

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION

Date and Time :- Tuesday 31 January 2023 at 10.00 a.m.
Venue:- Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
Membership:- Councillors Pitchley (Chair), Cooksey (Vice Chair), Andrews, Atkin, Aveyard, Bacon, Bennett-Sylvester, Z Collingham, Elliott, Griffin, Haleem, Jones, Hughes, McNeely, and Mills.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2022 (Pages 3 - 8)

To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2022 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

4. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

5. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press

To receive questions relating to items of business on the agenda from members of the public or press who are present at the meeting.

6. Communications

To receive communications from the Chair in respect of matters within the Commission's remit and work programme.

7. Corporate Parenting Panel - Update

To consider any updates from the Corporate Parenting Panel.

8. One Adoption South Yorkshire - Annual Report 2021-2022 (Pages 9 - 31)

To consider the One Adoption South Yorkshire - Annual Report 2021-2022.

9. Update Report on Post CSE Support Services (Pages 33 - 47)

To consider the update on the delivery of the action in response to the findings and recommendations of the Improving Lives sub-group on post-CSE support.

10. Work Programme (Page 49)

To consider and approve the Commission's Work Programme.

11. Improving Lives Select Commission - Sub and Project Group Updates

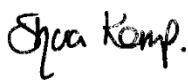
For the Chair/project group leads to provide an update on the activity regarding sub and project groups of the he Improving Lives Select Commission.

12. Urgent Business

To consider any item(s) the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

13. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on 7 March 2023 commencing at 10am in Rotherham Town Hall.



Sharon Kemp,
Chief Executive.

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 6 December 2022**

Present:- Councillor Pitchley (in the Chair); Councillors Cooksey, Andrews, Aveyard, Bennett-Sylvester, Elliott, Griffin, Haleem, Hughes, Jones and McNeely.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Atkin, Bacon, Barley, Z. Collingham, Mills and Thompson.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

35. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 6 September 2022 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items of business on the agenda that required the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

39. COMMUNICATIONS

There was none.

40. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE

The last meeting was held on 20 September 2022. The leisure card was discussed with a view to ensuring the young people could access the leisure card by December.

41. OUTCOMES FROM THE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EARLY HELP STRATEGY

The report was provided for information. In September 2022, Members had held a workshop to scrutinise the draft Early Help Strategy.

The report summarised some of the issues that had emerged from the

workshop. Due to the timescales required to ensure that the recommendations were considered by Children and Young People's Services and Members of the Cabinet, the Chair submitted a letter to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to outline the recommendations to ensure they could be considered at an early stage.

The Early Help Strategy was due to be considered by Cabinet early in the new year.

The Chair felt that the workshop had been a good development session and that it was a well written report.

Resolved That: The Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Noted the outcomes and recommendations of its review of the draft Early Help Strategy as outlined in the report.
2. Noted that the recommendations have been approved by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and submitted to Cabinet for consideration.
3. Receives further updates on the progress and implementation of the Early Help Strategy as approved.

42. OFSTED INSPECTION - DRAFT ACTION PLAN

The Joint Assistant Director, CYPS introduced the report highlighting that an inspection had been carried out in June and the authority had to publish its action plan in response to the recommendations made from the inspection outcome.

The inspection covered how the Council helped and protected children, the experiences and progress of children in care, its arrangements for permanence for children who were looked after, including adoption along with the experiences and progress of care leavers. Ofsted also evaluated the effectiveness of the Council's leaders and managers as well and the impact that they had on the lives of children and young people.

Ofsted found the following:

- the overall effectiveness was good,
- the quality of services that were provided to children and families in Rotherham was good,
- the impact of leaders was good,
- the experiences and progress of children in need were good, and
- the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers was good.

The report contained lots of positive references however some areas for improvement were identified. Children's Services were striving to become outstanding, so all comments were welcomed.

The four areas identified within the action plan were the four areas in

which Ofsted made their recommendations. They also provided lots of advice that would help the service move towards outstanding.

Ofsted indicated that services had continued to be delivered effectively during the pandemic. The new Director of Service and strengthening of the management had helped drive the continuous improvements forward.

The first area where improvement could be made was 'Consideration of previous history and current circumstances when responding to 'front door' contacts and child protection concerns.' For context, Ofsted identified a very small number of contacts that had come into children's services where no further action had been taken where it was felt that the history wasn't recorded within that contact as being fully considered to inform decision making. This was where children had previously been contacted and Ofsted identified no concerns or safeguarding risks, but it was felt that the way it was recorded didn't evidence that the service had taken into consideration and analysed previous contacts.

Action number two was regarding the 'Assessment of the identity needs of children when planning for their future.' Ofsted specifically considered the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and some care leavers within that recommendation. Ofsted that whilst every individual child's experience was recognised that for some children with particular cultural needs or experiences that may have influenced their identity, that this hadn't been recorded within the assessment as robustly as it could have been.

The third action was regarding 'The level of ambition for individual care leavers, the support for them to achieve their aspirations and the detailing of this in pathway plans.' During the inspection the services ambition for all children in Rotherham was acknowledged however it was regarding how it was described within the pathway plans along with the level of ambition included and needed to include their ultimate ambition and their aspirations.

The final action was around 'the quality of individual case audits to inform wider service learning.' Ofsted indicated that the services quality assurance was very robust, however they couldn't see how the information was used to inform wider service planning.

It was noted that some of the actions were listed as 'in progress and on track' but the deadline for completion had now passed. Could the reason for this be clarified? The reason for this was that the copy of the action plan had been submitted to Ofsted for consideration however it had not been assessed but it was being chased. A copy of the updated action plan could be provided to Members once approved by Ofsted.

During discussions the following was noted:

- It was clarified that the action plan would remain a live document for as long as needed.

- It was confirmed that all identify issues were considered and would be reflected across all cohorts of children and young people.
- In response to a query around the term 'pushy parent', it was clarified that this term was used regarding pushing services to do their best along with the children to active their best.
- Ofsted had provided positive comments on the Early Help Service and the way that it seamlessly worked with Children's Social Care.
- In response to a query regarding 'dip sampling' it was confirmed that the service did look at random cases however the recommendation mentioned in section 2.9 was in relation to supervision audits.

Resolved That: The Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Noted the outcome of inspection and note the draft action plan.
2. Agreed that a briefing note be provided, within an agreed timeframe detailing how actions were re-visited to determine the impact of the actions carried out.
3. Agreed that an update would be provided in September 2023 on all the expected outcomes from the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan.
4. That a copy of the updated action plan is circulated to Members of the Improving Lives Selection Commission upon acceptance by Ofsted.

43. **ROTHERHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Joint Assistant Director, CYPS provided an updated on the Commission's recommendations from a previous meeting. The first recommendation was regarding liaison between the Youth Justice Team and the Performance Team to ensure that the performance data was understood and incorporated. It was confirmed that the liaison had improved.

The Youth Justice Service Manager confirmed that quarterly feedback was provided, and a monthly development day was held where all practitioners attend ensuring shared learning and promoting best practice.

The second recommendation was in recognition that the Young People involved with the Youth Justice were among the most vulnerable residents in the borough and that work was to be carried out to ensure the management resources were utilised to ensure the operation could be delivered.

The Youth Justice Service Manager explained that the name had been changed to promote the child first approach. It was hard to understand the difference the name change had made to the children however our professionals expressed that there was less stigma attached to the service meaning the young people would feel that they hadn't been labelled for life.

There had been a number of actions centred around the national

standards for which the time frames had been removed to highlight that the actions were more important than the timeframes assigned.

The delay in going to tender was around having the correct commissioning framework in place to ensure a consistent approach across the council, however this was now being addressed.

On update could be provided to the Commission regarding whether the service interacted with Rotherham Sight and Sound.

In response it was clarified that the number of offences listed was not the same as number of offenders. The Commission felt that having a breakdown of this included in the reports going forward would be beneficial.

Resolved That: The Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Noted the contents of the report and the accompanying action plans.
2. Agreed that an update be provided, within an agreed timeframe, to members of the Improving Lives Selection Commission detailing how actions are re-visited to determine the impact of the actions carried out.
3. Agreed that the update submitted to the September 2023 Improving Lives Select Commission meeting specifically include details on how the target has been met in relation to item listed as Area for improvement 7. Enhance Board oversight of effectiveness of Out of Court Disposal (OoCD) decision making across the partnership.

44. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Work Programme.

The Chair invited Members of the Commission to contact her directly if they wished to discuss potential topics for inclusion.

The Chair sought Member's interest in taking part in the Young Producers Spotlight review which was to be scheduled around January to Early February 2023.

Resolved That: The Work Programme for 2022/23 be approved.

45. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES

The Chair provided a progress report on sub and project group activity, explaining that all current activities had been completed.

Resolved That: the update be noted.

46. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

47. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved That: the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission would take place on Tuesday, 31 January 2023, commencing at 10am at Rotherham Town Hall.

One Adoption South Yorkshire



One
Adoption
Agency
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2021/2022



FOREWORD

This is the first Annual Report from One Adoption South Yorkshire. We are very proud to share with you what we have achieved in our first year of operation.

It has not been an easy year in which to establish a new organisation. For much of the time the country has been in a significant lockdown with government advice to work from home wherever possible. Fortunately, everyone has become much more adept with the IT and the capacity of TEAMS to adapt to meet our needs has been vital.

As we start to emerge from the covid crisis and people return to actual face to face working, even if now most of us are hybrid working with a mix of working from home and working from the office, new challenges are emerging for the RAA.

Do we return to actual adoption panels? Do we get the teams together actually? What is the trade-off between travelling time and being able to work together directly?

The covid crisis has left all of us, including adoptive families and prospective adopters in a very different place to where we were two years ago. There have been some significant changes in the number of adopters and the number of children being adopted. Are these significant and permanent or will the picture change again? The use of on-line services has changed all of our lives in the last two years and many practices will be changed for ever.

Despite and in some cases because of the above we have been able to create a new identity as One Adoption South Yorkshire and start to deliver as a single unit rather than four separate teams. There is still lots to do but as this report will show – we have made an excellent start.

STEPHANIE EVANS

Head of One Adoption South Yorkshire



OASY STRUCTURE

One Adoption South Yorkshire was the thirtieth of the Regional Adoption Agencies to be created in England and is a partnership model RAA. It brings together the Adoption Services from Doncaster Children's Trust, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Sheffield City Council and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. DCST is the 'host' agency but in a partnership model, practitioners do not all move to the host agency either through secondment or TUPE. They remain employed by their existing agency. Doncaster hosts a small but growing team of central 'hub' staff who operate across the whole service. Unlike many other partnership model RAAs One Adoption South Yorkshire has a pooled budget. Some of the budget remains with each locality to cover staffing, direct payments to adopters and other local expenses, the remainder is held by DCST and covers inter-agency payments, commissioned contracts and other RAA-wide expenses.

Team structures April 2022

LOCALITY	SM	TM	AP	RECRUITMENT	FAMILY-FINDING	POST ADOPTION SUPPORT	TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF (NOT FTE)
BARNSELEY	0.2	1	1	6.5 FTE SW between recruitment and family finding 4.5 SW	6.5 FTE SW between recruitment and family finding 2 SW	2 SW FTE 0.8 Dev Worker – letter-box 2 SW	14
DONCASTER	0.8	1	1	3.45 FTE SW 0.5 SCA 3.45 SW	1.65 FTE 1.65 SW	3.2 FTE 2.5 SCA (incl letter-box) 3.2 SW New shared post 0.5 with SGO – Educ Support	15
ROTHERHAM	0.2	2	0	5.1 FTE SW 1 Support Worker 5.1 SW	2.2 FTE SW 1 Co-ordinator 2.2 SW	2 FTE SW 1FSW 1 contact co-ordinator 2 SW	17
SHEFFIELD	1	2.5	0	7 FTE SW 1 Interviewing officer 7 SW	4 FTE SW 1 SCA 4 SW	3.8 FTE 2.5 SCA 0.6 Letter-box co-ordinator 3.8 SW	28





Head of Service – Stephanie Evans, employed by DCST based in Doncaster.

Service Managers

Vicky Brooke – full-time Service Manager based in Sheffield, current agency lead on Recruitment and Assessment

Lindsey Knight – 0.2 Service Manager with the RAA, based in Rotherham

Sharon Wood – 0.2 Service Manager with the RAA, based in Barnsley

Claire Holmes – 0.8 Service Manager, based in Doncaster, current agency lead on Post Adoption Support

Helen Mangham has been appointed as a 12 month full-time Service Manager to manage the Rotherham and Barnsley teams and be the agency lead on Family-Finding

Team Managers

Michael Richardson – Full-time Team Manager in Barnsley

Melanie Johnson – Full-time Team Manager in Doncaster (this is a new post created by the RAA in April 2022, previously Melanie was 0.2 Team Manager and 0.8 Advanced Practitioner

Vacancy – there is a 12 month Team Manager vacancy in Rotherham which is currently under-recruitment following Helen's appointment to the Service Manager post

Jill Stanley – Full-time Team Manager in Rotherham

Jane Sandland – Full-time Team Manager for Recruitment and Assessment in Sheffield

Liz Rowe – part-time Team Manager for family-finding in Sheffield

Laura Williams – part-time Team Manager for Adoption Support in Sheffield

Agency-Advisers

During the first year in operation the RAA has re-configured the Adoption Panels into East and West Panels and appointed a full-time Agency-Adviser to each area:

Agency Adviser East (Doncaster and Rotherham) – Kim Wilson.

Agency Adviser West (Barnsley and Sheffield) – Samantha Jones.

Panel Chairs

Panel Chair East – Michaela Bass

Panel Chair West – Viv Howorth

OASY GOVERNANCE

RAA Governance Board – currently meets bi-monthly

Riana Nelson, Director of Learning Opportunity, Skills and Culture,
DMBC – Chair

Director of Children’s Services – RMBC

Assistant Director, Children in Care, Sheffield City Council

Director of Children’s Services, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough
Council

Director of Children’s Social Care, Doncaster Children’s Services Trust

Director of Children’s Services, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough
Council

Adoption-UK – South Yorkshire Adopter Voice representative

Virtual Head, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Yorkshire Adoption Agency – Voluntary Adoption Agency
Representative

As yet an appropriate representative from the local Health Services
has not been identified and after a year in operation this would be a
timely opportunity to review the membership of the Board in
general.



PERFORMANCE

Performance data is collected both for the individual authorities and for the RAA as a whole and is split between the adopter data and the children's data. At the present time the RAA is able to produce reliable data based on the requirements of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board but there are some areas of data collection, particularly around post adoption support and the stability of adoptive families that will need further development in the future.

Adopter Data

National Adoption Regulations have specific expectations regarding the length of each element of the journey to approval for adopters.

Stage 1 – Should be completed within 2 months

Stage 2 – Should be completed within 4 months

Numbers at stage one – 21-22 compared with late 20-21

No. at Stage 1 (Start date and no end date)

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
Barnsley	9	6	6	5	4	5	7	8	8	7	8	7
Doncaster	6	7	7	5	5	5	7	8	10	12	17	17
Rotherham	5	3	8	9	7	7	2	2	4	5	6	8
Sheffield	7	8	7	5	9	9	7	7	6	3	3	3
One Adoption SY	27	24	28	24	25	26	23	25	28	27	34	35

No. at Stage 1

	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
Barnsley	5	8	7
Doncaster	8	7	9
Rotherham	5	4	7
Sheffield	11	9	6
One Adoption SY	29	28	29





Numbers at stage one remain broadly consistent across the last eighteen months and are shared fairly equally across all four teams. The reasons for the sudden jump in numbers at stage one in Doncaster in recent months are not clear but it is likely to be that on the website the information events that adopters sign up for may be weighted in Doncaster's favour as Doncaster were the only service delivering actual information events. The agreed RAA procedure is that adopter assessments are allocated in the area where the adopters live regardless of which information event they attend unless the adopters themselves have an expressed preference for being assessed by a particular team. But often adopters from outside the One Adoption area who have chosen to approach OASY rather than their local RAA are allocated to the team delivering the information meeting they attend.

Stage One of the adopter approval process begins when the adopter has submitted a 'Registration of Interest' form which has been accepted by the agency and at this stage background checks and medicals are completed.

Ave length of time at Stage 1 (if greater than 2 months (61 days) then shaded orange)

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Ave
Barnsley	88.8	121.5	130.3	140.6	169.3	56.0	60.9	52.9	71.3	85.1	84.5	99.1	113.5
Doncaster	79.8	80.7	89.4	98.6	82.6	64.4	28.7	53.9	49.2	63.0	84.1	115.1	83.3
Rotherham	87.8	137.3	107.1	129.4	165.4	111.3	196.5	227.5	158.3	133.2	81.2	91.1	110.8
Sheffield	50.1	72.3	94.1	116.8	92.7	79.1	63.4	68.0	82.2	96.7	62.3	20.3	72.2
One Adoption SY	76.6	102.9	105.3	121.4	127.5	77.7	87.4	100.6	90.2	94.5	78.0	98.3	94.9

This table shows the average length of time the adopters currently at stage 1 have been in stage 1 on a month by month basis. In order to demonstrate whether the teams are making any progress in moving adopters through stage 1 more quickly the RAA needs to know the average time spent at stage 1 for those who have fully completed stage 1. However what this table does show is that some people spend far more than 61 days in stage 1.

This can be for a variety of reasons, which might include the service not progressing them quickly enough, but mostly, at this point in time, it is due to delays in obtaining the statutory checks particularly the medical examinations due to the pressures on GPs during and after the covid crisis. There are often other built in delays due to background checks not being progressed quickly enough or even some adopters' information not being immediately available. In 22/23 a dedicated case management system will allow the RAA to more effectively identify any delays in the process.

No. at Stage 2 (start date and no end date)

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
Barnsley	10	12	9	5	6	6	4	1	2	4	5	6
Doncaster	7	9	8	11	8	7	9	6	7	6	7	7
Rotherham	11	12	9	8	5	3	5	7	7	8	6	6
Sheffield	8	11	9	9	10	6	8	12	10	9	8	8
One Adoption SY	36	44	35	33	29	22	26	26	26	27	26	27

Stage 2 is the period during which the full assessment of potential adopters is undertaken by a qualified and experienced social worker. As can be seen from the table above there has been a substantial drop in overall numbers by the end of 21/22 from earlier in the year. The teams are reporting higher numbers of adopters than usual dropping out either between the enquiry and the registration of interest stage or during stage 2. Some of the expressed reasons from drop out at stage 2 in the last year have been the couples becoming pregnant and either wanting to delay adoption until sometime after the child is born or even giving up on the adoption process altogether but another common reason for the increased number of drop-outs is becoming financial reasons, the uncertainty after COVID and the inflationary pressures on family incomes are making some potential adopters reconsider their decision.

Ave length of time at Stage 2 - days between Stage 2 start & end of month (if greater than 4 months (121 days) then shaded orange)

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Ave
Barnsley	63.5	71.0	103.7	79.2	97.8	53.5	55.8	50.0	35.0	39.8	31.8	51.7	79.4
Doncaster	49.8	61.9	88.8	100.6	92.0	74.1	70.8	100.3	93.9	73.5	67.4	98.4	66.8
Rotherham	50.1	59.1	107.1	132.5	123.0	65.0	66.6	75.4	95.9	113.1	67.3	98.3	72.1
Sheffield	54.1	66.7	166.0	82.6	92.9	54.5	58.3	52.8	58.8	84.4	95.4	54.8	95.6
One Adoption SY	54.4	64.8	117.2	100.2	98.9	61.9	63.8	69.7	76.4	83.9	69.2	75.1	78.8

There are the same problems with this table as with the stage one table and the RAA needs further work on a specific adoption case management system to ensure the required information becomes available to take the Service forward. However as with the stage 1 table it does show some adopters taking longer at stage 2 than the national target. Again this is likely to be due to a number of factors similar to those at stage 1.



Overall number of adopters approved 2020/21**No. of Adopters Approved**

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Total
Barnsley	4	1	3	3	3	1	2	0	3	3	1	2	26
Doncaster	3	0	4	0	2	2	2	1	3	0	1	2	20
Rotherham	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	0	4	3	24
Sheffield	0	2	2	4	5	1	3	4	0	1	0	2	24
One Adoption SY	9	4	11	9	11	6	9	7	9	4	6	9	94

Overall number of adopters approved 2021/22**No. of Adopters Approved**

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Barnsley	2	1	3	3	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	17
Doncaster	0	0	3	0	4	2	1	3	1	2	0	1	17
Rotherham	2	1	3	2	2	4	0	0	2	4	0	0	20
Sheffield	3	0	3	3	0	4	1	1	3	1	2	4	25
One Adoption SY	7	2	12	8	8	11	4	4	8	7	3	5	79

The target set in the original business case for the SYRAA was 92 adopters per year so in 21-22 the RAA output is below the set target and there is a decline in performance from 20-21 when the target was exceeded. The reasons are likely to be as outlined above with some adopters dropping out of the process and others not coming forward due to the circumstances around covid and the current impact on family finances. However there may also be an awareness amongst potential adopters of the current position regarding children seeking adoptive families. In December 2021, the last time figures were collated, OASY had 63 approved adopters awaiting children and only 45 children for whom we were seeking adoptive families. This picture is replicated nationally with the number of approved adopters outstripping the number of children to be placed.

The challenge facing One Adoption South Yorkshire is not necessarily to recruit more adopters but to recruit more adopters who can meet the specific needs of the children who need families. This will mean recruiting more adopters who could provide a home for older children, for brothers and sisters together, for children with complex health needs and for children with diverse cultural heritage. The Service has begun to do this since coming together as a RAA with recent national and local campaigns for adopters for older children and sibling groups. Practitioners have been working with adopters and local communities to try to spread the message that adoption can be for people from a wide range of backgrounds. The Service aims to connect with faith groups and with people employed in the caring professions who may feel able to adopt older children and children with complex health needs. In the future the RAA will develop a 'concurrent planning' service where parents are dually assessed as both foster carers and adopters with the understanding that the initial plan is to return the children to birth family or extended family members wherever possible, but if that proves impossible the children would be adopted by the concurrent carers. This service would need to be developed alongside colleagues in the local authority fostering service and colleagues in the Children's teams.

In order to address the current excess of adopters over children OASY has established links with other Regional Adoption Agencies who are not in the same position and there are a number of external matches for OASY adopters coming through in the near future. This will ensure that local adopters are not dropping out of the process due to waiting times and children from elsewhere in the country are provided with the families they need.

Children's data

As with adopters there are national targets for the completion of certain stages in the child's journey from coming into the care of the local authority to an Adoption Order being made and their becoming a permanent member of their new family.

The A1 indicator is the length of time between a child coming into care and being placed with their adoptive family. The target time is 426 days.

Average time from entering care to being placed (A1 Indicator) (for those children adopted)

	Qtr 1 21 22	Qtr 2 21 22	Qtr 3 21 22	Qtr 4 21 22	Full Year
Barnsley	373.4	401.6	477.0	436.6	398.2
Doncaster	437.0	478.7	524.0	442.5	463.0
Rotherham	563.8	549.6	581.3	726.1	621.5
Sheffield	521.5	535.7	760.3	580.0	564.4
One Adoption SY	471.1	502.5	610.1	594.3	528.0

The table shows the average length of time for the children adopted by each team in 21-22. As these are all children where the Adoption Order has been made the ones earlier in the year will mostly be children placed before the RAA was created.

Average time from Entering Care to being placed (A1 indicator)(for those children adopted) by Age at Adoption

	Under 1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+	Full Year
Barnsley	173.5	395.4	660.0	-	-	398.2
Doncaster	-	466.3	437.0	-	-	463.0
Rotherham	206.0	527.5	977.0	1276.0	-	621.5
Sheffield	177.4	537.1	763.5	-	-	564.4
One Adoption SY	182.9	481.4	789.0	1276.0	-	528.0

This table provides balance to the previous table as it shows the impact of age on waiting times for children.

If the service was only placing children under one year old the target would easily be achieved, as for many children under year old adopters are more readily available and many are placed subject to an early permanence placement where the adopters are dually approved as foster carers and the children are placed with them before the Court has made a Placement Order. Care proceedings have always been lengthy and the 26 week target was rarely achieved before covid. In the last two years care proceedings have taken longer and longer meaning that unless the child is placed in an Early Permanence Placement before the Placement Order is made they are becoming older and older at the point of placement with their adoption family. Older children always take longer to find suitable families but the impact on the timeliness figures of finding a suitable placement for older children between 5 and 9, or as shown here where Rotherham placed a child over 10, should not mean that the service ceases family-finding for older children.

To adjust for this practice of older children being adopted at a later stage often by their previous foster carers the National Targets have a relatively new indicator – A10.

Average time from entering care to being placed with foster carer (A10 Indicator) (for those children adopted)

	Qtr 1 21.22	Qtr 2 21.22	Qtr 3 21.22	Qtr 4 21.22	Full Year
Barnsley	315.1	401.6	477.0	436.6	364.3
Doncaster	437.0	389.7	524.0	272.8	357.9
Rotherham	475.4	506.8	316.8	352.1	418.9
Sheffield	341.3	535.7	731.3	568.2	476.5
One Adoption SY	359.0	474.8	512.3	437.8	420.4

On this indicator three of the four locality teams are under the national target and the RAA overall is within the 426 days.

This target is not one the RAA can deliver against as a single service. The achievement of this goal to place children as quickly as possible with permanent families is a shared activity involving colleagues in Children's Services making assessments and plans and implementing them as promptly as possible and the Courts ensuring that decision-making is prompt in the interests of the child. As we are all aware in the last two years there has been considerable delay in care proceedings and in setting dates for hearings as a result of the COVID crisis.

Average time from Placement Order to Matching (A2 Indicator) (for those children adopted)

	Qtr 1 21.22	Qtr 2 21.22	Qtr 3 21.22	Qtr 4 21.22	Full Year
Barnsley	142.6	57.0	88.0	119.8	119.8
Doncaster	220.0	149.0	53.0	93.8	121.7
Rotherham	282.3	174.1	401.8	341.8	292.2
Sheffield	193.9	200.8	158.5	152.3	179.0
One Adoption SY	191.7	151.4	213.2	209.2	191.2

The National A2 indicator is one where the main responsibility for achieving this target lies with the RAA, as the speed with which this is achieved depends on the early allocation of a family-finder and the availability of adopters to meet the needs of the child. If the child is allocated early enough to a family-finder and if there are suitable adopters available the target of 121 days is easily achieved. However for older children, for sibling groups and for children with complex health needs adopters are not always immediately available and there have to be more lengthy searches both across the RAA's own resources and even nationally, involving adopters from other RAAs and Voluntary Adoption Agencies. However sometimes unnecessary delays can occur at this stage where a case is transferred from one children's social worker to another or where there are a number of possible adopters and there are delays around making a choice of where to place a child. Even here closer and more effective working with colleagues in the Children's Teams can speed up the process for a child.

No. of Adoptions

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Barnsley	8	7	3	1	1	3	2	1	0	1	1	3	31
Doncaster	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	9
Rotherham	3	5	1	1	4	3	2	1	1	4	0	8	33
Sheffield	4	6	9	5	1	0	3	1	0	6	3	4	42
One Adoption SY	15	19	13	8	8	6	8	3	1	11	5	18	115

No. of Adoptions

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Total
Barnsley	2	0	1	0	3	5	4	1	0	0	3	6	25
Doncaster	1	0	2	2	2	4	1	1	0	4	0	4	21
Rotherham	1	0	0	1	1	9	7	5	2	2	1	5	34
Sheffield	2	0	0	3	2	11	2	3	3	4	0	3	33
One Adoption SY	6	0	3	6	8	29	14	10	5	10	4	18	113

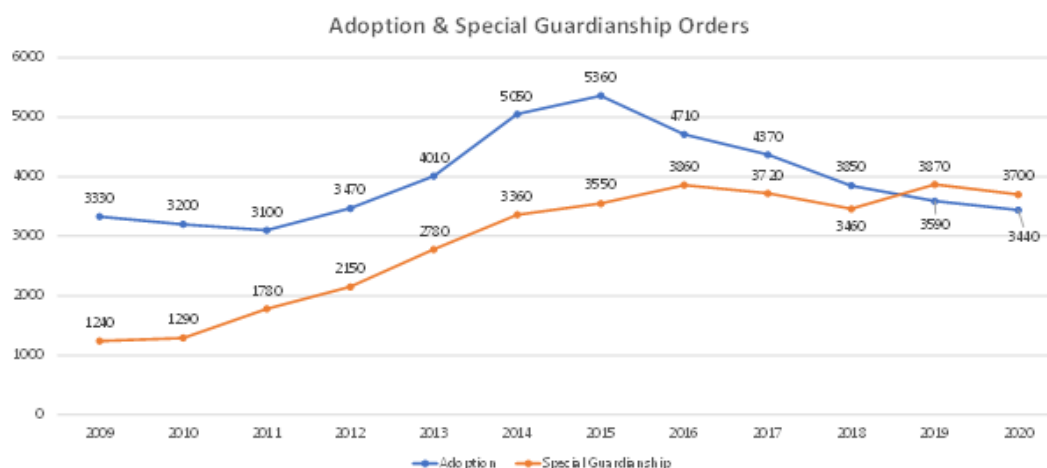
The number of children adopted in 21/22 compares favourably with the figures for 20/21. The number of adoptions in a given year largely reflects the activity of the previous year as Adoption Orders are usually made some months after the child is placed so the first table will mostly reflect activity in 19/20 and the second activity in 20/21.

Activity by the RAA in 21/22 is more accurately reflected in the number of children 'placed' for adoption.

Children who were placed during (includes those later Adopted or no longer placed)

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Barnsley	1	1	1	3	3	2	0	4	0	0	3	1	19
Doncaster	1	0	1	0	1	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	14
Rotherham	3	3	3	0	4	2	0	6	0	1	0	0	22
Sheffield	5	1	6	1	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	3	26
One Adoption SY	10	5	11	4	10	10	3	14	1	3	5	5	81

This table shows a reduction in adoption activity across all four local authorities in 21/22 from the two previous years. A reduction in adoption activity has been shown right across England and Wales over the last three years. At this point the reasons for this are largely speculative. Covid and the delays in Court are believed to be a significant feature as this has slowed down the adoption process across the country. Many children have ultimately either been placed with relatives following lengthy assessments which should be a positive thing or have remained in care for so long that they are now considered too old to be adopted and are likely to remain in long-term foster care. More children are now being placed subject to Special Guardianship Orders than Adoption Orders – the cross-over point came at the end of 2018. However in the last two years under covid there has been a decline in the number of both SGOs and Adoption Orders being made. Again this is believed to be due to the reduction in Court activity. (See table below)



John Simmonds, Coram-Baaf for the Public Law Working Group Jan 2022

The original RAA Business Case set a target of 154 children adopted per year, although this was a relatively arbitrary figure, based on levels of adoption across South Yorkshire in previous years. The RAA can only find placements for the children the local authorities ask it to find placements for so together we need to explore whether this down-turn reflects a permanent change in practice or is just a reflection of the impact of the recent pandemic or other temporary factors.

Central to the ethos of One Adoption South Yorkshire is the aim of placing South Yorkshire children with South Yorkshire Families. There are two main drivers behind this aim. Firstly by placing local children with the RAA's own adopters practitioners know both the children and the families much better and can be more confident that good matches are being made. Secondly if children are placed with local families the RAA is in a much better position to support those families into the future and ensure that the child remains secure within that family. The current legal requirement is that the placing authority provides adoption support to the family for the first three years post placement which means that if the RAA places a South Yorkshire child anywhere in England or Wales practitioners will be travelling often long distances to support families and they won't have the knowledge about local facilities and services that they would need to provide useful advice and support.

Children who were placed from within the RAA (includes those later Adopted or nc

	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total
Barnsley	1	0	1	3	2	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	14
Doncaster	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	8
Rotherham	3	3	1	0	2	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	16
Sheffield	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	3	15
One Adoption SY	6	4	4	4	7	5	2	12	1	2	3	3	53
% Barnsley	100%	0%	100%	100%	67%	0%	-	100%	-	-	100%	0%	74%
%Doncaster	100%	-	100%	-	100%	50%	0%	50%	100%	100%	0%	0%	57%
%Rotherham	100%	100%	33%	-	50%	50%	-	100%	-	0%	-	-	73%
%Sheffield	20%	100%	17%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	-	100%	0%	100%	58%
% One Adoption SY	60%	80%	36%	100%	70%	50%	67%	86%	100%	67%	60%	60%	65%

Children who were placed from within the RAA (includes those later Adopted or not)

	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Total
Barnsley	2	1	1	1	6	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	15
Doncaster	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	9
Rotherham	0	1	3	1	2	3	1	0	4	0	0	2	17
Sheffield	2	0	4	1	0	3	0	1	1	4	1	2	19
One Adoption SY	5	2	9	3	9	8	3	5	5	4	2	5	60
% Barnsley	100%	33%	100%	100%	86%	0%	50%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47%
%Doncaster	50%	-	100%	0%	33%	40%	100%	50%	-	-	100%	100%	47%
%Rotherham	-	33%	100%	50%	67%	100%	20%	0%	100%	-	-	67%	57%
%Sheffield	40%	-	100%	25%	0%	60%	0%	50%	100%	67%	100%	50%	54%
% One Adoption SY	56%	33%	100%	30%	64%	50%	30%	45%	83%	44%	40%	45%	52%

The table for 21/22 shows a significant increase in the percentage of children being placed within the RAA, up 13% from the previous year. However 35% placed externally is still some way from where the RAA would want to be. As a RAA we would never want to insist that all children are placed with RAA adopters as there always has to be the consideration of the needs of the child and the avoidance of delay. If the right adopter at the right time happens to live elsewhere in the country we would still make the placement with the external adopters. However a number of children are placed externally because there are no adopters who could take a sibling placement or who don't have the required cultural heritage within South Yorkshire. Over time the RAA will seek to ensure that it is able to provide such placements in house wherever possible. South Yorkshire is a large conurbation of 1.4 million people from a wide range of backgrounds and if suitable adopters can be found anywhere in the country we ought to be able to find them here.

In terms of disrupted adoptions, that is placements which have ended before the Adoption Order is made, OASY has had 2 disruptions in 21/22, one involving a sibling group, so 3 children in all. Disruptions are very difficult for everyone involved but are thankfully rare. Lessons can be learned but often the circumstances are quite specific and relate to the characteristics of the individuals involved and how they relate or don't relate to each other.

There was an additional situation where children were placed subject to an Early Permanence Placements which did not work out as planned and there is learning to be had from this as well.

In 21/22 the whole service received training from the University of East Anglia based on research they had been undertaking in respect of making good transitions for children from foster carers to adoptive parents using the Secure Base model. In the light of the 3 breakdowns the importance of making good transitions has been emphasized and in 22/23 the Regional Adoption Agency would want to ensure this training is rolled out to colleagues in the Children's Teams and in the Fostering Service as well as more adopters and foster carers to ensure that we are all operating together in the child's best interests.

FINANCE

The South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency was created under a Section 101 agreement on the 1st January 2021.

The four partners who signed up to the agreement are Doncaster Children's Trust (Lead Authority), Sheffield City Council, Barnsley MBC & Rotherham MBC.

An annual combined budget of £4.964m was agreed, of which £1.644m relating to interagency, contracts and marketing is managed by Doncaster as the Lead Authority.

South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency (SYRAA)	2021/22 £000
Rotherham RMBC	1,241
Sheffield CC	1,626
Barnsley MBC	976
Doncaster Children's Trust	1,175
Total Gross Income	5,018
Capital Expenditure	0
Revenue Expenditure	3,975
Total Gross Expenditure	3,975
Underspend	1,043
Underspend retained for 2022/23	270
Balance Reimbursed to Partners Pro-Rate to Original Contributions	773

The Board agreed in the March 2022 meeting to roll-over the underspend (£270k) in 21/22 to provide for a new case management system, additional training and start-up events for RAA practitioners, adopters and RAA partners and for additional adopter-voice work. The remaining portion of the 21/22 underspend (£773k) is to be returned to the partner authorities as a one-off payment pro-rata to the original contributions.

Changes in RAA staffing have been agreed by the Board to take into account the development needs of the new service. Posts relating to 22/23 include an Advanced Practitioner and Finance and Administrative Manager in the central team and an Adoption Support post for the Barnsley team. This follows approval at previous Board Meetings for the acquisition of Agency Advisor x 2, Clinical Psychologist and 2x Service Managers for 22/23. After a year of operation, we now have a good understanding of the resources in each team and the capacity to meet demand both locally and across the RAA.

The circumstances of 21/22 have been exceptional due to covid, the anticipated recurrent underspend has been re-allocated to extend the service and it is not anticipated that there will be a similar underspend in 22/23.





Adoption Support Fund

The funding provided by the Department of Education through the Adoption Support Fund has become a significant aspect of the Adoption Support service provided by RAAs across England and Wales and One Adoption South Yorkshire is no exception.

In 21/22 the funds drawn down on behalf of families were as follows:-

Total Applications - 432

Barnsley	£279,937.73
Doncaster	£318,947.36
Rotherham	£371,936.25
Sheffield	£506,162.03

TOTAL AMOUNT CLAIMED	£1,476,983.37
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Barnsley	£51,331.67
Doncaster	£70,679.20
Rotherham	£84,340.28
Sheffield	£87,187.00

Total Returned to ASF Fund	£293,538.15
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The funding from the ASF is not a grant to the agency. Each application is specifically linked to a child and a provider. The funding comes from the Department of Education and must be used on the specific agreed intervention. If the funding is not fully used any unspent funds must be returned to the DoE. As of 1st April 2021 the RAA become the administrator for the ASF across all 4 teams and the funding is now paid directly to DCST. As can be seen above the amounts involved are substantial and are increasing every year. The full-time business support post with the RAA is fully occupied in administering the payments to providers and a substantial proportion of the Adoption Support workers' time is taken up in writing applications and commissioning and reviewing interventions. In 22/23 the Adoption Support Fund is changing its payment processes in that funding will no longer be released in advance of the work taking place with any unspent funds being returned at the end of the year. Instead the RAA will only be able to drawdown funding as invoices are received from providers as confirmation that the work has taken place.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 21/22

During 21/22 the main focus of the RAA has been to maintain the previous high level of performance of each of the four constituent teams while gaining a good understanding of resources and capacity across South Yorkshire as a whole with a view identifying future development opportunities and creating structures which will enhance the service for children and adoptive families and deliver a consistent, high quality Regional Adoption Agency into the future.

- All previous contracts and commissioned services which were held across the four authorities in respect of adoption were consolidated and novated to the RAA.
- A single website and a single communications and marketing service working alongside the two other RAAs comprising the Yorkshire and Humber-wide One Adoption Service; One Adoption West Yorkshire and One Adoption North and Humber were established and the previous local adoption websites were closed down. A central point of contact for adopters was established which continues to allow adopters and potential adopters to contact their local area teams where required.
- Quarterly newsletters have been produced on a rotating basis by the four teams and the 'in kind' Communications support provided by each partner provides the local lead alongside the central One Adoption Communication service on an aligned quarterly basis.
- The first RAA-wide survey of adopters was undertaken in February 2022. This will assist the service in planning future activity and will be repeated every year.
- OASY came together on Linkmaker, which is the nation-wide system for linking adopters and children who need families. Within Linkmaker it is possible for details of local adopters and local children to be shared across all four teams to establish whether we have a local match before we open up either adopters or children to consideration by other agencies. Alongside monthly matching meetings to consider those children who might wait longer because they are older, part of a sibling group or have complex health needs this move to a single agency site on Link-maker has enabled the RAA to place more children within South Yorkshire where we can better support families as the children get older.



- Preparation training for adopters had been a joint South Yorkshire undertaking for several years in advance of the RAA but during 21/22 a RAA wide training programme has been produced and alongside a RAA wide post adoption training plan.
- A 3 year development plan on a page has been created to ensure practitioners, adopters and partners have a shared understanding of the RAA direction of travel.
- The first of the planned annual conferences bringing together RAA practitioners, adopters and partners was held in March 2022 and was a great opportunity to bring people together actually for the first time since the RAA went live. The theme of the conference was 'E-safety' a topic which has become a source of particular concern with families and young people confined to the home and living life online as a result of the pandemic.
- Adoption Panels have been stream-lined within the RAA. Although the same number of monthly panels take place and they are still loosely aligned to the 4 authorities. The RAA now has 2 Chairs and 2 full-time Agency Advisers, one for the East Panel (Doncaster and Rotherham) and one for the West Panel (Sheffield and Barnsley). With fewer people involved the RAA has been able to move to more consistent and more effective practices and procedures. Alongside the standardised panels and practice we are also moving to a single share-point site – the RAA Hub - where practitioners can book onto panels and up-date the panel reports from any of the 4 localities across South Yorkshire.
- Progress has been made towards aligning practice on recruitment and assessment, family-finding and adoption support. Information events are coordinated and there are single protocols for recruitment and family-finding. ASF users come together on a regular basis to agree shared approaches. However there is still a great deal of work to do which will be further advanced in 22/23 by the creation of the 3 full-time Service Manager leads. Each Service Manager will be responsible for bringing together RAA practice in one of the 3 key areas of adoption work.
- The reduction in external placements has freed some funding to facilitate the creation of new structures and essential support posts to ensure the future development of the RAA. In 22/23 these posts will be created and their impact on services monitored.



Adoption Support



Adoption support is a key developmental area for the South Yorkshire RAA and indeed for all RAAs. An adoption doesn't end with the adoption order and the commitment of the South Yorkshire RAA is to be there for our adopter families throughout the years as their children grow and become young adults, ensuring that our children grow to adulthood in secure and stable families and achieve their full potential.

At the point of 'go live' in January 2021 the teams were all in very different places in respect of adoption support. Sheffield and Doncaster had small dedicated teams, Barnsley had one full-time worker equivalent and Rotherham had one full-time worker who had just transferred across from the Rotherham Therapeutic Team. Prior to becoming part of the RAA the Rotherham adoption team had no responsibility for Adoption Support at all as this had been provided entirely by the Rotherham Therapeutic Team supplemented by applications to the ASF. Each authority had a different approach to grants and expenses for adopters and post adoption training.

Early meetings with adopters established that adoption support was their number one priority but it also became clear that some of the support they were expecting needed to come from partner agencies, particularly Education and Health and while the Adoption Support teams had a key sign-posting and co-ordination role they were not the key deliverers of some post adoption services.

As a result adoption support development in 21/22 concentrated on two main themes. Firstly consistent support to adopters in the early stages after a child joins their family. There is a new 'offer' to adopters including membership of Adoption-UK and the Institute of Therapeutic Parenting, linking with a peer mentor and regular ongoing contact with their assessing social worker through the first year of placement to ensure they are accessing any support they need. Initial grants are available to adopters where children may have additional needs such as when two or more children join a family at the same time.

The RAA has adopted a consistent approach in terms of recommending adoption allowances for adopters in specific circumstances consistent with the criteria for initial grants. However adoption allowances are not the responsibility of the RAA. The decision regarding the payment of an allowance rests with the Authority who are responsible for the child.



Secondly the RAA is looking to work with adopters and partners to further develop the provision of multi-disciplinary support to adoptive families.

Current areas under development:-

- Trauma- informed services in schools. This is an approach already embraced by many schools across South Yorkshire, although there are still many where it would be a new concept. There is a specific coordinating project across South Yorkshire led by Sheffield Hallam University and the Virtual Heads in all 4 partner authorities are supporting the development of trauma-informed approaches in all their schools. In 2022/23 the RAA will continue to work with adopters and partners to ensure the approach is introduced in ever more schools across South Yorkshire.
- The introduction of a consistent education support plan for adopted children across South Yorkshire. A team from the RAA, the virtual heads group and adopters are working on a single plan to be introduced to schools across South Yorkshire from September 2022
- Work with the virtual heads group to develop an introduction to education services for adopters and RAA practitioners, ensuring that everyone understands the key stages, the SEND processes and ongoing processes for student assessment and support.

Future adoption support development work:-

- RAA practitioners and adopters to engage with SENDIASS, local Academy Trusts, local SEND teams, local virtual heads teams to ensure a coordinated approach to adopted children in local schools
- RAA practitioners and adopters to engage with local health services, particularly the new Integrated Care System which will be South Yorkshire wide, to ensure adoptive children are able to access pathway services such as those for ASD and possibly a potential FASD pathway and local CAMHS and other physical health services in a timely way
- The RAA has funding to create the nucleus on an in-house multi-disciplinary team to support the adoption support workers in supporting families across South Yorkshire. In 22/23 we will recruit an additional adoption support worker in Rotherham and one in Barnsley and an advanced practitioner who will be Hub based to co-ordinate adoption support across the RAA. Funding has also been identified for a RAA Clinical Psychologist who will also be Hub based and support adoption support workers across South Yorkshire Their remit will be specifically to undertake psychological assessments of adopted children which will inform our applications to the ASF. In the future there may be some possibilities of using ASF funding in one form or another to increase the membership and range of services within the RAA multi-disciplinary team.
- RAA adopters, adopted children and practitioners to work together on developing additional services such as support groups for older children and young people.



Future plans

Adoption is always changing and the coming years could be the period of greatest change for a generation. Almost all local authorities are now part of a Regional Adoption Agency. At the last national up-date there were only one or two statutory adoption services which were still part of stand-alone local authorities. The National Adoption Strategy published in July 2021 sees the RAAs at the heart of adoption activity and 2021 saw the creation of a National Strategic Lead for Adoption with a co-ordinating role to promote best practice across the country.

One of the key objectives of the Adoption Strategy is speeding up the time it takes to find suitable adopters for children. This is invariably linked to the availability of families for children who are older, are from a minority ethnic or mixed heritage background, need to be placed with brothers or sisters or who have complex health needs. As a Regional Adoption Agency we are engaging with the national drive to reach more diverse communities of adopters who have the skills, abilities and motivation to provide homes for children with more diverse needs. As we emerge from the isolation and restrictions imposed by the pandemic we are committed to reaching out into our local communities, challenging the beliefs around who can adopt and raising the profile of the kinds of children who need families. We ask all the readers of this Annual Report to assist us with this project and promote adoption for all children who need alternative permanent families wherever and whenever they are able.

Adoption Support will be a key element in increasing people's confidence that they can provide a family for brothers and sisters, for older children and from children with complex needs. Families come in all shapes and sizes and family support comes from a broad range of sources, from appropriate and effective services in the local community, from the extended family of fellow adopters, from the Regional Adoption Agency and its support services from the Adoption Support Fund and from all partner agencies all the way from placement to adulthood.



There are many areas of adoption practice which the RAA still needs to develop further alongside partner agencies:-

- Ongoing support for birth families – the RAA has a contract with PAC-UK to provide some birth family support and there are some areas of good practice across South Yorkshire, some areas have PAUSE projects and others don't. This is an area we need to understand better and work with birth families themselves so that we can make best use of our resources
- Post adoption contact – this is very much an area for further development at national and local level and would involve a culture change across Children's Services and local courts as well as across the RAA. There are some new projects such as Letter-swap which are already under development but current thinking about the importance of post adoption contact with birth family could initiate major changes right across the sector
- Access to records for adopted adults and other relevant persons. At the moment the arrangements are very confused across the country. The move to RAAs has made it even more unclear who holds the records and how adopted adults could access them.
- Partner Adoptions – post covid this has become a large part of the RAA's work as families seem to have reviewed their situations and decided that this is something they want to take further. The allocation of step-parent adoptions impacts significantly on our capacity to allocate assessments of adopters for children who don't have families and can pose real dilemmas around the allocation of limited resources.

In year two One Adoption South Yorkshire will still be an agency in its infancy. At the end of year one we have identified a number of significant changes we need to implement in 22/23 to help us move forward.

- We will recruit to several key posts and there is likely to be a subsequent need to recruit to vacancies elsewhere in the service as existing staff step into new roles. So this is likely to be a busy year in terms of recruitment and changes in staffing.
- Post covid we will make good our intention to reach out and recruit a more diverse range of adopters to meet the needs of our children
- Together with colleagues in South Yorkshire and those in One Adoption West and North and Humber we will further develop the use of early permanence placements, specifically we would be planning to work with colleagues in the fostering teams to explore the joint recruitment of concurrent carers. In concurrency foster carers are also approved adopters who could adopt the children in their care if plans to return the children to birth family are not successful.

- We will commission a new adoption specific case management system which will assist the RAA teams currently spread across 4 authorities and 4 different IT systems to come together and understand its current commitments and its capacity to deliver against expected performance.
- We will introduce Letterswap, initially as a pilot, but if successful as the main form of indirect communication between adopters, adopted children and birth families. With Letterswap delivering the in-direct contact this could free up resources to support other services such as Life-story work and even actual contact where appropriate. We will take the next steps to move away from the previous operating as four separate agencies and move further towards working as one. This will involve more shared practice across the three areas of adoption services. It will involve shared recording systems and shared information storage systems. It will involve practitioners in each of the three areas of practice and the four localities coming together regularly on an actual basis.
- We will continue to work with the three local authorities and the Children's Trust in Doncaster to ensure that allowances and other financial support for adopters is aligned and equitable across South Yorkshire
- We will continue to take steps in partnership with adopters and other agencies to ensure we have an effective and consistent adoption support offer across all four areas. A single case management system which includes adoption support services will help us plan better and deliver more effective work with families.



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Public Report
Improving Lives Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 31 January 2023

Report Title

Update Report on Post CSE Support Services

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report provides an update on the delivery of the action in response to the findings and recommendations of the Improving Lives sub-group on post-CSE support.

Recommendations

1. Members of the Improving Lives Select Committee note the completed actions.
2. Members of the Improving Lives Select Committee agree to add an update from the Trauma Resilience Service on Post-Abuse support to the forward plan.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Updated Response to Scrutiny Review – Post-CSE Support
Appendix 2 Equality Analysis Screening
Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Improving Lives Select Commission report: Outcomes from the sub-group on Post-CSE Support

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy (including Sufficiency) 2023 - 2027

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1.	Background
1.1	It was agreed at the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 3 March 2020, that benchmarking work to inform the development of a needs analysis to underpin the commissioning process should be resumed, with the results detailed in a standalone report on post-CSE support.
1.2	Eight recommendations were generated by Members which derived from desktop research and a series of online meetings with officers and Cabinet Members at other local authorities to learn how they supported survivors of CSE. This report provides an update on progress against the recommendations, together with details of timescales and accountabilities. The recommendations from the review were agreed by Improving Lives Select Commission on 21 December 2021, and by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 19 January 2022, Cabinet on 14 February 2022 and Full Council on 20 th July 2022.
1.3	Cabinet's response to those recommendations was considered at its meeting on 20 June 2022.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	The Improving Lives Select Commission spotlight review produced eight recommendations, all of which were accepted. Actions to address the recommendations have now been completed. The responses are listed against each in Appendix 1.
3.	Options considered and recommended proposal
3.1	Recommended proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members of the Improving Lives Select Committee note the completed actions. 2. Members of the Improving Lives Select Committee agree to add an update from the Trauma Resilience Service on Post-Abuse support to the forward plan.
4.	Consultation on proposal
4.1	The Strategic Director – Children and Young People's Services and the Strategic Director – Adult Social Care, Housing and Health have been consulted with regard to the response to the recommendations. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health have been consulted with regarding the report and its recommendations.
5.	Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision
5.1	The timetable and accountability are detailed in appendix 1.
6.	Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications
6.1	Where there is a need for the Council to commission services from third party organisations to deliver the strategy, this must be done in compliance with the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and the Public

	Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended). Early consideration needs to be given in the development of any commissioned services to ensure the chosen delivery vehicle includes the flexibility to meet the requirements of the Strategy.
6.2	<p>The Post CSE Support Service has an aggregate contract price of £156,000 per annum with the current individual contracts listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service £45,000 • GROW - Support £33,000 • Rotherham Rise - Counselling and Support £78,000 <p>The CYPS budget earmarked to the value of these contracts has been transferred to ASCHH.</p>
7.	Legal Advice and Implications
7.1	There do not appear to be any legal implications connected to the recommendations in the report.
8.	Human Resources Advice and Implications
	There are no direct HR implications contained within this report.
9.	Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults
9.1	The implications for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults are set out in the attached Improving Lives Select Commission report: Outcomes from the sub-group on Post-CSE Support (background paper) and in the attached Updated Response to Scrutiny Review – Post-CSE Support (appendix 1).
10.	Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications
10.1	<p>The commissioned service will continue to offer access to all communities and groups including those with protected characteristics. The specification has been developed after thorough consultation and with consideration of the profile of all socioeconomic groups and communities. There is evidence of access to services from a range of cultures and ethnicities from data collected.</p> <p>An equality analysis screening is attached as Appendix 2.</p>
11.	Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change
	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
12.	Implications for Partners
12.1	The contract evaluation team will have multi-agency representation and the tender evaluation report will be considered by the Trauma and Resilience Expert Reference Group which has representation from health, police and voluntary sector partners.
13.	Risks and Mitigation

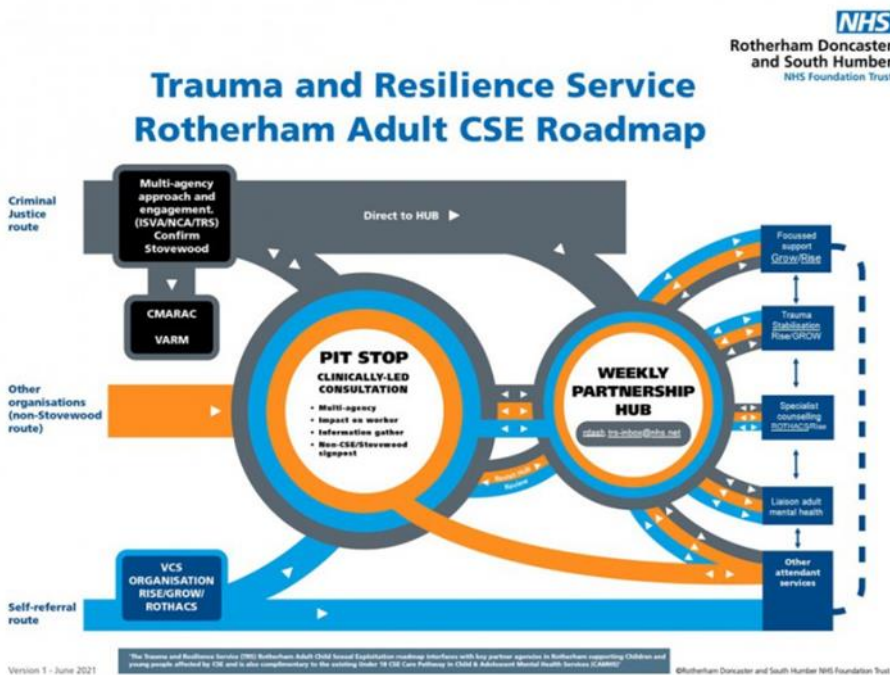
13.1	CYPS are a key part of the partnership's hub and commission/ deliver other integrated services, consequently when appropriate, the needs analysis to inform future commissioning intentions will be undertaken jointly by CYPS and ASCHH.
	Accountable Officer(s)

Report Author: Helen Sweaton, Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Quality

Helen.sweaton@rotherham.gov.uk or 07554436546

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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	Recommendation	Cabinet Decision (Accepted/ Rejected/ Deferred)	Cabinet Response (detailing proposed action if accepted, rationale for rejection, and why and when issue will be reconsidered if deferred)	Accountability	Target date for completion (if applicable)
a	That post-CSE services are transferred to the Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health directorate to enable the greater integration and coordination of support pathways that are available to adult victims of trauma as children.	Accepted	<p>Contract management for the three lots of post CSE support currently commissioned by RMBC has transferred to Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health. These are Grow, Practical, Emotional Support and Advocacy for Young People. Rotherham Rise, Practical, emotional support and advocacy for Young People (up to the age of 25) and adults who have experienced child sexual exploitation and Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service, Evidence based therapeutic interventions for young people and adults who have experienced child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Since September 2022 Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health worked jointly with Children and Young People's Services to build relationships with providers, understand the specification content and understand performance expectations in preparation for the handover.</p> <p>Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health have now taken the lead in meetings already in place. There will remain an ongoing need for CYPS Commissioners to be involved in the development of post CSE support to inform needs analysis, commissioning and service delivery of the other elements of the pathway.</p> <p>The contracts began on 1st January 2021 and expire on 31st December 2023, if required there is agreement for extension for up to a further 2 years ending 31st December 2025. Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health will lead engagement in preparation for re-commissioning. This will commence in 2023 in consultation with the lead member for Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health and Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services.</p>	Assistant Directors Commissioning, CYPS/ ACPHH	Completed. December 2022
b	That further work is undertaken with relevant partners and survivors to improve the ways in which survivors' voices are captured to inform future reviews of post abuse services (for example drawing on the research from Sheffield Hallam University, the development of voice and influence groups or other survivor's forums).	Accepted	<p>The Roadmap continues to enable service user voice to drive service delivery.</p> <p>Feedback is collated on an individual basis, some victims/ survivors who have been accessing the services for a significant period within the three years of operation are now in a position to consider supporting us to develop voice and influence activity for many this would not yet be appropriate. This activity will be taken at a pace suitable to the victims/ survivors.</p> <p>June 2021 Roadmap V2 (003)</p> 	Assistant Directors Commissioning, CYPS/ ACPHH	Completed. November 2022

			<p>Feedback from victims/ survivors is consistently used to develop service provision and inform future commissioning. The voices of those accessing services inform the use of language e.g. victims/ survivors because some women identify as survivors but some do not wish it to be forgotten that they are victims and development of the pathway. The roadmap (rather than a linear pathway) is reflective of the voices of survivors/ victims who are clear it is easier to talk about their abuse with someone they know and the necessity of the opportunity to enter and exit support dependent on their resilience and readiness.</p> <p>The research undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University to draw on the experience and voice of victims/ survivors evidences the positive impact of the individual approach to survivor voice and how this informs future service and pathway development and re-commissioning of services. Travelling Through Trauma: Voices in Partnership, 2020-2022 - Service Evaluation Sheffield Hallam University (shu.ac.uk) (Page 11, Exec summary.)</p> <p>Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Hospital Trust (RDaSH) have sub-contracted with Grow who are now commissioned to develop a drop in bringing survivors together with a view to co-creating service development. This is now included in NHS South Yorkshire, Rotherham Place contract monitoring meetings with RDaSH.</p>		
c	That consideration is given to appropriate governance arrangements to enable elected members to provide a steer on the activity that is taking place within the Borough to stop CSE/CCE and support survivors.	Accepted	<p>Discussion with Cabinet Member and Chair/Vice-Chair of Improving Lives to determine arrangements for ongoing role for elected members in providing a steer on activity.</p> <p>Agreed that in addition to the regular update to Improving Lives Select Commission on Child Sexual Exploitation a separate update on Post-Abuse Support should be added to work programme annually. This should be approved by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health and the Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services. The Trauma and Resilience Service, who are responsible for the coordination of the service roadmap, will be invited to the meeting.</p>	Strategic Director Governance Advisor	June 2022
d	That the Improving Lives Select Commission continue to monitor the provision of post-abuse support to survivors of CSE.	Accepted	Included on Improving Lives Select Commission's work programme annually	Governance Advisor Link Officer	Completed. November 2022
e	In relation to recommendations c) and d), that consideration is given how survivors' voices to inform these processes.	Accepted	<p>Feedback from victims/ survivors is consistently used to develop service provision and inform future commissioning. The voices of those accessing services inform the use of language e.g. victims/ survivors because some women identify as survivors but some do not wish it to be forgotten that they are victims and development of the pathway.</p> <p>The roadmap (rather than a linear pathway) is reflective of the voices of survivors/ victims who are clear it is easier to talk about their abuse with someone they know and the necessity of the opportunity to enter and exit support dependent on their resilience and readiness.</p> <p>The research undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University to draw on the experience and voice of victims/ survivors evidences the positive impact of the individual approach to survivor voice and how this informs future service and pathway development and re-commissioning of services. Travelling Through Trauma: Voices in Partnership, 2020-2022 - Service Evaluation Sheffield Hallam University (shu.ac.uk) (Page 11, Exec summary.)</p> <p>Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Hospital Trust (RDaSH) have sub-contracted with Grow who are now commissioned to develop a drop in bringing survivors together with a view to co-creating service development. This is now included in NHS South Yorkshire, Rotherham Place contract monitoring meetings with RDaSH.</p> <p>Victim/Survivor voice will be included within CSE updates to elected members/ Improving lives Commission. Travelling Through Trauma: Voices in Partnership, 2020-2022 - Service Evaluation Sheffield Hallam University (shu.ac.uk).</p> <p>The ongoing reporting of victim/ survivor voice now included in NHS South Yorkshire, Rotherham Place contract monitoring will inform future reports to Improving Lives Select Commission.</p>	Assistant Directors Commissioning, CYPS/ ACPHH	Completed. November 2022
f	To emphasise the shared responsibility of all elected members, that an annual training event/workshop is delivered. This is to ensure that all elected members are kept up to date with the activity within the Borough to protect young people from being at risk of harm from CSE/CCE and support adult survivors to move forwards in their lives.	Accepted	Factored into Member Development Programme.	Head of Democratic Services Strategic Directors CYP/ ACPHH	Completed. September 2022
g	That the relevant Strategic Directors explore options for sharing best practice with other local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.	Accepted	Strategic Director CYP is an active member the Association of Directors of Children's Services, best practice is shared with other local authorities through this forum. Best practice in the Yorkshire and Humber Region is shared via Bronze Safeguarding Group which is attended consistently by the Assistant Director Children's Social Care and/ or Head of Service Front Door. Rotherham is recognised as an area of best practice, Kirklees Council approached Rotherham	Strategic Directors CYP	Completed

			CYPS in relation to sharing learning and the Pathway the partnership in Rotherham have developed for adult survivors of CSE.	Assistant Director Children's Social Care.	
h	Drawing on the good practice from Durham County Council, that consideration is given to the language used in the provision of post-CSE support to ensure that it is positive and inclusive of the needs of those accessing services.	Accepted	<p>Rotherham services have worked with victims/ survivors to consider the language used in the provision of post-CSE support to ensure it is inclusive and respectful of the needs and wishes of those accessing its services. This language is reflected in all documentation. This will continue to be reviewed as further feedback is received in line with recommendation b.</p> <p>After engagement and consultation with key stakeholders the Rotherham Youth Offending Team Board received proposals at the January 2022 meeting to re-name the Youth Offending Team Board as the Youth Justice Service Management Board. This proposal was agreed in April and will inform amendments to all terminology. This follows the change to refer to staff in the service as Youth Justice Workers.</p>	Assistant Directors Commissioning, CYPS/ ACPHH	Completed

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PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title

Title: Post CSE Support Cabinet Response

Directorate: CYPS

Service area: Commissioning

Lead person: Helen Sweaton

Contact:
helen.sweaton@rotherham.gov.uk

Is this a:

☐

Strategy / Policy

☒

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Improving Lives sub-group on Post-CSE Support produced a stand-alone report on post- CSE support to inform the development of a needs analysis that underpins the commissioning process for post-CSE support services.

The Cabinet decision to accept the response to the recommendations will impact on future commissioning of post-CSE support services.

The Services affect those whose lives have been impacted by historical child sexual exploitation.

Appendix 2

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		x
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		x
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- How have you considered equality and diversity?**

The service offers access to all communities and groups including those with protected characteristics.

A full Equality Analysis Form (part B) was completed during the re-commissioning activity.

The Post-CSE support paper provides an update to the needs analysis undertaken at the time.

- Key findings**

Survivor voice and Benchmarking/ Best practice should be maximised to inform future commissioning activity.

Improved governance arrangements and involvement of Adult Services would strengthen future commissioning activity.

- Actions**

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	December 2022/ December 2024 dependent upon recommissioning timeframe
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	April 2023/ April 2025 dependent upon recommissioning timeframe
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	TBC

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Helen Sweatton	Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Quality	20 th April 2022

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	20 th April 2022
Report title and date	Post-CSE Support Cabinet Response
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Cabinet – April 2022
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	20 th April 2022

Appendix 3 – Carbon Impact Assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	N/A				
Emissions from transport?	N/A				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	N/A				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	N/A				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	N/A				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	N/A				
Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields: N/A					

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:
N/A

Supporting information:

Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Helen Sweaton, Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Quality. CYPS
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	

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Improving Lives Select Commission – Summary Work Programme 2022/23

Meeting Date	Agenda Item
14 June 2022	End of year performance report on Child Exploitation
26 July 2022	Adult Safeguarding
	CYPS Performance
28 July 2022	Carers Strategy/Support for Carers
Health Select Commission	
6 September 2022	Looked After Children's Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy
	Special Educational Needs and Disability inspection Written Statement of Action
21 September 2022	Draft Early Help Strategy
25 October 2022	– LGA Workshop 2 in lieu of formal meeting
24 November 2022	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
6 December 2022	Rotherham Youth Justice Service Progress Report
	OFSTED – Draft Action Plan
31 January 2023	One Adoption SY
	Update – Post Abuse Support
7 March 2023	TBC
9 March 2023	Intermediate Care and Reablement
Health Select Commission	
25 April 2023	TBC - Counter Extremism in Schools and radicalisation of Young People and extremism

To schedule:

- Workshop with OSMB re. Children's Performance
- Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership – Annual Report (September 2023)
- Adult Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency (Phase 4)
- Young Producers Spot Light Review – January/Early February 2023
- Place Partners - Adult Mental Health Services – Joint with Health Select Commission
- Review Scoping: Pandemic Related Risks to Children's Development
- Year End performance (June/July)
- Input into the Child Exploitation Strategy
- Input into the Early Years Strategy

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