Brent Adoption Service

• Issues were identified around the performance of the Placements Service 2009.

• Measures put in place to address this including an Interim Head of Services appointed July 2010.

• Identified issues in Adoption around timescales children very slow to be matched with adopters and move through the system.

• Low numbers in relation to recruiting adopters.

• January 2011. Implemented a performance culture, tracking sheets / systems implemented to track recruitment, children awaiting adoptions and those adopted, weekly meetings set up to monitor performance

• February 2012 – Ofsted inspected the service, outcome of this inspection was satisfactory, good outcomes for children, very low rates of adoption breakdown and recruitment had increased by 50% to currently 19 assessment underway.
Government Performance Indicators for Adoption

• Up until April 2012 Government used NI61 to measure the time from the decision ‘should be placed for adoption’ to the time the child was placed.

• This was then measured when the child was adopted sometimes up to 2 years later.

• This meant Brent’s data was not current data but an average over 3 years of the children adopted.

2012 Score Card

• Political focus on timeliness of adoption

• Focus upon
  (1) average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family; and
  (2) average time between receipt of court authority to place a child and decision to match

• Brent’s performance:
  (1) Brent 827 days, higher than statistical neighbours and England average (Eng 625)
  (2) Brent 235 days compared with England average 171 days

• Brent is in the bottom quartile in the country
The Story behind the data

Permanence in Brent:

- A focus on permanence for all children with significant numbers of SGOs (reflecting and responding to the diverse cultures in Brent) – Figures indicate that Brent is in the top quartile for SGOs.

- A recognition that if the score card had included permanency via SGO, then Brent would have scored higher.

- Also this would have included a much higher proportion of BME children.
Data analysis

• Current data shows:
  o 13 children adopted 2009-10
  o 9 children adopted 2010-11; and
  o 6 in the first quarter of this year. With a further estimate of 10 by end March 2013 (16)

• Forecasting for future scorecards:
  o 2010/12 – an average of 871 days – actual in scorecard
  o 2012 – an average of 955 days for the 9 children adopted.
  o 6 adoptions this quarter – an average of 401 days.
  o Children adopted 2010/11 – 8/9 children were Black Caribbean, African or dual Heritage.
  o Children adopted 2011/12 – 6/9 from BME backgrounds.

Overall Strengths

• Senior Management Vision and Aspiration over the last 2 years
• Political and Staff Engagement
• Commitment to Improving Outcomes for Children
• Child focused practice
• Commitment to embedding a culture of high performance across teams
• Establishment of key forums for permanency planning and monitoring of drift from the time a child becomes looked after
• Good legal advice and support which is highly valued
Outcomes for Children (1)

• Statistical data and files indicates (historical) drift & delay has been reduced
• Reports from social workers and adoption teams indicate earlier permanency planning.
• Commitment to permanence for children across the service.
• Improved assessments reported e.g CPR.
• Increased number of children adopted – 9 last year.
• Only one disruption over last 5 years.

Outcomes for Children (2)

• Commitment from social workers re: life story work and life story book, but in practice workloads make this difficult – take up of training.
• Clear evidence that children’s views inform permanency planning.
• Excellent service from CAMHS and play therapy:
  o consultancy for social workers;
  o help with direct work; and
  o direct support for adopters
• Brent “Does not give up on a child”
DFE Diagnostic Assessment

Where we are

- 21 adoption assessment under way.
- Last year 2011, 32 Children placed for permanency.
- Average time reduced by half from 827 to 401.
- 9 adoptions 2011 to 16 adoptions 2012.