

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 5th June 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Adoption Inspection

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Executive Board of the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of Adoption Services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) the Ofsted Inspection report be endorsed.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In August 2006, CSCI carried out an inspection of Halton's Adoption Service. Prior to this it had been acknowledged that there were issues for the service to address and progress had already commenced on recruiting a suitable staff team, adding management capacity and developing practice.
- 3.2 Whilst this progress and the plans for the future were accepted as appropriate by the Inspectors, the outcome of the inspection was that the service provided **Poor** outcomes.
- 3.3 As a result, the inspectors imposed 11 statutory requirements and made 31 recommendations.
- 3.4 All statutory requirements were achieved within the timescales that were given and all the recommendations were worked on over the following months.
- 3.5 On the 3rd March 2008, prior to the Joint Area Review, Inspectors returned to Halton for a Random Inspection of the Adoption Service.
- 3.6 The outcome of the inspection was that the overall quality rating of the service was **Good**. The inspection report noted that the agency had made considerable efforts to address previous issues and "the work undertaken by the agency has resulted in an improved service being provided to adopters, children, their birth parents and family".

3.7 As a result of the inspection, there was 1 statutory requirement and 6 recommendations. The statutory requirement related to information held on the adoption service's personnel and this is now being addressed. The recommendations will be addressed over coming months.

3.8 The inspection report can be accessed via the Ofsted website.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 internal policies and procedures will be amended to reflect the Ofsted recommendations.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the inspection.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Adoption Service ensures that children are safeguarded, healthy and happy, and receive their entitlement of high quality services that are sensitive to need.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Improved life chances and greater stability will positively impact on the lives of those children placed for adoption.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Promotion of the physical and emotional wellbeing of children in care is an essential component in securing positive outcomes for them.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Achieving positive outcomes for children in care will contribute to the role that they play in their local communities.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Increasing the ability of children in care to live permanently within a family will be of benefit to the individual and to the community in which they live.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Implementation of the requirement and the recommendations of the report will ensure that the Adoption service continues to improve.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Children in care are recognised as a vulnerable group whose life chances and outcomes are poor. Adoption can be a very positive option

for some children, enabling them to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers.

9.0 REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 Endorsement of the Ofsted Inspection report is sought so that progress on developing adoption services in Halton can continue.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 There is no alternative option to addressing the statutory requirement contained within the Inspection report.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The statutory requirement in respect of information relating to the Adoption service's personnel had to be complied with by the 31st May 2008 and is currently nearing completion.

11.2 The recommendations within the report will be implemented over the coming months.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Ofsted Inspection	Grosvenor House	Christine Taylor
Halton Adoption Service	Ofsted Website (www.ofsted.gov.uk)	