/re/arranged dates	N/A
Number of Panels chaired by SH	13
Number of Panels chaired by JP	12
Number of Panels chaired by vice-chair JF	1
Number of Panel chaired by vice-chair LT	2
Number of cases heard at the panels held:	
One case:	2 (4)
Two cases:	8 (7)
Three cases:	12 (9)
Four cases – went into a full day Panel:	1 (0)
Total cases heard:	58 (50)

Figure in () is the number for the previous six-month period in each category

Panel Chairs general overview:

- There has been an increase both in the number of panels but also the overall number of cases heard at each panel. There were more approvals in the six months, although slightly fewer matches.
- The knowledge and skills of Central List members are much more developed now that Panels have become established and are held regularly.
- The electronic system continues to cause some challenge and frustration although this improved considerably in the later months of the period. Missing documents for matches on occasions has been a frustration.
- Panels with three matches, and especially where siblings are being considered, have felt over-burdened, tight for timings and very heavy on reading.
- Panel chairs met with the Service Manager/ADM and panel advisors in May 2019 and planned appraisals which have taken place with most of the central list members
- 2 Vice Chairs have now been appointed.
- Separate meetings with the Medical Advisers are held to progress issues. There have been difficulties in this period with sickness absence of some medical advisers.
- Although there is a strong central list membership with good representation from adopters, panels would benefit from greater diversity of members, particularly BAME membership; it is also noted that there are only 3 male central list members.

Number of Cases Presented to Panel by Type

Type of Business presented		Outcome
Number of suitability to adopt considered	27 (17)	27 recommended 0 deferred All recommendations unanimous

Single applicant	2 (3)	
Male/female Couple	22 (13)	
Same sex couple	3 (1)	
Number of Brief reports recommending unsuitable presented	1	1 recommendation as unsuitable to adopt. This was unanimous by all panel members.
Number of Adoption Matching cases considered	29 (32)	29 recommended 0 deferred All recommendations unanimous
Number of Children's Adoption Plans Considered (Relinquished)	1 (2)	1 recommended 0 deferred All recommendations unanimous
Number of Adopter Reviews of Suitability	0	N/A

Figure in () is the number for the previous six-month period in each category

Timescales:

Panel minutes comment on reasons for delay if these are over the timescales prescribed -as required in NMS 17.8. Delays in matching are explored, and understanding is sought on any reasons and factors that create delay for children in achieving a permanent adoptive placement.

Suitability to adopt:

(Suitability: applications should be completed within six months; of which 2 months should be for stage 1 and 4 months for Stage 2. Fast track applications should be completed within 4 months).

5 in timescale- main-stream applications

17 out of timescale- main-stream applications

3 in timescale -fast track

4 out of timescale- fast track

Reasons for delays include delayed medicals, delayed DBS and delayed reference checks. Chairs felt it would be useful to distinguish between delays in Stage 1 and in Stage 2 and also circumstances where prospective adopters wish to delay.

Panel Training

A Panel training day took place on Wednesday 10th July 2019, which involved almost all panel members, and which looked at early permanence placements and their impact on panel. Also, statistics on the panel activity, with a presentation on the different types of cases that could be presented to panel such as relinquished baby, brief reports, and considered policy and panel role in relation to these cases. The training allowed for some jargon busting.., and gave opportunity for Panel members to provide feedback on how they felt things were progressing from their experience.

Quality

Panel provide feedback on quality matters both in respect of reports for adopter approvals (PAR) and adoption matches (CPR, APR, PAR). Below is a summary of key points and feedback.

Quality: Adoption Applications

The great majority of comments from the Quality Feedback Sheets submitted were in respect of good, thorough reports received.

Some positive quotes about quality of PARs from members of panels.

"Well written report", "very detailed and easy to read", "well written report- a real sense of the couple" "thorough report which analyses all the information" "good that extra references were taken up"

A small number of concerns were raised around the theme of information not being visible or documented in reports.

Quality: Adoption Matches

Many of comments from the Quality Issues Sheets submitted were also positive in respect of the standard of reports received.

Some positive quotes about quality of matching documents from panel members.

"Creative use of FfA to prevent further delay"; "Good that the CPRs had been updated in red", "good quality of reports for the match"

There are some themes from quality concerns in CPR's and matching documents. These have been fed back to operational managers for improvement plans.

Summary of action following receipt of quality feedback by panel

Panel feedback presented in the chairs 6 monthly report is considered by the management of Adoption Tees Valley, and then is shared within the team alongside Panel Chairs. Feedback and actions are taken to the ATV team. Also to the Adoption Tees valley Adoption leads meeting, although any specific case issue is addressed immediately.

- The service has considered the delays occurring in many cases, especially in stage 1 and has planned change work to tighten this up.
- CPR training has continued to be delivered by ATV during this period, to children social workers, and feedback is that there are improvements in the quality as a result.
- It is now a focus for the service, and for the Panel, to develop a monthly update and feedback to ensure that comments are addressed and panel is provided with updates on the progress of cases once they leave the panel arena.

Feedback on Panel Process

Feedback from applicants attending was almost universally positive, with comments on how welcoming the panel was, and they made applicants feel at ease.

A small number of social workers provided feedback in writing and of those who did all comments were positive. Any verbal comments made have been explored and checked out: it is the service aim to have a panel which is robust, challenging where needed, attentive to quality and regulation, but also enables social workers to feel that their work is valued, and that any points for improvement can be provided in a constructive way.

Central list members have provided written feedback on their views about the functioning and process of panel, including comments on the chairing, in their appraisals. Comments reflect that members have developed their knowledge and understanding of adoption and ATV and have grown more accustomed to the role. Panel chairs were felt to be experienced, knowledgeable, and a safe pair of hands.

6. None Agency Adoptions

Adoption Tees Valley has responsibility for step parent adoptions.

The parents (one birth parent and one step parent) may apply directly to Court, or may apply to Adoption Tees Valley for an assessment, which will subsequently be presented to Court.

April to September	
Enquiries for step parent adoption	12
Step Parent assessments allocated	2

None agency adoptions by step parents are a challenging aspect of the work of ATV. It is fully recognised that in newly constituted families there can be a wish to formally adopt the child of one parent, by the new partner, almost always the step father. In some cases, early assessment and discussion with the family, and with the absent birth parent identifies that an adoption is not the most appropriate course of action, as seeking a court order to legally and permanently end the parental role, and responsibility can be a "drastic" action, where potentially a lesser order may be more appropriate.

A further challenge is the volume of these requests, which have come to the statutory service for adoption, and require assessment, but which draw important resource from that which is allocated for achieving permanent adoptive families for children in the looked after system. This issue is one which needs to be recognised, and is evident nationally, and poses a challenge for stretched adoption service resources.

An inevitable consequence is a waiting list for this service.

7. Referrals of Children and Family Finding

Early Notifications

ATV has received 88 new early notifications of children during this period. This is in addition to the children who are already referred and waiting. Not all children will require adoption, and may return to parents' care, or go to a family member. However, early notification enables the service to be aware of and consider the children where permanence plans are developing.

Permanence Champions

It is considered essential to ensure close tracking and management of all children as they are referred to ATV, and to establish close and good working relationships with each of the five partner LAs.

The 5 Permanence Champions maintain close and regular links with the respective Local Authorities, and there is monthly tracking of children's plans within ATV.

Where there is any delay, or question around the care planning or any aspect of the plan, the permanence champion will liaise with local authority social worker, and where necessary the manager to ensure smooth working together, and close working on adoption care plans.

New Early Notifications of Children to ATV

1.5.18-30.09.2018	58
1.10.18-31.3.19	111
1.4.19-30.9.19	88

The second half of 2018-19 was a peak period for early notifications and this is reflected in increased placement activity in the second half of that year, and the first half of 2019-20.

Linking, Matching and Placing Children

Permanence Champions receive referrals of children from each Local Authority and track permanence plans for children. Adoption process meetings are held with children's social workers, to assist with preparing for adoption planning. Early consideration is given to all available adopters, and those who may become available within the child's timescales. Early permanence is considered in many cases. Once the Court has granted a Placement Order, the child is allocated a Family Finder from within ATV. There is then a proactive approach to seeking families, if one has not already been identified, from the internal ATV pool of adopters, or through an external search.

Adoption Match, the national register ceased operation on 31.3.19.

ATV has commissioned Link Maker, which is an alternative commercial national matching database. This is utilised to seek families for children, as well as undertaking court searches. There are processes to ensure that internal ATV adopters are considered initially for children, and an internal match is achieved where it is possible and in the child's best interests.

In the first six months of the year the following placements have been made

ATV children placed with ATV adopters	25	Non TV children placed with ATV adopters	1
ATV children placed with non ATV adopters	11		
Total ATV children placed	36	Total children placed with ATV adopters	26
% of "internal" placements	69%	% of "external" placements	31%

In this period 3 children were placed under early permanence fostering for adoption placements. They are counted as placed when the match as an adoption placement has been to Panel, and therefore 2 placements are not counted in the above figures.

A key aim of the RAA programme is to impact on timeliness of children waiting for adoption.

Timeliness has shown a dip in the first half of this year, however, as noted in section 2, children's timescales are brought into statistical performance once they are adopted. In order to understand "real time" performance better, ATV has introduced some new measures, looking at timeliness for children who have been placed in the period, but are not yet adopted.

The cautious analysis shows better timescales for children who are currently being placed, with A1 being 419 days for those children placed, and A2 being 170 days.

It is important to understand local and regional adoption practice within the context of a national system. There is a current shortage of adopters, with children requiring adoption and waiting outnumbering the numbers of approved adopters waiting by 3:1.

Also, 40 % of children are currently waiting in excess of 18 months to be adopted.

A further aim of the RAA programme is to impact on the time that adopters wait for a match.

It is crucial that ATV works towards a best practice and efficient method for linking and matching children, which enables all available and waiting adopters to be considered for all children with a plan for adoption.

A13 is the number of adopters in assessment, not yet approved. This has increased to 31 reflecting improved recruitment activity, although as noted in the Panel section there are delays in some approvals, which are in the stage 1 period.

ALB Scorecard A11 reflects the numbers of adopters waiting. ATV has impacted on this figure, with 24 adopters having progressed to a match within the half year period considered. Bearing in mind the available "pool" of adopters was utilised for children in 2018-19, the matches are with newly approved adopters.

A12 is the percentage of adopters who waited at least three months for a match. This has reduced to 20% showing that 80% of ATV adopters are matched with children within 3 months of their approval. This is an indicator of much better use of the adopter resources, and early consideration of potentially good matches which are being considered at stage 2 for the adopters, and through early notifications and close tracking for children.

Early Permanence

As detailed in the introduction, the service is actively working with a strategy to promote early permanence for more children, where it is appropriate in their plan. A key aim is reduce moves for children, between foster carers, prior to moving in with their adoptive family, or in some cases moving in with prospective adopters who agree to be temporarily approved as foster carers by the child's local authority, to enable the child to move in under fostering regulations, while awaiting the outcome of care planning for adoption.

Early Permanence Placement- a case example

ATV received an early notification for an unborn baby on 15 April 2019. The local authority pre-birth planning and assessment had identified that the unborn baby had previously had a sibling adopted. Crucially, the assessments indicated that there had been no changes in the lifestyle and capacity made by the birth parents, which would suggest that they may be able to parent this baby, when it arrived, safely. Assessments are not concluded prior to birth, and Courts may not consider giving authority to place until at least 6 weeks following the birth. Birth parents are always given opportunity to change. Therefore, it is necessary to plan concurrently for the best interests of the child when born- possible outcomes being that the child may return home, or the child may have a plan of adoption.

ATV made contact with the sibling's adopters and a meeting was held on 17 April 2019 to discuss the possibility of an early permanence placement. The couple were advised of the differences between a general adoption match and an early permanence placement, including the regulatory differences. They

were helped to consider that the child may not end with a plan of adoption, which would mean that the baby would leave their care, and return to birth parents. The couple understood that they would be caring for the baby initially as foster carers and would need to adhere to fostering regulations until any match was presented to panel. The couple made the decision to proceed with a 'fast track' assessment in order to care for the baby from birth. They were subsequently linked up with other early permanence carers/adopters in order to support them through the process.

The couple registered their interest with ATV late April 2019, assessment commenced May 2019 and they were subsequently approved as adopters in August 2019. The couple were approved as temporary foster carers by the child's Local Authority later in August. The baby was born 2 weeks later and was placed from hospital in to the early permanence placement at 2 days old. The carers attended the pre-discharge meeting at the hospital which provided them with an opportunity to meet birth parents and gain first-hand knowledge from them. This was a very positive meeting where valuable information was shared; including the reasons baby's birth name was chosen and the importance of the things that were in baby's cot. Birth parents were aware prior to this meeting that the placement was an early permanence placement, and in the event of the court deciding on a plan of adoption, baby would then remain with these foster carers which would avoid any further moves. They were also aware that baby would be placed alongside the sibling, something which they shared at the pre-discharge meeting was their desire for both children.

The placement continues to progress well, with the carers promoting contact between the baby and birth parents, and working professionally with the local authority plan. The benefits of this early permanence placement are that it has provided the full biological siblings with an opportunity to form a close relationship from the earliest point available; in the event of a decision being made for a plan of adoption then the baby will have had the benefit of avoiding a break in attachment with the primary caregivers.

Profile of Children with an Adoption Plan

The rate of Agency Decisions for an adoption plan (ADM) and Placement Orders, which are key performance indicators for numbers of children

requiring adoption have dipped slightly in the first half of this year, although at the time of writing it is known that numbers are increasing again.

Numbers of children adopted has increased last year, to 83. The numbers of adoptions in this first half year have dipped, and this is almost certainly due to a dip in placements during 2018-19, when the RAA first went live.

Placement activity is rising again, to former levels, and indeed indicators are that the numbers placed are forecast to be higher than in previous years.

The Tees Valley region has a high and rising number of sibling groups who require adoptive families, with a plan to place the children together. There are 33 sibling groups waiting to be placed, and 72 children who make up this cohort.

The data on children aged five years and over is not reflective of ATV current work, as this is measured in respect of children who have been adopted within the period. Currently, there are 9 children aged five and over who have a Placement Order, and are not yet placed, although 5 are linked with adoptive families.

The region has fewer children of black / minority ethnic (BME) status than many other areas of the UK. However, there is a small but rising number of children with dual heritage, and of BME heritage who require adoption.

Adoption Tees Valley is working closely with regional Local Authorities, through the Regional Adoption Leadership Board (RALB) to seek regional placements for children, where there are no internal available adoptive families who would be suitable.

ATV does not delay, or hold children back from seeking a potential family. There is early work to identify any potential available families within a reasonable timescale for the child, and if none are available, without undue delay, then a wider search is implemented, without delay.

The agency has started to gather more detailed information regarding children with developmental delay, and health needs, to form a better picture of the needs of children.

8. Adoption Support

The ethos in ATV is to build and offer a 3 Tier adoption support offer, which promotes families and children coming in to the service, and gaining help and support at the earliest possible opportunity, to avoid escalation to crisis levels, where families and children are suffering due to the needs of children being unmet.

Tier 1	Engagement Events; Support Groups; General Support; Open Door
Tier 2	Themed Workshops and Training Events; Mentoring and Buddying
Tier 3	Assessment for post adoption needs; Application to ASF; Case allocation; Multi Agency working; Education Support

The service is aiming to empower parents to learn how to support children, and to know where to go to get help, at an early stage.

The service is seeking to create a community of adopters and adopted children and a source of help, support and friendship for those with adoption in their lives.

Demand for adoption support has been an area of significant increase from that evident prior to ATV going live, and it continues to be a significant demand on the service resources.

A key objective of the regionalisation programme is to improve outcomes for children through access to high quality timely adoption support.

Therapeutic Providers

Within this period a significant amount of work was undertaken by ATV supported by Stockton Procurement team, to establish a framework of therapeutic providers, who can deliver high quality, therapeutic interventions for children and families, based on the assessment of needs in the Adoption Support Assessment.

This planning concluded with a new framework being implemented, of preferred providers, commencing 1.9.19 which meets EU public procurement regulations. 8 providers were awarded preferred provider status, with a further 5 selected as providers of specialist assessments.

The service would have benefited from a larger pool of providers, however, it is planned to open the tendering process up again, in early 2020.

Adoption Support Fund (ASF)

	Q1-Q2 (18-19)	Q1-Q2 (19-20)

Number of successful applications to ASF , in this period	35	98
Value of successful applications, delivering therapeutic services to children	£111,173	£278,460
Number of unsuccessful applications	1	0

The service has increased the level of funds drawn from the ASF significantly by over 150%. Within this period group applications have been made to fund therapeutic parenting training, available to all approved adopters in the region.

Commissioned Services

Transferred into ATV at the point of "Go Live" was a contract for indirect contact/post box and birth parent support, to Darlington BC adopters, children and birth families, which was provided by DFW Adoption, (now Adoption Matters).

It was planned that Adoption Tees valley needed to have a consistent approach to Post Box delivery, and to birth parent support, across the 5 Local Authorities, and that running post box to one LA via an alternative VAA would not be consistent with a shared and equal service. The former contract with Adoption Matters was ended, and on 1.7.19 the post box arrangements for Darlington BC children transferred to ATV. A new post was created to manage post box within ATV, which is the Post Box Co-Ordinator, and this post was filled prior to the transfer date.

Post Box continues to present challenges in terms of volume of workload.

It is the plan to ensure each "arrangement" is recorded within the ATV client management system, to make sure a long standing record is kept of all correspondence, for the child in the future, and also to enable proper management and monitoring of what post box has gone out to be undertaken. At the end of Q2 there remained substantial volume of arrangements that needed to be created into the system, however, post box letters and cards are being transferred as received, to families.

It is estimated that there are 900 post box transactions that have taken place in this period.

Independent Birth Parent Support/ Support to Contact

This service is now commissioned from Adoption Matters. This moved from After Adoption (now ceased trading) to AM, and the service is now up and running with this charity, since 1.10.19.

Promotion of the awareness of this important support service has been undertaken through the Local Family Justice Board, and with Adoption Lead officers, as a route to communications within the 5 LA's.

Post Adoption Support Groups

ATV now runs adopter support groups monthly, facilitated by 2 social workers.

There is usually attendance of around 5-10 families attending each group, which is a drop in, to which young children can be brought.

Therapeutic Parenting Training

ATV has now begun to establish a "tier 2" offer of therapeutic parenting, which is available to any adoptive family, wishing to book in.

The following training has been delivered within ATV in this period

Nurturing Attachments	3 days- April/May 2019	Kim Goulding company	20 families
Therapeutic Life Story Work- telling about adoption	2 days- July 2019	Bridgett Betts	13 families
Nurturing Attachments	3 days- September/Oct 2019	Kim Goulding Co.	8 families
Future Stars Early Intervention	10 week programme, started September	Integrate Families	3 families
SEND Law	0.5 day session		4 families
Therapeutic Life Story Work- telling about adoption	2 days- September	Bridgett Betts	10 families

Education, Virtual Schools and Education Support for adopted children

The service manager meets once per term with the 5 Virtual School Heads, specifically with the objective of working together on the support needs of adopted children within school settings.

VSH's have duties to provide information and guidance to adoptive parents and children around their entitlements to support.

It is clear that many of the open adoption support referrals feature difficulties for children within school settings. Parents are often not aware of the

supports, and assessments they may be entitled to, nor that pupil premium plus is available to all adopted children.

ATV and the VSH's worked together and agreed that an education support post, located within ATV, and funded through the DFE grants to Virtual Schools in respect of adopted children would be a positive development, targeted where it is most needed, and effective- within the adoption service.

The post was filled on 1.9.19 and a qualified teacher now delivers education support, advice, information and guidance to schools.

Feedback from parents and schools has been extremely positive.

Below is one case study, written by the Education Support Worker, describing how within this post she has helped a child:

> I supported a family whose child was experiencing difficulties at school. The school didn't know the child was adopted and was not meeting the needs of the child and therefore the child was not coping in the school environment. The school weren't aware, and didn't look at an approach that would help children with attachment difficulties in an education setting. This unfortunately led to the child, just 5 years old, being put on a part time timetable and "home educated" part days, but this means that child was effectively excluded. This cannot be an informal arrangement, but the parents were not aware of this.
>
> I supported the family at school meetings and stopped the part time timetable. I delivered staff training in school to raise awareness of the child's needs and to provide strategies that they can use such as sensory breaks and key workers around the child. These were partially effective, but the child has high level needs, and parents felt an alternative school may be a better option.
>
> I helped with the EHCP assessment process and ultimately, the transition to a new school that is able to meet the needs of the child better and provide a nurturing environment, which will reduce their barriers to learning. This has been a very positive outcome, not only for the child but for the family as a whole.

9. Disruptions and Interruptions

During this period, there has been one disrupted placement for Tees Valley children, which involved 2 siblings placed with adopters, but not yet

adopted. The adopters were originally approved by one of the 5 LA's, and then transferred to ATV.

A Disruption meeting has been held, and work is currently underway, to review and reflect on learning from disruptions.

There has been 2 "interruptions" for Tees Valley children, within this period, by which it is meant that the placement commenced into introductions, but then did not progress to placement.

Both cases form part of the review highlighted above.

It is extremely sad when placements end, or when planned placements do not proceed. Children are very impacted, and can lose trust in the potential to have a forever family. The system is geared towards doing everything possible to find and achieve permanence for children, so when these plans go wrong, it is important to reflect and learn from where important opportunities to achieve a better outcome were missed. Similarly, disruptions and interruptions are incredibly painful for prospective adopters, who have invested their emotions and hopes for the future in parenting.

10. Quality Assurance

National Minimum Standard 25.

The following mechanisms have been implemented for managing and monitoring the work of the agency, and the quality of work.

- Tracking systems to enable regular monitoring of children and adopter journey's; timeliness, and outcomes.
- A performance, assurance and challenge meeting (PAC) has been held with the senior adoption lead for each LA, after the first six month data has been generated. All children for each LA have been tracked and monitored, and agreement about direction, or decisions signposted where applicable. It is now planned to implement these meetings quarterly.
- Monthly management meetings are focussing on the key performance information required, and how this will be generated from Charms, and/or other sources.
- A balanced scorecard has been generated quarterly detailing key performance data, user feedback/satisfaction measures; complaints/compliments; finance. This has been presented to the Board, which has a role in questioning, challenge and being satisfied of the effectiveness of the service.

- The Adoption Panel now operates a quality monitoring mechanism for assessments/matches presented, which is monitored by the Panel Advisors and Chairs, for improvement.
- The Adoption Panel Chairs provide a report bi-annually to the Service Manager, which will be presented to the Board; Panel; and to the team, for learning and improvement where required. The first six month report has been produced and is commented on within this Bi- Annual Service report.
- Staff performance is monitored via supervision, which is monthly for all staff.
- A new case practice audit tool has been developed, although not implemented within the first half year. This will be implemented in the second half of the year, as an audit, assurance, and learning mechanism.
- Staff will have an annual appraisal, and Personal Development Planning will be aligned to appraisal and review.
- All Central List members and Panel Chairs have had an annual appraisal.
- Team meetings take place monthly, and are used to convey policy and practice information, involve staff in developments and any quality improvements that are required.
- Adopter feedback has been sought on an annual basis via a Consultation Survey. User feedback is used to inform improvements, or consolidate areas of good practice. A survey has been prepared and is ready to go out to adopters for this period.
- The Service Manager, and Team Manager, post adoption support, have reviewed and monitored work undertaken by external agencies for post adoption support, to ensure that work supports outcomes and delivers best value.
- Stockton BC have undertaken an audit of the service to provide an "independent" QA mechanism. The report is currently in circulation, at Board level.

Procedures

The work of the management team, and team has been to build on good practice from the partner LAs, and to harmonise adoption practice across the region. Learning from neighbouring and national RAA development, it has been a decision to engage with staff and wider partners in the development of new practice, and change as ATV has become embedded as the new RAA.

A decision was taken to hold on policy and procedure setting, while the change process was underway.

The agency has entered into a contract with Tri X- a national policy provider company, used by many LA Children's Services, and a draft policy framework

has been supplied. It is fair to say that substantial and significant amendments have had to be made to the "off the shelf" policy framework, and practice has been that continuing "tweaks" to policy and procedure have needed to be made, as practice has changed.

Work is now underway to finalise the ATV policy and procedure, to reflect national regulations, and standards, which will be published through Tri X in early 2020.

Ofsted

There has been one full ILACS inspection during this period, in May 2019, of Stockton BC. ATV was inspected as part of that inspection, but regulations and the Ofsted framework state that the RAA will be inspected "through the lens of the Local Authority". The focus is on the assurance that the LA has that the Regional Adoption Agency is delivering an effective adoption service, which provides timely and sufficient placements for the children it refers.

Findings in this inspection were broadly positive around the adoption service, including from the adopters interviewed.

Early permanence was an area identified for improvement, and plans are underway, as detailed above, to improve and develop early permanence across Tees Valley.

11. Complaints/ Early Resolution

ATV received one complaint in the reporting period. This was a complaint relating to one of the 5 Local Authorities, when the approved adopters were registered with the LA, before transfer in to ATV.

ATV have worked closely with, and on behalf of the LA to manage and investigate the complaint. at the close of this period the complaint remained active.

12. Governance

Adoption Tees Valley has a Management Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services at Middlesbrough Borough Council, Helen Watson. The Board comprises of all five Directors of Children's Services. Plans are underway to recruit 2 Non Executive Directors who will be people with experience of the adoption system- adoptive parents, or adoptees, or birth parents.

The Management Board has met monthly during this reporting period and receives an update by the Service Manager about the progress of the service, any issues requiring Board resolution, and about emerging adoption matters nationally and locally.

Plans are underway to recruit 2 Non Executive Directors to the Board, who will be people with experience either as adopters or adoptees, or birth parents.

The Board receives a financial update quarterly, and a balanced scorecard quarterly, detailing key ALB scorecard and performance information.

A partnership collaborative group between ATV and the Senior Adoption Lead Managers for the five Local Authorities meets monthly, to progress practice and implementation of the new agency.

13. Summary and Plans for the next 12 months

A summary of what is working well includes:

- Early notifications to ATV of any child who may have an adoption plan;
- Permanence Champions provide close links with LAs;
- Recruitment of adopters is strengthened, and is close to target for delivery in this financial year.
- Matching within the available pool of adopters successful;
- Some children who have waited for some time are placed and are now adopted.
- Many children are being matched, and placed for adoption.
- Collaborative working with LA's tracking individual children's plans.
- Adoption support is developing and strengthening.
- Therapeutic parenting training now regularly available in ATV
- Improved quality assurance of therapeutic providers, via a framework of preferred providers.
- Significant increase in take up of therapeutic interventions, funded by ASF
- Education support worker brought in to ATV
- Post Box Co-Ordinator brought in to manage post box
- New contract for birth parent support, with a local VAA

Challenges:

- Timescales for adoption of children has dipped this period- evaluated and analysed within this report.
- While recruitment is going well, it is not delivering sufficient adopters due to the increase in numbers of children coming through requiring and adoption placement.
- This has led to higher than planned purchase from the VAA sector, impacting on costs this financial year.
- Overall impact of higher numbers of children creates pressures on all aspects of the service.

- Early permanence is not yet consistently and fully understood, or embedded within the wider system in this region.

Key Priorities:

- Early permanence strategy and roll out
- Adopter sufficiency, including preparing adopters for the children in this region.
- Working with the national recruitment campaign for adopters
- The learning from disruptions and interruptions is shared regionally within ATV and across care planning teams
- Continue to progress a multi -agency and multi stakeholder partnership strategy, to develop a shared approach to better outcomes for adopted children.

Appendix 1- Staffing Structure

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                        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                        │ Adoption Tees Valley  Service │
                        │           Manager            │
                        └──────────────────────────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┼────────────────────────────┐
    ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
    │ Team Manager  x2 │  │ Business Support      │  │ Recruitment and Marketing    │
    │                  │  │ Manager               │  │ Officer                      │
    └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  │ (18.5 hours)                 │
                                                     └──────────────────────────────┘
  ┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
  │ Assistant Team Manager x 2│  │ Senior Business Support   │
  │                          │  │ Officer                   │
  └──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
                                           │
                              ┌──────────────────────────┐
                              │ Business Support Officer x2│
  ┌──────────────────────────┐└──────────────────────────┘
  │ Social Worker x 17       │
  └──────────────────────────┘
  ┌──────────────────────────┐
  │ Support Worker   x 1.5   │
  │ Education Support Worker  x 1 │
  │ Post Box Co-Ordinator  x 0.6 │
  └──────────────────────────┘
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35