

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
17 November 2015**

National and Regional Adoption Service

Reason for the Report

1. This item is presented to The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee:
 - As a theme for information and discussion as part of the Committee's 2015 – 2016 work programme;
 - In response to a letter from Councillor Mel Nott to Council Leaders and Members for Children's Services, dated 27th of July 2015; written in his capacity as and Chair of the National Adoption Service for Wales Governance Board (copy attached at **Appendix A**)
 - To provide an opportunity to review and comment on the implementation and operation of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative (Report attached at **Appendix C(B)**).

Background

2. The National Adoption Service was launched in November 2014 to bring together local, regional and national organisations and activities, as a key part of implementing the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014.
3. The City of Cardiff Council Cardiff holds the prestigious role of 'host' to the national team for an initial three year period, following success in a competitive process.
4. The Service is probably most accurately described as a network of interdependent services operating at local, regional, and national levels through local government and the voluntary sector. The three tier structure is based in local government, with partnership arrangements connecting to services in other sectors. Operation is overseen by a Governance Board and an Advisory Group.
5. Suzanne Griffiths is the Director or Operations. The Governance Board is chaired by Councillor Mel Nott OBE who is the WLGA Presiding Officer. Councillor Sue Lent; Deputy Leader, and Tony Young; Director of Social Services represent The City of Cardiff Council as the host authority on the

Governance Board. Phil Hodgson is the Independent Chair of the Advisory Group.

6. The Service is run in line with regulations in the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015. These regulations set out in detail the aims for the service, including the need to for governance at regional and national levels.
7. Local authorities remain responsible for identifying and meeting the needs of children for whom adoption is the most appropriate plan. The five local collaboratives are responsible for developing and improving services. The National Team coordinates national functions, drives improvement and consistency whilst maintaining strategic and planning links.
8. The letter from Councillor Nott encourages Members to ensure that links with the national and regional Adoption Service are embedded in the Corporate Parenting duties of the Council.
9. The letter highlights the first annual report of the services (copy attached at **Appendix B**) and a video produced by Adoption UK Wales.
10. April 2014 to March 2015 was seen as the inaugural year of the National Adoption Service seeing the set up and first months of operation. The report highlights progress in:
 - Setting up and handing over to the central operations team and regional collaboratives, including building relationships and getting into the media.
 - Collaborating with people who use the services, voluntary adoption services and Health services.
 - Reporting, comparing and understanding data about adoption activity across Wales for the first time, following the introduction of a new performance management system.
 - Consultation exercises, conferences and events to listen to adopted young people and adopters and to identify priorities.
 - Looking specifically at adoption support.
 - Identifying priorities and setting out an action plan.
11. The Committee is encouraged in the letter to make itself aware of the issues highlighted in the attachments, alongside receiving reports about how the service is working to meet the needs of the looked after children in the area, that are to be or have been adopted.
12. A report presented to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee at its 13th of October meeting, detailed progress on the implementation and operation of the National Adoption Service and Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Services and is attached at **Appendix C**, along with appendices to that report **Appendix C(A)** and **Appendix C(B)**.
13. Appendix C(B) is the September 2015 progress report of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative. The VVC Collaborative comprises the City of Cardiff Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

14. The report summarises:

- The regional governance structure
- Staffing and resources
- Service delivery
- Performance management
- Budget & financial considerations.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Legal Implications

16. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That Members review the information contained in **Appendices A, B, C, C(A) and C(B)** together with any additional information presented at the meeting and submit any comments, concerns or recommendations about the service to the Cabinet Member for discussion with the Director of Operations and or Regional Manager.

TONY YOUNG

Director of Social Services

10 November 2015